

# Closed Stacks – Accessible for All

The National Library of Israel, established in 1892, is by law the legal deposit library of Israel and the central library of the Jewish people. It serves a wide range of patrons from the general public to scholars.

85% of the library's collection of more than 5 million items is held in closed stacks in two facilities (in-house and remote).

Large parts of the collection can be ordered to three different reading rooms and some items are available for home loan, while others can be accessed only with special permission.

## Going online with Aleph's Reading Room module

Prior to the implementation of the Reading Room module, orders were sent to the stacks on hand written slips. The only record of the items' whereabouts was the placeholder on the shelf.

The reading room function allows patrons to order items from the stacks to the reading rooms (similar to hold requests in the regular circulation module). Additionally, the present location of items is apparent to all users.

Librarians can also track whether the item is on hold at the desk or in use. Ceasing the use of paper slips requires full computerization of the collection at item level and registration of all patrons. Item statuses and patron statuses must be defined in order to set limits: who can order which items, how many items, to which reading room, for how long.



## In-House Digitization Center as a "Reading Room"

The National Library of Israel has recently launched a large scale digitization project:

- **Books** – 5 million pages / year
- **Manuscripts** – 10,000 volumes / year
- **Archival material** – 100,000 documents / year
- **Periodicals** – 200,000 pages / year
- **Other material types** (maps, photos, broadsides etc.)



The reading room module is used to order and track items in use at the newly established Digitization Center.

The library staff developed some additional functionality with in Aleph and interfaces with other applications:

- Export of bibliographic data to Excel for curators to mark priority for digitization
- Global ordering of large number of items according to requests by curators
- A PHP application with a single interface used at the Digitization Center to read and write data to and from Aleph, Digitool and CCS
- Automatic addition of date of digitization to unused field in item

## Enhancements

### Order slip design:

- A5 (≈Junior Legal), with perforation (one half as place holder in stacks, one half sent to reading room with item)
- Graphical logos for each reading room to allow quick & easy routing

**Reports and statistics** sent to department heads and librarians (hourly, daily and/or monthly) for tracking and follow up:

- number of orders per reading room
- number of orders placed within library & number of orders placed off site
- number of cancelled orders (by user)
- average delivery time from each storage facility (in minutes)
- printed orders not fulfilled or answered within three hours (control mechanism for technical or human errors)

Due to very incomplete serials holding (retro conversion from card catalog to be completed by end of 2012), periodicals are ordered via an HTML form sent by email. The form is automatically populated with bibliographic data

(Java script originally developed at Deutsche Sporthochschule Koeln).



## Conclusions

General feedback from patrons and library staff (in reading rooms and stacks) was very enthusiastic:

- **improved service** - patrons can order items from anywhere at any time and are notified by email when the item arrives at reading room
- **improved control** - reading room staff can keep track of use and send un-used items back to stacks
- 40% decrease of errors and increased percentage of fulfilled requests
- 10,000 new registered patrons within the first year of operation
- 550 orders per day