

Nov–Dec 2007

ILS Survey

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**Before your ILS was selected, did the selector(s) analyze costs and benefits of ILS alternatives?**

- **Yes, but this ILS was selected for other reasons (What reasons? Please specify.)**

**Koha/Academic/Argentina**

Familiarity of the staff with the system and the complete control over the system (open source).

**Koha/Special/Canada**

We wanted access to the source code because we wanted the capacity to expand the functions and Koha is the best-known ILS with free access to the application code.

**Koha/Academic/Cyprus**

Cost was not the only factor but flexibility to change code and add different modules was important as well.

**Koha/Academic/Ecuador**

Además por la posibilidad de mejorar, de crear nuevos servicios y promover el trabajo cooperativo. [Also for the possibility of improving, of creating new services and promoting cooperative work.]

**Koha/Academic/France**

Technical reasons (full web, UNIMARC, Z39.50), "political" reasons (choose a different way to spend the public funds), and also economical reasons.

**Koha/Academic/India**

The reason is simple. Koha is customizable. Commercial LMSs are available in general as a fit-to-all size entity. But no two libraries in this world are the same. We need to have scope and freedom to make the LMS suitable for the library. Freedom of customization is the very first reason for Koha.

**Koha/Public/New Zealand**

Because it had the potential to handle telecommunication between branch libraries much more cost-effectively than other systems.

**Koha/Academic/Portugal**

Budget reasons, as this is open source software.

**Koha/Academic/Uruguay**

We needed to customize the ILS to our internal processes.

**Koha/School/United States**

Koha is the most cost effective as far as outlay of money, but the time that it required of me does have a cost that isn't always factored in. On the other hand, my new knowledge has a benefit for

## Reasons ILS was selected (other than most cost-effective)

the school district that I work for.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

No money was available to purchase an ILS

### **Koha/Public/United States**

Open source is the wave of the future. There were few choices as full-featured that were affordable.

### **Koha/Academic/United States**

The ILS is an open source application, which means it is free to acquire, use and modify. It was picked by the university's head of IT, who is also a professor. It was initially assigned as a class project, and turned into a project as part of an internship. The point of assigning it was first and foremost to get some ILS experience, but also to get some experience with the Linux operating system, as well as compare the program's viability in a Windows environment.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Special/Australia**

Selected during the Dynix Sirsi merger. We did not actually select this system. We selected Horizon but due to the merger we were left with little option but to implement Unicorn.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/Canada**

Consortial decision.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Special/Canada**

Upgrade from Dynix to Horizon was determined to be the "path of least resistance" utilizing the same vendor.

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Special/Czech Republic**

Number of installations in the biggest libraries in Czech Republic, references of academic libraries in Czech Republic, guarantee of software development according to new library services

### **TechLibPlus (Open Text)/Academic/India**

Purchased long ago. At that time it was being distributed by a government agency. Presently the library is in the process of acquiring new software.

### **iSPEKTRA (developed inhouse)/Academic/Indonesia**

The ILS was first developed in the early 1990s, when there were not many options for ready-to-use (off-the-shelf) library automation software (almost all were overseas products), and technical services were a nightmare using international calls. Another reason, most overseas software (developed by developed countries) lacked functionalities needed in developing countries (e.g., the need to still print catalog cards as backups although an OPAC module is available).

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/Israel**

We bought it as part of a consortium of 41 libraries in Israel. They offered the best ILS and best solution for outsourcing services. Ex Libris gives us all the off-site services for software and

Reasons ILS was selected (other than most cost-effective)

hardware.

**LibrarySoft (New Generation)/School/Northern Marianas**

It was what they could afford to cover the whole public school system back then, according to the public library director. He purchased the program.

**Custom (Local)/Academic/Pakistan**

This ILS is part of an overall Academic Management System. We have IT people to develop different modules and reports as per our requirements.

**Destiny (Follett)/Academic/Peru**

I didn't select the software but it was a good election.

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Academic/United Kingdom**

This was in 1994. It then had a GUI OPAC when others didn't.

**Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

SirsiDynix provided very competitive pricing, but also their online catalog was far advanced from the others we looked at in 1998. The ability at that time to connect to the server via the Internet instead of needing a direct link to the server in our consortium with a client/server-based system was really attractive, and at the time SirsiDynix was the only company that we could do that with a Windows system.

**Circulation Plus (Follett)/School/United States**

Specific features and prior experience with the system

**Liberty3 (SoftLink)/Special/United States**

At the time, 2002, there was only one other contender for an ASP hosted (now SaaS) solution. EOSi had one, but it did not have all the modules complete at that time.

**Millennium (Innovative Interfaces)/Public/United States**

Ease of patron use, included features we wanted to work with our workflows and procedures

**Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Costs were pretty similar for our 2 finalists, but staff overwhelmingly preferred the Unicorn interface and iBistro catalog.

**Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

I would actually say no, it wasn't about cost, it was about features. The selection was either Voyager or Aleph for a consortial environment for the state. The selection was based more on features that would supposedly make working in a consortial ILS workable.

**Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/United States**

In NC this is the software used by the State consortium. In order to provide ILL services to our students we decided to join the consortium.

Reasons ILS was selected (other than most cost-effective)

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Formerly used Dynix. We were concerned that a previously corrupted database would be migrated successfully. We knew that the company had a lot of experience with this migration of ALL files, not just bib records.

## Other reasons your library chose this ILS

Please rank in order the top 5 reasons your library chose this ILS. Choose "1" for most important, "2" for second most important, etc.

- other (please specify and rate as 1–5)

### **Koha/Special/Australia**

5 – Open source (which allied nicely with our mission), and built a good relationship with the developers.

### **Koha/Academic/Ecuador**

3 – Creo que el mayor incentivo está en tener acceso al código del programa y realizar algunas aplicaciones adicionales. Del mismo modo poder compartir con otras instituciones para apoyar el desarrollo del proceso documental. [I think the biggest incentive is having access to the code of the program and making some additional applications. Similarly we can share with other institutions to support the development of the documentation process.]

### **Koha/Academic/Ethiopia**

5 – Students can further enhance the software through project assignments; the possibility of localization to Ethiopian languages, such as Amharic, Tigrigna and Oromifa. Availability of documentation to read and install by ourselves has helped us to learn a lot. Koha can be deployed to a simple PC and used—no need to have a server, which is expensive. A library portal can be developed using the Koha OPAC/intranet in the future.

### **Koha/Academic/Ghana**

5 – It's free.

### **Koha/Academic/Poland**

1 – a) Our old ILS was going down (too many users, too many books, too old, etc). b) Koha because it's open source, so we can do lots of changes. :) c) My diploma piece was (in English more or less) "Open Source Library System Koha adapted for reading room in Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology." ;)

### **Koha/Academic/Portugal**

1 – We begin studying / analysing Koha because it is a recommended free open source software, other than that we had ... a working group formed among several public administration organisms that promoted Koha and together translated it and explored it.

### **Koha/School/Sweden**

Open Source

### **Koha/Academic/Taiwan**

1 – I've used free software since 2000.

### **Koha/Academic/Uruguay**

Works with MARC21 and as an open source software we were able to adapt it, and we did it.

## Other reasons your library chose this ILS

### **Koha/Special/United States**

2 – It is free, it is open (MySQL), and has a great Internet interface.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

1 – Open Source. At my company, option 1 is building your own solution, option 2 is use something open source you can contribute to. Using anything proprietary or closed source is a virtually impossibly sales job when pitching to the VPs.

