

## **UM Libraries, Ex Libris (USA) Sign Partnership Agreement To Further Develop Digitizing Software and Initiatives**

The University of Maryland Libraries have entered into a Premier Partner Agreement with Ex Libris (USA) of Chicago to further both the development of DigiTool digital asset management software as well as the digital initiatives of the Performing Arts Library (PAL) located in the new Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. The UM Libraries are the first library in North America to enter into this agreement.

For the UM and other libraries that have staked out strategic positions in creating and managing digital collections, particularly where they are digitizing materials, DigiTool has the essential applications for creating and maintaining digital collections that together comprise the emerging digital library.

The Premier Partnership Agreement calls for the full implementation of Ex Libris's digital asset management product "DigiTool" as well as having the University of Maryland actively participate in the ongoing product design, development, and testing of new features within DigiTool. As a Premier partner, the UM Libraries will become a focal point, a leader and a reference for other libraries around the world by participating in the leading edge work of designing information systems for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

"We are excited about this opportunity to partner with Ex Libris," said Charles Lowry, Dean of Libraries at the University of Maryland, in hailing the agreement. "Above all, it gives us an opportunity to help define development of digital library technology with the leading software developer of library systems. Ex Libris is a company that has a record for highly effective and rapid software development. Besides the obvious benefit of gaining a 'supported' product, we are helping Ex Libris push the profile of this technology in a multi-media environment that will support digital conversion and 'objects' that are born digital. An equally important outcome is that this will benefit the larger library community."

Carl Grant, President of Ex Libris (USA) said: "The University of Maryland Libraries represent the ideal partner for us to work with on this project." He added: "They have a great deal of expertise in the area and a development partnership such as this provides a valuable means for Ex Libris to design, develop and test software in close consultation with them. Ex Libris has always believed that our collaborative partnership approach with our customers, combined with tailoring technology to provide for the future requirements of libraries is part of the foundation of our success."

As the central location on campus for holdings in music, theatre, and dance, the PAL, specifically its building program, envisioned a number of new technologies to assist users in

accessing its audio collections, including a combination digitizing, playback, and distribution system. All of the classrooms in the PAL Center have been equipped with the highest level of teaching technology, and the university recently announced an agreement enabling the campus libraries to distribute approximately 1,000 selected titles from the Films for the Humanities & Sciences, Inc., (FFH&S) of Princeton, NJ collection of educational videos over the university's state-of-the-art digital video-on-demand delivery system.

The PAL contains more than 50,000 books, 100,000 scores for performance and study, and 124,000 musical recordings. Beyond PAL there are other collections of audio and video material of potential interest to PAL users; the Library of American Broadcasting, the National Public Broadcasting Archive, and Nonprint Media Services (video), all located within the Hornbake Special Collections Library, represent three such collections.

Ex Libris, a leading worldwide developer of high-performance applications for libraries, information centers, and researchers, was awarded a five-year contract earlier this year for an advanced "next generation" shared Library Information Management System (LIMS) for the University of Maryland Libraries, in cooperation with 16 University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institution Libraries. ###