

Libraries have long had to familiarize themselves to the fact that in their array of services the electronic documents and other online materials are demanding a truly substantial role in addition to the traditional documents and printed forms. The sources accessible via electronic channels (e-sources) are broadening continuously, either as databases provided within the framework of national, regional, or discipline-based consortia, or by dint of various competitions, grants, and single institutional subscriptions.

It is widely known that each database employs an idiosyncratic query language, a special vocabulary and syntax. To acquire the basic routine of an online session in quest of some research data in a database is a challenge to the user, so online search, the fundamental tool of scientific research, becomes a highly fragmented activity. This problem has been recognized in the field of library and information science and there are now new services on the market that offer a remedy to this 'fragmentation': they function as gateways and yield transparent access to all the electronic sources – from one single springboard of an interface.

From the publicly available workstations in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, one can log in to more than ten databases and the number of periodicals to be displayed with full-text capability is approximately ten thousand. In order to facilitate the computer-based activity of the Library's readers, to support and simplify the researchers' online use, the Academy Library purchased *MetaLib/SFX*, a software package marketed by ExLibris, which can be implemented independently of ExLibris' leading ILS, Aleph. Our lecture concerns primarily the installation and maintenance of MetaLib, the part of the software package providing full portal services.