### **Koha/Academic/United States**

My professor in a Linux class (who is also my supervisor in the “work/study”) had indicated that he had a library catalog program as one of the projects, among other applications. I was assigned the library catalog program as a class project. It later spilled over into a “work/study” project.

### **Koha/School/United States**

This school began as an open source institution, hence Koha.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Special/Australia**

1 – Value for money—the only basis of government tender selection

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/Canada**

Consortial decision

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

We also took into consideration the stability of the company, that it was growing and had a strong market share.

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

The 56 community colleges in the state were already using a version. I'm sure that was a determining factor. The previous ILS provided a State University/CC union catalog capability.

### **Voyager (Ex Libris)/Special/United States**

1 – The consortium we belonged to chose Voyager, and the technical support we receive from the consortium was a big selling point.

### **Library World (Caspr)/Public/United States**

5 – learning curve for staff

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Sole reason vendor was chosen over others was low bid.

**Customizations involving changing the source code (in Perl, PHP, or another programming language). Can you please briefly describe your customization?**

**Koha/Academic/Afghanistan**

The original Koha software does not support the following features: Persian/Pashto language, bar code printing, and bilingual interfaces. My students and I have modified the source code to support our desired features.

**Koha/Special/Australia**

We asked for a field for recording URLs (this was in the early days when this wasn't a standard feature), and an abstract field, separate from the notes field. These involved changing the source code.

**Koha/Special/Canada**

Added a function "documents frontpages depot" (like amazon.com) and a function "Email Notices and Bills". I don't know what programming language was used.

**Koha/Academic/Cyprus**

We changed the source code (Perl) to accommodate Turkish character handling and also for hourly circulation. (Our reserves section loans books for 4 hour periods). We shared all our improvements with the Open Source community.

**Koha/Academic/France**

Enhancement in authorities module (bugs correction). Scripts for report.

**Koha/Academic/Poland**

:) — new layout — Polish translation — more reports — advanced MARC editor — periodical MARC21 support — full EAN-13 support, returns/issuing on one page (user detail page) — advanced user rights — and many more :)

**Koha/Academic/Portugal**

We changed the source code and the HTML. Some changes were needed in the Perl code and in the MySQL database.

**Koha/Academic/Sri Lanka**

1. I wrote some Perl scripts to ignore some bugs. 2. I changed data entry worksheets and search options to work with our local language (Sinhala and Tamil) 3. Also I added our fines policies. I edited fines2.pl script using Perl. I changed the source code. 4. Also I wrote some Perl scripts to change our data time to time. For example, to convert from ISIS, to delete unused biblio data, to change DDC numbers from text to numbers, to change ISBN (we used as a 1-445- but I changed last year as a 123456).

**Koha/Academic/Taiwan**

Most are debugging, not really modifying source code. We do a lot of interface Chinesenize, traditional Chinese and simplified Chinese. Yes, we did customize some source code. There are a lot of bugs that have nothing to do with Chinese characters.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

We also modified some of the Perl source code to change the way certain portions flowed to make them more in line with our preexisting workflow or needs. For example many of our books had an existing barcode which was in the form bib / copy, however the '/' wasn't compatible with Koha's number only system. We modified the source code which validates scanning so it removes the / before processing the barcode. There were a few of the [source code] modifications.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

1) Self-checkout system: Even though it is said that Koha has a self-checkout system, I couldn't figure it out, and I wrote my own code using another language. It communicates with Koha's database and modifies it properly. 2) If you want to see all books of a branch, Koha does not show it. It may be an error or the actual intention of its programmer. I needed to fix that, because I needed to see the books that everybody was holding.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

I made some changes to templates to change the look a bit, some changes to the templates and Perl code to add or change some functions and wrote some reports in PHP that aren't integrated into the Koha interface, but use the Koha MySQL tables. My Perl skills are fairly limited, so the changes I've been making are minor.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

RSS feeds for any OPAC search results. Self-online checkout for all patrons. In the basic item detail page, there is now a Checkout button next to the ITEM number for all checked in items. And if a user is already logged in, this works as a one-click checkout. Basic item detail pages display the username of the patron to whom the item is checked out. Book cover images without using Amazon. Normalizing display of ISBNs, title, subtitle, author, series. We fixed some bugs with subject heading displays and MARC field 856u.

### **Koha/Home/United States**

Changed the code, mostly to increase the flexibility of Koha's search options. For example, most special characters and punctuation are unsearchable by default (at least in my version), and I wanted a search on nothing (i.e., a zero-length string) to return all possible results. I also made a few changes to the way authorities are handled; coming from a computer science background rather than a library science background, I'd like them to behave a little more like an ontology, although I know that's not what they were originally intended for. :)

### **Koha/Public/United States**

[We sponsored the Z39.50 functionality and MARC compatibility in Koha.] We also contributed the NPL templates (developed inhouse), which have become the default for 3.0.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

I'd have to say [source code modifications] and also [other modifications]. For [source code modifications], we customized a lot of the functionality in the Perl part of Koha, including writing some additional modules, such as Clubs & Services & Rotating Collections tools. For [other modifications], we also heavily changed the appearance of the librarians' interface, using

## Customizations to source code

HTML, CSS, etc. We also wrote our own custom utilities for reports and for migrating our data, mostly written in PHP (Google for Koha-tools to find them). Most of our work for [source code modifications] and [other modifications] has been contributed back to Koha, either in the official CVS repository for dev\_week (we'll be porting things to 3.0 before we upgrade) or in Koha-tools.

### **Koha/School/United States**

The most significant changes revolve around two points: first, creating a migration path from our previous library software, and second, tailoring Koha to the needs and requests of our librarians.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Special/Australia**

Change of report layout, retention of circulation history. The report change was done to source code specifically for us by SirsiDynix.

### **Innopac (Innovative Interfaces)/Academic/Canada**

Paid Innovative to create a customized form that provides an address label for shipments. Otherwise we have just customized the web forms.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/Canada**

Our customizations have consisted largely of [nonsource code modifications], with a mix of some [other modifications] using the system's API to perform activities that aren't supported by the out-of-the-box capabilities of Unicorn. One of these [other] customizations include creating an integration point between our ILL system and our ILS so that users can track their current ILL items in the same interface as their regular borrowed items (and be notified about overdues just the same). I didn't change any of the source code for Unicorn. When we migrated to Unicorn back in 2003, we did pay for SirsiDynix to create a test instance for us that resided on the same server as our production server. This was considered a nonstandard customization, and that was confirmed when we upgraded to the latest supported version of Unicorn, the test instance no longer worked, and SirsiDynix told us that as a customization it wasn't supported and they wouldn't help us fix it under the terms of our support license (but they would happily fix it for an additional customization fee).

### **TechLibPlus (Open Text)/Academic/India**

Web OPAC, customized reporting

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/Israel**

Any customization that may have dealt with source code was done by Ex Libris, as we have no access to it.

### **Custom (Local)/Academic/Pakistan**

Our ILS is developed inhouse so you may or may not call it customization. Actually, we have our own MIS department, which is responsible for design and development of software systems. We forward our demands (any changes required), including changes in display or programmes, to our MIS department, which changes our ILS according to our requirements.

## Customizations to source code

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

SirsiDynix did the work.

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/Netherlands**

Add on tools for data conversion, HTML customization for OPAC, add on tools for reporting

**Customizations limited to modifying the appearance of web pages (in HTML or CSS) such as to show your library name, logo, etc, or to configuring ILS options such as branch libraries and circulation policies. Can you please briefly describe your customization?**

**Koha/Special/Canada**

Only added our name.

**Koha/Special/France**

Only the appearance of web pages (in HTML or CSS) such as to show your library name and logo.

**Koha/Special/United States**

I made changes to the CSS and to the HTML templates to include different call number variables which are configurable from the administrative interface. I would suspect that it takes most libraries a good deal of time to customize Koha for their library's MARC records. I made small customizations to a command line script that is distributed with Koha. I submitted my changes back to the project, but I do not think they were accepted.

**Koha/Special/United States**

Our customizations have mostly been to the appearance of the web pages, and to configuring ILS options such as those you mentioned. We have several other changes that we were looking into, but as Koha 3.0 is meant to be released soon, we are waiting to see which changes are addressed in that new version.

**Koha/School/United States**

My school tech person didn't get very involved in the configuration of the OPAC, so I chose among the styles offered by Koha itself. We haven't changed much yet, but I am working with a new programmer who can go into the code itself and change things to make it interlace with our portal. We want to make it work with Moodle and Drupal.

**Liberty3 (SoftLink)/Special/United States**

System allows for changes to look and feel/logos/colors/etc, but also to page layout, translations, and design.

**Can you please briefly describe your customization?**

**Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/Canada**

Customized OPAC scripts & display, many customizations made for consortial reasons. I don't have the details but I do know that our consortium has added and altered code in the OPAC scripts. This work is all done centrally so I don't know what conversations or permissions they received from Sirsi but I do know that this isn't done by configuration changes but is done through actual scripting changes entered by programmers working within our consortium. I do also know that this has led to problems when Sirsi is unable to provide support or technical assistance with issues due to the changes we have made....

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Academic/United Kingdom**

Many: for example many customisations are done for UK customers. We have more retrospective information about who has borrowed what. We also have extra tables in the addresses. OPAC display is customisable as an inherent part of the package. In all cases the customisations were done by the company not ourselves.

### **Do you have any comments about the ILS installation process or how it could be improved?**

#### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Because we were the original developers for Evergreen, the answer to [the installation time question] is not completely accurate since we spent over 2 years developing the software.

#### **Koha/Academic/Afghanistan**

Koha has documentation for installation. However, since it is open source, you need some who has technical skills to do so.

#### **Koha/Academic/Argentina**

As we began installation, we missed some cataloging frameworks that had to be configured by the staff. Actually they are available from the software download site.

#### **Koha/Special/Australia**

I am currently reinstalling on a Linux server. The initial install was on Windows. Linux is proving much less error prone to install. Documentation needs to be vastly improved, but it relies on a user community. The ILS is free under GNU license so you cannot expect rapid documentation.

#### **Koha/Special/Canada**

For Koha, choose a Debian Linux platform, otherwise the install will be tricky. We tried Koha on Mandriva, then on Ubuntu first, but without the experience we now have, it was hard to figure out the adjustments that were required. On the other hand, the Debian install went right essentially at the first attempt: all the modules landing at the right place with the right permissions, etc. Since this is a brand new library, we cannot talk about data migration apart from a member list upload that I tested. It seems fairly straightforward for someone having some knowledge of database imports.

#### **Koha/Academic/Costa Rica**

Since Koha is an open source ILS, there is little documentation, no technical support, and everything needs to be done by the host librarian. As a nonsystems and nontech services librarian, this process is difficult because I've forgotten much of what I learned in library school. In order to get the system working, I'm going to have to consult with librarians who have successfully installed and set up Koha.

#### **Koha/Academic/Cyprus**

We have developed a new installation process for Windows machines that improved the process 100%.

#### **Koha/Academic/Ecuador**

Debería existir una forma mejor de instalarlo, aunque hoy ya existe virtual machine. [There ought to be a better way to install it, although now there is virtual machine.]

#### **Koha/Academic/Ethiopia**

Installation of the Linux environment is very difficult since the software needs to be installed in

## Installation

this environment to work properly.

### **Koha/Academic/Ghana**

Only a few IT personnel can work with Linux (the platform for Koha). I wish that a more flexible programme would be used to develop the software. Also detailed notes could be attached to the parameters in less technical language to make configuration easier. Thanks.

### **Koha/Academic/India**

Koha should be guided by an international forum combining librarians, library schools teachers and computer professionals.

### **Koha/School/Papua New Guinea**

Too many Perl modules that needed to be downloaded separately. Not only after downloading said modules I discovered that only certain versions worked with certain Koha versions. So I had to go rushing back and fourth hunting specific Perl modules that were hard to get. I had no Internet connection except for a phone line 2 hours drive away (which is hard to do without a car). Please package a full installation.

### **Koha/Academic/Portugal**

In Linux, Koha can only be installed by people with very good Perl knowledge.

### **Koha/School/United Kingdom**

Improved documentation on accessing Z39.50 servers. Our system was up and running in 1 day, but it took us 2½ more days to get it to access external Z39.50 servers.

### **Koha/Academic/Uruguay**

We've worked on it for 10 months because we needed to migrate 40,000 titles (about 60,000 items) from CEPAL format to MARC21 format. We've also modified a lot of the circulation policies and contributed some code to the main development project.

### **Koha/School/United States**

As more people use Koha there will be a larger group of users to get information from. Right now it seems that there are a lot of programmers, and there needs to be more people able to share information with other users.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Better documentation.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

It's open access so we got what we paid for. I could not have done it alone.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Installation of the software took less than an half hour, but the migration of the existing catalog which was in MS Excel format took approximately 14 days, because tools did not work, and reentering of the 600 records was required.

## Installation

### **Koha/Public/United States**

Perhaps some better tools for handling nonstandard MARC records could be added, I ended up having to write a small script to convert our records into Koha's format so it would accept them nicely.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

It helps to be familiar with network administration to do the initial server setup and install. The ability and desire to poke at and test the software settings is necessary. No one who is shy or scared at learning about a piece of software by playing with it, breaking it, reinstalling it, and documenting how you did should expect to get much out of Koha. There is no free support, just a helpful community of other users. It is not an out-of-the-box solution.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Many of the difficulties with installation should be taken care of in the version 3 release of Koha.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Our first, clean installation (when the company's library was created) took 18 hours, without any customizations. Now that we know the system rather well, migrating to a new server or upgrading to the newest version takes a total of 3 hours work.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

It's pretty hairy, but they've been developing a better installation package. With Ubuntu + VMWare, it's fairly easy now.

### **Koha/School/United States**

We installed on Windows XP and there are some known bugs/issues that are not in the documentation. I have since worked through most of them with online help from the Koha groups and mailing lists. I think the errors could have been easily fixed if a list of issues and fixes was kept in a central location. I did not answer [the question about how long it took to install] because we have not finished entering our catalog yet. We have never had a system before so we are entering each item as we go, there was nothing to migrate from. The system took about 5 days to get up and running, tweaked, patron interface customized, and bugs worked out.... Plus a few days of testing after that....

### **Koha/Public/United States**

I didn't have the skills or the ability to "look under the hood", or things might have gone smoother or faster.

### **Koha/Academic/United States**

The process could have been improved a number of ways. First, the documentation was "so-so", and not up-to-date. The ILS software itself at the time was not made for the current version of some components (at least one of those components is no longer available in the required version). The application could have been bundled with all required software into one "installer" (Linux, unlike Windows, has you jump backwards through flaming hoops to install a program, ... installation involves manually installing/configuring the individual components in the right order; that being said, there are "bundled installers" out there for other applications). Installation took

## Installation

an inordinate amount of time because of the trial and error of trying to install on various operating systems (Windows and two flavors of Linux), hardware and software incompatibilities, etc.

### **Koha/Home/United States**

Koha is very much free software—the price is right and the software is fairly comprehensive, but its structure is pretty horrible and documentation is sporadic at best.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Our ILS is open source, so the installation and configuration process is a bit different than it would be with a proprietary system. While involved, this process does allow us to adapt the ILS to our specific needs.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Installation went very smoothly.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

Initial installation of Koha happened at a time when the product was very early in its development. Difficulties we faced then would be fewer for current users.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Better documentation about MARC fields and setting up parameters, as well as more complete descriptions of what each Perl script does and which ones interact. We were migrating from InMagic which is non-MARC, so had to translate all the records into MARC format, not an easy process when you have combined/general fields like Notes which involve all the 5xx fields crammed into one, but you can't separate them out.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

We have been working on our migration to Koha for probably a couple of years now, including the decision-making process that led us to decide to use Koha. That may seem daunting, but we had a lot of customization to Koha that we both sponsored other developers to make, and customizations that we made ourselves. We sponsored the integration of the Zebra indexing engine to speed up Koha's searching capabilities, and we also redesigned the staff interface to suit our needs. We did a great deal of debugging and also redesigned some of the functions within Koha to suit our needs. Since we didn't have vendor lock-in, we could set our own timeline for the migration.

### **Koha/School/United States**

Different versions of PHP and a few other components had to be exchanged, which held up the function.

### **Koha/School/United States**

The initial installation went smoothly. It was trying to get the program to work for our district that took the time. Working out the kinks has been an ongoing process for the last year and a half.

## Installation

### **Koha/School/United States**

Loved having wide-open access to the MySQL databases during and after install. If things went bad I could repair them very easily. Much better and easier than our proprietary system that hid everything away.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Special/Australia**

It is always difficult to make decisions about how to set up a new system when you do not understand the new system. More support helping library staff to understand how the new system works and the implication of the choices being made would have been more helpful

### **SOUL (INFLIBNET)/Special/India**

It's very simple takes minutes to install the software including server and client.

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/Israel**

Ex Libris's products often take many months to configure. It's difficult to answer your first question. Ex Libris projected a migration period of 46 for a library already using Aleph 300 and 79 days for a library migrating from another system. Most of the configuration work was done by Ex Libris, and some of it done by us. At my specific library (which took 160 days) we also took the time to merge 5 libraries into one catalog, and a lot of decisions had to be made in the process. For a turnkey system, Aleph is so sophisticated and flexible that one has to go through an enormous number of screens even on OPAC, in order to tailor it to needs, and I know that university libraries in Israel that don't outsource took up to a year to set up their programs before they went live.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Academic/United Kingdom**

This was in 1994 so probably irrelevant.

### **Library World (Caspr)/Special/United States**

It's a small system for a small library; install the software and that's it.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

At the time we were waiting for E-rate Internet connectivity to be funded, which came through for the first time in spring 1999. We did not even have our Internet installed in most of our libraries by the time we had training scheduled with SirsiDynix, so the time spent prior to the training was to our benefit not to be rushed.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

We needed more and better training.

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

Communication and support between libraries (6 on campus) could have been improved. The main library was very central and self-important.

### **Liberty3 (SoftLink)/Special/United States**

Softlink provided these services. Very smooth.

## Installation

### **Millennium (Innovative Interfaces)/Public/United States**

Given the amount of time we had, the amount of work involved in customization and configuration, and the amount of technical expertise any of our staff had, we needed a) much more training, and b) much more time.

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

Our process had more to do with us wanting the data migration to be correct and the vendor wanting to make their "go live" date. They pushed on the date, we pushed on data quality. Vendors need to be more responsive to quality. The vendor, the system office, and the library all had numerous people working on the migration and conducting testing. The system was already installed for some time as a group of libraries had already migrated, but I would say that amongst all of the people working on the project you could call it 8-hour days for the whole thing.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/United States**

The difficulty with the installation was due to our network, not our ILS. We joined a consortium. As part of our agreement with the consortium we have to recatalog each item in our collection. We are not permitted to migrate records from our old system in batch.

### **Library World (Caspr)/Public/United States**

That is an approximation. We are open six hours at a time, and for six hours a day, four days a week, at least one and more often two staff members were entering records and barcoding since April of last year. We expect to launch our automated system in June. We have not been automated before now. Patrons can access the part of the collection that has been input, but right now only staff is using it for the most part. I know of several very small libraries in my state that could use an affordable solution to automate. Most of them cannot devote the amount of time we have to adding bibliographic records by hand or do not have the technological expertise to do so.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Answers above count only time after equipment was delivered. Servers were "staged" before delivery.

**Do you have any comments about the documentation or how it could be improved?**

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

We are getting a grant to fund further writing of the documentation.

**Koha/Special/Australia**

Needs more attention to getting Z39.50 servers installed and working.

**Koha/Special/Australia**

I've found what I need either in the official documentation or in the user docs that various users have added to the website.

**Koha/Academic/Costa Rica**

Since Koha documentation is done by volunteers using the ILS, there are gaps in documentation. These gaps could be filled and the documentation could be more user friendly, especially for those who have never handled installing an ILS.

**Koha/Academic/Ethiopia**

The documentation is not updated regularly.

**Koha/Special/France**

I am writing a guide in French for helping the partners of our net.

**Koha/Academic/India**

Developing of the manual in the way a librarian works is not the job of developers. We need to come forward to do things for ourselves. The documentation may be distributed globally.

**Koha/Public/New Zealand**

Documentation is frequently the weak spot in open source software, since it requires time and commitment, and there is rarely anyone willing to pay.

**Koha/Special/New Zealand**

On the whole it is reasonably good but lacks information on tricky problems.

**Koha/School/Papua New Guinea**

Documentation available online and used by me extensively. Very detailed documentation available, but more is needed on installation and support because the software package is too buggy.

**Koha/Academic/Portugal**

Many documents are still in development mode.

**Koha/School/United Kingdom**

There can never be enough documentation. The documentation supplied is written by the developers but ideally should be written by users (librarians). We would be willing to write some documentation from a librarian's point of view and make it publicly available, if only we

had the spare time to do so.

**Koha/Academic/Uruguay**

As a typical open source software project, Koha lacks a lot of information. We implemented it 3 years ago. It's better now, but still....

**Koha/School/United States**

The documentation has been done mainly by the programmers. As more librarians use the software, the documentation is getting better.

**Koha/Special/United States**

More practical details.

**Koha/Public/United States**

The help inside Koha itself is lacking in some areas, but the online docs were thorough and very useful.

**Koha/Special/United States**

All documentation is user community generated, at least for the Windows version of Koha. There are attempts to bring all documentation in one central place through the use of wikis and web pages.

**Koha/Special/United States**

Documentation is always a struggle with an open source project. Koha needs more community support for documentation.

**Koha/Public/United States**

I wrote a chunk of the documentation, so I'm not rating my own work. :)

**Koha/School/United States**

As stated before now, bugs and issues are not always posted centrally.... You have to ask or look for some information.

**Koha/Public/United States**

There are large sections with no available documentation because it is a work in progress. I hope to help fill some of those gaps in the future.

**Koha/Academic/United States**

The documentation that comes with Koha is "so-so". It gives you some basic information. It should have more screenshots and be easier to understand, using plain language. This being a Linux-based program, we do not receive that consideration. I've had to write my own documentation.

**Koha/Home/United States**

I haven't looked at Koha's documentation in the last several months to a year, but unless it's improved dramatically, it's woefully incomplete and disorganized. As with much free software,

## Documentation

the code itself is often more helpful (or at least more informative) than the documentation.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Lack of documentation has been a real problem for us—our ILS is open source, and has very limited documentation available.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Since the software is open source the documentation is written by the users. Certain sections are very complete, whereas others are incomplete or missing. Plus, depending upon what computer, software version, etc, you are using, some of the documentation does not match.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Documentation needs a bit more detail and explanation. Since Koha is an open source project, I will be contributing to the documentation.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

The documentation for Koha tends to be behind, because development happens quickly and developers often neglect to write documentation. This is an area where Koha could definitely improve. We have written our own documentation for training staff on the circulation interface as well as for providing documentation to the patrons in pamphlet form.

### **Koha/School/United States**

Since this ILS is open source, I cannot fault the documentation, which is done by volunteers. And it always needs updating as Koha changes.

### **Koha/School/United States**

It's incomplete because it changes so quickly and it's customized for different libraries. It's hard to have documentation for something that's different for every library that uses it.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

More documentation needed!

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Evergreen would have been enhanced by having a table to show the old process used and how to complete the same process in Evergreen.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Documentation is practically nonexistent, particularly as pertains to the reporting module.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

PINES is growing and changing every day. The software isn't perfect but we are very fortunate to have a SUPERB! staff at Georgia Public Library Service who manage the PINES system and help us quickly resolve most of the issues we come across. PINES member libraries are also in constant communication through listservs where members often help resolve another's problems.

## Documentation

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

I do not have any particular comments about the documentation. I have been able to navigate through it pretty well.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Currently the only documentation that is available is online, and one must look up the information through a separate interface. Interactive online documentation would be helpful for those who feel comfortable with it, and print documentation should be made available for those who require it. Documentation for changes that are anticipated should be supplied before changes are made to the functions. Then supervisors who are in charge of letting personnel know of those anticipated changes could prepare workers and outsourcing vendors before the fact, not after.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

There currently is no documentation. On his own, Thomas Jones at Middle Georgia Regional Library has prepared a circulation manual. That is all the documentation available.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

The Evergreen software is still under quite a bit of development, and we are due for the next version release in a couple of months. In that next version there may be more information in the documentation without having to read the wiki. As of now the wiki is used mainly for the developers and experienced staff, and is not oriented for the training of new employees, which it doesn't need to be at this point in time for our library system.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

It has been over one year and the documentation has yet to be written!

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Not much documentation available yet

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

The program itself lacks any help menu, even just one that links to the online documentation. (There is supposed to be one, but it doesn't work at this time.) The wiki is a great idea, but needs a lot more attention from developers actually adding articles and basic information in a language the end user can understand, instead of programming jargon.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

What documentation??? The system is somewhat like a plane that has crash-landed into Libraryland with nothing in the "glove box", and we have to try things and experiment to see how it works. Not very efficient when you're working a busy service desk.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

A complete line up of documentation for PINES / Evergreen needs to be done at some point.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

No documentation available at this time.

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Special/Australia**

Needs to contain complete details and explanations about other functions that impact on the task at hand (e.g., default settings, parameters).

**Innopac (Innovative Interfaces)/Academic/Canada**

More pictures of what changes look like on the system, especially changes to web pages.

**Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/Canada**

Documentation is interface-oriented (describes a screen at a time) or situation-oriented (describes one facet of a task), rather than task-oriented (describing all of the steps from start to finish to completing a significant task).

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Special/Canada**

Complete lack of troubleshooting information.

**TechLibPlus (Open Text)/Academic/India**

More help needed regarding customization and implementing additional features. Needs more illustrations and updating.

**Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/Israel**

Not user friendly, written in a cumbersome way, very technical at times.

**Winnebago Spectrum (Sagebrush)/School/Netherlands**

After I exhaust my notions of how to solve an ILS problem, using the online help and the printed manual, I email tech support. I have always gotten prompt and thorough explanations.

**LibrarySoft (New Generation)/School/Northern Marianas**

I wish the instructions were a lot clearer. They miss steps and expect that you should know your way around, like it's common knowledge.

**Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

It has the usual technical jargonese. I'd like more of the step-by-step approach detailing how to complete a procedure. I do like very much that the ILS includes its help online right within our system, and we can find them right in context, i.e., click on Help - Context and it will come right up, indexed for the area you are working in or the report you are running. We don't have to make copies for staff because everyone has access at their workstation.

**Circulation Plus (Follett)/School/United States**

Better indexing.

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

The documentation for the core product is fairly good. However, the add-on systems such as the reporting software leave a lot to be desired. Also, they don't automatically ship a "master index" with the manuals, so before I found a copy online, I spent too much time trying to guess which manual would contain the information I needed.

**Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

Make it easier to read.... Have the parent institution include systemwide policies and permissions, not just the "out of the box vendor provided" processes.

**Liberty3 (SoftLink)/Special/United States**

The online chat feature for help is the best!

**Millennium (Innovative Interfaces)/Public/United States**

Documentation is poorly indexed, poorly cross-referenced, and some features are not well documented at all. Keyword searching is a big plus and does help quite a bit.

**Voyager (Ex Libris)/Special/United States**

It is extremely difficult to locate any information that is not really basic. Troubleshooting directions and instructions for server side operations are almost nonexistent.

**Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

The Ex Libris documentation is cryptic. It is written for developers, not users. Often you can easily find some function or feature you are interested in, but there is no explanation or discussion of how to use it or what some of the features mean/do.

**Library.Solution (TLC)/Public/United States**

The vendor no longer offers printed manuals. They are available in PDF format, which is ok, but not always the most convenient. Printing them requires huge amounts of time and paper, so isn't a good option. The documentation itself is generally good.

**Circulation Plus (Follett)/School/United States**

A quick start guide for new users would have been beneficial to me as a new user.

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Create task modules "To do XXX", rather than focus on options available and program flow.

**Library.Solution (TLC)/Public/United States**

Documentation is somewhat out of date. Their "installation guides" lack appropriate details for how we use our ILS.

**Innopac (Innovative Interfaces)/Special/United States**

Better indexing.

## Support

**Do you have any comments about your ILS support or how the support could be improved?**

### **Koha/Academic/Afghanistan**

This is open source software. All the support you get is from your colleagues.

### **Koha/Academic/Argentina**

The only support we have is through the community and some local staff who worked with our system (Koha).

### **Koha/Special/Australia**

ILS support is through user community forums. Generally very helpful, responsive and knowledgeable user community. Software developers from Koha are also very responsive and helpful.

### **Koha/Special/Australia**

We use an IT firm who supports all our IT needs. They used Koha for the first time when doing our install, and have since become experts and installed it, and maintain it for other libraries too. As an open source product the support doesn't come from a company but from the community of developers and users.

### **Koha/Special/Canada**

Open source software does not have support aside from listservs of other users.

### **Koha/Academic/Ethiopia**

The support comes from volunteers who use and develop Koha. Some of the posted requests are ignored. Better if there are some organizations that can help with introducing small fee.

### **Koha/Special/France**

No.

### **Koha/Academic/Ghana**

The language is technical.

### **Koha/Academic/India**

In the case of FLOSS-based automation tools, building of inhouse expertise is essential.

### **Koha/Special/New Zealand**

We use Koha, which is free, open source software that was developed by a group of people in New Zealand. This is problematic when it comes to technical support. No one (including myself) has knowledge of Linux, which means we have to pay for an external contractor, which is costly.

### **Koha/School/Papua New Guinea**

I think that the code needs to be redone because too much support was needed. Online support was provided and was average for Open Projects. Having said that, I very much appreciate the time taken on support.

## Support

### **Koha/Academic/Portugal**

It functions through Koha's general mailing list. It has revealed a very helpful resource.

### **Koha/Public/Samoa**

Because the IL System is new to our library, I think we need support in terms of entering a new record, because some of our items were not entered in our Koha cataloging like paperback books, newspapers, etc.

### **Koha/School/United Kingdom**

Our inhouse techies seem to be able to find an answer to any questions we ask.

### **Koha/School/United States**

For the most part I provide my own support. When I have a question, I try to find the information on my own. I should ask questions of people who know without the wait, but it takes me a while. LibLime who provides paid support for Koha is great for giving answers to people who aren't paying them.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

I have not found an answer to any of my questions.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

No suggestions, the mailing list was very friendly and resolved our questions quickly and satisfactorily.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Free support is available on user forums. You have to seek out help and search for solutions on your own. Nothing is handed to you unless you pay for it.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

We do not pay for support. The documentation, listserv, and IRC are the free support options we use.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

It's mad! I get better support for free from Koha than I've had in either of the two consortia I've participated in, and it's not by a small margin.

### **Koha/Academic/United States**

Support in Koha is in the form of “ask the forum”, downloadable documentation (usually incomplete or not applying to your situation), and in limited languages. Koha does have “paid support”, which is also part of the open source philosophy of “free software, paid support”. I was not authorized to use “paid support”. The support that I did get from the forums was bad. I had to wait over a week to get my question answered, and even then the answer was insufficient/wrong.

### **Koha/Home/United States**

It's free—I don't ask for support, but the documentation could at least be made better.

## Support

### **Koha/Special/United States**

The support is good but sometimes it takes the programmers a little while to get back to me. In a corporate library setting, we need immediate turnaround on tech issues.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Support has been spotty. There are email lists to ask questions, but not all questions are answered.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

The great thing about using an open source ILS is that you can look at the code to troubleshoot it yourself. Also, the developers are usually available on the IRC channels if help is needed.

### **Koha/School/United States**

The IT person who started my Koha system is too busy to help tune it, so improvements are ignored and bugs go uncorrected.

### **Koha/School/United States**

Most help come from community forums. I have gotten very quick responses from the forums or have found that my question has already been dealt with.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Support seems to be a sort of trial and error technique after many users have registered their problems.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

I currently have 17 open helpdesk tickets with GPLS for Evergreen, mostly related to bugs. We do not seem to be getting close to a resolution with any of them.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

More timely answers to questions posted via helpdesk ticket would be appreciated.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

ILS support is sporadic at times. Chain of command must be followed and sometimes those working with the software on a daily basis seem to have a hard time explaining details of exactly what errors or problems are occurring. Also, in the past, the development team has pinch hit as the support team, and frequently problems are asked to defer to development. Particularly with the cataloging module, it seems that the details (i.e., it's in there, never mind how it displays in OPAC) are dismissed in deference to the OPAC and public service side of the system.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Most helpdesk tickets are returned unanswered.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

It often takes weeks to get replies about issues.

## Support

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

I think the support is top of the line. All of the glitches and bugs we have had during this first year have been quickly and successfully handled.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

We mostly ask coworkers who have "played" with a feature or tweaked it. I am unaware of any advanced training or documentation that may have been provided

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

System is much slower than the previous system. Not very user friendly. Hard to navigate.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Slow response time has never been figured out on our systems. Fingers seem to point every which way but at the problem. On the other hand, I've had some decent responses when I opened help desk tickets for various issues.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

They work harder to support our system than any other software I have used before. They take suggestions for improvements and strive to give us what we need as soon as possible. I am very pleased with the response. It is a difficult task to try to please large, medium, and small libraries with a one-size-fits-all, but I think they are doing a fantastic job.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Better communication and faster response.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

The development team is good about answering support requests, though feature requests take unacceptably long to implement. The real problem, though, lies in the Byzantine path by which support requests must be routed through PINES/GPLS.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Little or no support.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/Canada**

Support is provided consortially—we do not contact Sirsi directly.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/Canada**

Responses within a week of opening a support ticket would be nice. Resolution of support tickets within a month would be even nicer.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Special/Canada**

We presently pay maintenance on some components (interlibrary loan software) that our ILS vendor no longer provides support for! This is unacceptable.

### **TechLibPlus (Open Text)/Academic/India**

Lack of support is one of the reasons why we are changing our ILS.

## Support

### **Winnebago Spectrum (Sagebrush)/School/Netherlands**

After I exhaust my notions of how to solve an ILS problem, using the online help and the printed manual, I email tech support. I have always gotten prompt and thorough explanations.

### **LibrarySoft (New Generation)/School/Northern Marianas**

Have more flexible hours or even other means of contact other than fax number!

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Academic/United Kingdom**

Support in the UK is difficult as we have to go through a local office. Since Sirsi and Dynix joined it has improved somewhat.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Support has improved, and as with any ILS, much depends on the competence of the person you get to help you with a particular issue. Some are wonderfully helpful, while some are in a learning mode themselves. We do have access via phone, email, online help center, etc. I don't like necessarily that there is no weekend support or evening support. Out West at 5 p.m. Client Care closes down back East, albeit they are open until 7 p.m. where they are at.

### **Circulation Plus (Follett)/School/United States**

Quicker phone response time.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

The vendor priorities and our priorities are different. I consider HIP, the patron catalog, a very important component of our system (from a PR standpoint if nothing else) and would like support for it to be available 24/7. I'd be willing to pay a premium price if such support options were available. However, I don't have this option. Also, for some issues, their response time can be too slow (several weeks). During some of this time, they might be researching the problem, but I would appreciate more direct feedback.

### **Voyager (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

Very satisfied until the time last year when Endeavor was bought by Ex Libris—now support is very challenging.

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

Have more joint policies in common, less restrictive by sublibrary policies.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

If the problem is not an emergency, it can take a while to be resolved.

### **Voyager (Ex Libris)/Special/United States**

The most valuable source of support for Voyager is the Voyager-L listserv of regular Voyager users. Other support from Ex Libris has been spotty, at best.

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

We have a central office that provides support to the libraries. This office gets support directly

## Support

from the vendor. Our support from the central office is good. Our support and response from the vendor is less than good. Part of the problem is that they develop and test for a single site installation and sell the product for a consortial environment, but do not test for consortial environments. Thus some functions do not work or work well, and they do not do much to remedy this.

### **Library.Solution (TLC)/Public/United States**

Since moving to an online support request system, support has improved. The vendor has also begun using a Knowledge Base which isn't used much yet, but has a lot of potential.

### **Circulation Plus (Follett)/School/United States**

Ours is very costly.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/United States**

Our first contact for support is through the state, not through our vendor.

### **Library World (Caspr)/Public/United States**

They could try not screening their calls.

### **Polaris/Public/United States**

Polaris support could not be better. Support personnel are very responsive.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

ILS is losing staff expertise in this product as newer products are developed and company ownership changes.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Example: Had a ticket in for six months for a problem we were having. Their support team couldn't resolve. Our tech person finally discovered it was as simple as changing an internal setting, something someone familiar with the software should have been able to resolve in minutes.

### **Library.Solution (TLC)/Public/United States**

Support for some areas/problems are wonderful, very quick turnaround. Support for other areas is lacking, seems to depend a lot on which technician you talk to about the problem.

### **Circulation Plus (Follett)/Public/United States**

They always tell us that an upgrade to the next new great thing is what we need to "fix" any problems we are having. The next big thing is more expensive and has fewer features. They are pretty much telling us that they won't help unless we upgrade.

### **Innopac (Innovative Interfaces)/Special/United States**

Quicker responses.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/Canada**

Quicker responses from support teams.

**What types of ILS problems have you had (not including problems caused by underlying components such as network failure)?**

- **Other (please specify)**

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

Evergreen is still version 1 software.... Bugs are just part of it.

**Koha/Academic/Afghanistan**

There were some bugs in our version of Koha. Hey, any software can have bugs.

**Koha/Special/Australia**

Could not get Z39.50 working under Windows. Works under Linux.

**Koha/Special/Australia**

Our problems were caused by my very infrequent use of the system, and our failure to upgrade to the latest stable version of the software. Now that we have the latest version all is well, but I still would get far more out of it if I put in the time to really get to know it. That's life in a small special library!

**Koha/Special/Canada**

Issues with the display of the holdings records.

**Koha/Special/Canada**

- 1) The printing label module does not work whether you use a Linux or a Windows browser.
- 2) Import of other library MARC21 record works in English, but not with languages using accented letters (French or Spanish).

**Koha/Special/France**

For the serials module and the acquisitions module, the ILS, in its current version, is not adapted.

**Koha/Academic/Ghana**

It's difficult to search by subject areas.

**Koha/Academic/India**

In India, multiscrypt document processing and retrieval is a must. It must be done in a Unicode-compliant environment. Koha has no themes for any Indic scripts. We had to develop two Unicode-compliant themes (OPAC and Intranet) for managing Bengali script-based documents and searching displaying interface in Bengali.

**Koha/School/Papua New Guinea**

Records would become uneditable. Database seemed flaky. Often an item was changed in the GUI but remained the same in the database. Inconsistent record keeping.

**Koha/Academic/Philippines**

Database error due to lack of library staff's knowledge in IT.

## Problems

### **Koha/Academic/Portugal**

Though we think many of these problems reported happened due to a bad server installation.

### **Koha/Academic/Uruguay**

We modified it a lot, so apart from the original bugs, we introduced new ones. We do our own maintenance, so we don't use external/original developers.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Barcode problems.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

Z39.50 search engine failed and could not be fixed. Had to switch to MARC Breaker for downloading MARC records. Added a few steps to the process.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

The internal Z39.50 search has had recurrent problems, but the developers have been responsive to help. The other bug I found was in a command line script and something not likely to be used even by most administrators.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

Episodic inability to access the server in Ohio.

### **Koha/Academic/United States**

Various modules/functions do not work, such as the Z39.50 module, the label printing module, etc.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

When they did a major Koha version upgrade, some of my custom programming was lost and had to be redone by the support staff.

### **Koha/Special/United States**

General difficulty loading records from InMagic/DBTextworks into Koha. Most are likely due to a translation error from InMagic format back into MARC.

### **Koha/Public/United States**

We've had some minor bugs, but we've mostly been able to patch them, usually by ourselves or with the help of one of the developers. That's another thing with open source—once you start hacking at the code, you'll always see room for improvement!

### **Koha/School/United States**

Circulation module does not respond to the directions given in the documentation.

### **Koha/School/United States**

Report functions.

## Problems

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Evergreen should seek the closest library to request a hold from, but seemed to look randomly.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

General slowness in the afternoons.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

There have been a few other minor problems that have arisen due to some hardware failure on the servers once in a while. Also when the software was first imported to the new circulation system (Evergreen) from our old one (Sirsi Workflows), there were some patron fields that were not imported correctly. Evergreen is now a year old and most of the problems have been corrected.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Occasional bugs have come up but have been resolved quickly when the developers are made aware and a problem ticket is created.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Response time a big issue because it contributes to staff errors in check-in and check-out while waiting for the printer or alert messages to come to the screen. Unable to print detailed lists of patrons' fines owed which is off-putting for patrons (just gives bill numbers, not item IDs or titles).

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Most of the problems were due to software being new and a work in progress.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Paying bills and having the charges actually removed. Renewals that renew to -1. Not being able just to see our library's holds. Not being able to reorder holds. Not pulling holds from local systems first. Lack of documentation and speed problems.

### **Evergreen/Public/United States**

Our biggest issue has been bandwidth (which is an underlying network issue). We are working to get more bandwidth and have already gotten another T1.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Special/Australia**

Deficiencies in screen displays and reports.

### **TechLibPlus (Open Text)/Academic/India**

Lack of GUI.

### **Library World (Caspr)/Special/United States**

Crashes when connected to a Canon printer. Crashes for no known reason sometimes (not too often). BTW, I don't use the serials or acquisitions modules at this time. I have a Filemaker Pro database that tracks serials and has better features.

## Problems

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Sometimes problems arise right after an upgrade and take a few hours to unsnarl. Some upgrades go smoothly, however. Sometimes a new feature will not work "out of the box" as the company expects. We have had no problem that lasted a long while or caused loss of data. However, recently, I've been upset because some functionality from prior releases was taken away in a new release, which seems quite backward to me.

### **Circulation Plus (Follett)/School/United States**

Accepting 13-digit ISBNs, trouble with remote scanner.

### **Voyager (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

We just had an upgrade resulting in Voyager being down for 2 days—the longest we have ever experienced.

### **Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

Loss of power at central database facility, which is approx 2.5 hours away.... They lose power and 11 universities are without an ILS.

### **Liberty3 (SoftLink)/Special/United States**

There was a bug with the weeding function, now updated.

### **Library.Solution (TLC)/Public/United States**

We have really had very few problems that were related to the ILS itself. Most of our difficulties have had to do with network speed issues.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Cataloging and circulation transactions sometimes very slow.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

Just regular limitations of a single product designed to serve multi-type libraries. Not really problems, but instances where we have to provide a workaround from our own solutions (creating lists, using 3rd part products, etc).

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/Canada**

Minor bugs.

**Do you have any comments about your library's ILS or how it could be improved?**

**Koha/Academic/Afghanistan**

Koha is very good if you have technical staff to install, modify and update the code. You can do a lot of creative things without big costs that these commercial vendors charge you. It does have some room for improvements. For example, the current built-in interface can be organized better. Complete to support all the languages (maybe it did, but previous version does not support all the languages).

**Koha/Academic/Argentina**

Our system (Koha) works fine for our library. We would like to have a better serials module, but our library's policy is to upgrade to every stable release, and we hope the next release will include a better serials solution.

**Koha/Special/Australia**

We picked this mostly on the basis of cost. Eventually we will be integrating four other branch libraries and one national archive collection into the system. Until we get this fully setup we cannot really make comments on the ILS. Still evaluating.

**Koha/Special/Australia**

I love the fact that it's an open source product, so we are contributing to the building and sharing of a resource that is freely available to all. The fact that there was no purchase and few ongoing costs is fabulous, and we are very happy with the quality of the ILS. While it is more designed for a public library, so has far too many features and fields for us, we are able to customise the front end to make it look as we want.

**Koha/Special/Canada**

I am getting rid of Koha and am in the process of migrating to Evergreen, another open source ILS. This decision was not made out of dissatisfaction with Koha, but rather due to the decision of the province of British Columbia to invest in the further development of Evergreen. This will create a local knowledge base and more support than we had with Koha, along with the opportunity to be part of the development and secure some outside funding.

**Koha/Academic/Costa Rica**

I am very impressed with the capabilities of Koha. Even though it is an open source ILS and thus free, it is extremely robust. We recently upgraded to a newer version, and I'm having difficulties getting it in working order. However, it has great potential.

**Koha/Special/France**

FRANTIQU is a group of 20 specialised libraries.

**Koha/Academic/India**

Through fraternity and community computing, Koha, like other FLOSS based tools, allows us to work at the system level possibly for the first time in the history of library automation right from the 1950s.

**Koha/Special/New Zealand**

Often problems crop up in Koha that could be fixed there and then if I had knowledge of the system, but I am a librarian, not a programmer. The developers can be contacted by email and are helpful, but the help is not always instant. Koha has some annoying features that don't seem logical.

**Koha/Academic/Nigeria**

Koha currently has lots of useful features and bug fixes in the development version, which is not yet suitable for production use. It would be nice to get some of these backported to the stable version. Upgrading to a newer version becomes difficult as soon as you have customised any of Koha's templates.

**Koha/School/Papua New Guinea**

Yes REdo the Code. Bad code and very unimpressed after my first venture into Perl. Database needs to be normalized ASAP as data is stored everywhere in complex arrangements. Perl is not suited to online interaction. PHP, Python, or another language would work better.

**Koha/Academic/Poland**

We don't have everything (all books and serials) in ILS.

**Koha/Public/Samoa**

To improve and keep this program effectively, I propose further training for every member (library) to gather together, share their views and any other good issues, and to develop others, especially new ideas, methods, etc. Not only that, but to promote and encourage users to keep using this library search as a common. Thanks!

**Koha/Academic/Sri Lanka**

It is free software. It is a very good ILS.

**Koha/Academic/Taiwan**

It works fine. We need a local contractor to maintain it.

**Koha/School/United Kingdom**

I'm sure there are, but the system does everything that we want. We do not use the self-service catalog search feature, which keeps the system away from borrowers. This probably reduces the problems that we have.

**Koha/Academic/United Kingdom**

We chose it because it was free, but have no regrets!

**Koha/Academic/Uruguay**

We wrote a new search module, new reports, new information displaying.

**Koha/School/United States**

Better documentation. I am preparing documents for other school librarians to use. I am also trying to get more school districts that don't have catalogs to use Koha here in Alaska.

**Koha/Public/United States**

The OPAC needs to be made IE7-compatible. Migration tools could be much better. Everything else is great.

**Koha/Special/United States**

Like all ILSs, Koha has problems, mostly in the form of bugs. Unlike my experience with other ILSs, the Koha developers actively work on bug fixes and software improvements.

**Koha/Special/United States**

I think I'll be even more satisfied with the forthcoming Koha 3. This is a part-time job for me (in addition to my full-time library job) while I'm in library school. I wanted a system I could set up on my own from scratch and look at the source code.

**Koha/Public/United States**

Most of the problems I've had will be eliminated with Version 3, which is due out any day now. I've beta tested it, so I know this to be the case instead of just talk. If everyone knew how easy and cool this was, no one would pay what they pay to commercial vendors ever again.

**Koha/School/United States**

Better documentation is needed. If this were done there would be more Koha users. Also adding the fixes and patches to the installer so there are less issues for the next installers.

**Koha/Public/United States**

The virtual shelf/book bag needs to be completed so patrons can use it. Email notices would be nice and fines, while they accrue, do not appear on the patron's account in \$\$ figure.

**Koha/Academic/United States**

As stated before, make the application have one installer file. Ensure that all the modules work "out of the box". Have better documentation. Give better ability to modify the interface. An easier backup and restoration.

**Koha/Home/United States**

Koha's great for small libraries and hobbyists, but it would be difficult for any "real" library without significant programming and technical staff available to use in production.

**Koha/Special/United States**

We chose Koha as our ILS because it provides a degree of adaptability that is not possible with proprietary systems. While it has required some work on our end, our hope is that the work will result in increased functionality for our staff and users.

**Koha/Special/United States**

I would like to see it released from the strict MARC format so that we could include some nonstandard materials more easily

**Koha/Public/United States**

We are actively involved in the further development of Koha, both through paid contracts for software development and inhouse staff contributions. We are very proud to be improving the ILS every day.

**Koha/School/United States**

Koha in my library needs to relate to the research databases and search engine functions seen in software such as Evergreen.

**Koha/School/United States**

I had used the Follett program before using Koha. Follett is very simple and easy to use. Koha is too complex for a small school. The screens are too busy, and way too much area is taken up with complex information that we do not use. It may be perfect for large cities and universities.

**Koha/School/United States**

It would be nice to have a cataloging interface that was a little more user friendly or adaptable to show only the fields that you regularly use. I am sure it is possible in Koha, but I haven't gotten that far yet. Koha has given us all the features we were looking for in an ILS at an unbeatable price—and the community of users and developers is great!

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

Reports module is difficult to use ... and frustrating.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

I've been very happy with Evergreen. It's much more user friendly then our previous program—for both staff and patrons. Delivery of materials has been an issue, and there are always issues related to the desires and differences between different libraries within the system, but overall it's an excellent program. Most of the problems we experienced were due to a natural learning curve, and the developers have been open and willing to change as problems have presented.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

The biggest problem is how slow it seems to switch from one task to another or from inside a patron's account as I switch tasks. Often it is very slow to retrieve patron record. Also the network timeouts are a problem.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

I like the concept of open source and have been using open source applications for the past decade. Open source is a good thing, but only when it works the way it's supposed to. I acknowledge that the commercial ILS market has its share of problems, but as far as support, documentation, and the maturity of the product in general, they are still way ahead of what we're using now. Evergreen has become a buzzword, but this is the first time I'm aware of that anyone from another state has actually asked the people who use it anything about it. I very am glad that someone is at least asking the question, whether my responses end up reflecting those of the majority or not.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

No. All in all, I do believe that Evergreen does not need much more "fine tuning". The GPLS staff in Atlanta has been pretty responsive to input/suggestions from the member libraries.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

The addition of a quality assurance person has improved our understanding of future releases. Fear of the great unknown has been a problem, i.e., frequently we don't know what's happening to our daily life until after it's happened and then we must "just deal." It has been nice to know that our issues are being heard and some of them are being addressed. All in all, I think that the libraries in the state are working on a most cooperative basis together. We all want the best for public and technical services—just keep us updated and invested in the product.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

Ease of use should be improved. Complete documentation should be made available to all PINES libraries. More input by library staff members who use the system daily with the public.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

I am very happy with our new software (Evergreen) and its development. It has met and exceeded our needs. One of the main benefits is that the development team works closely with the state, and any changes we want/need can be developed inhouse and applied. Having a mostly statewide circulation system has also greatly benefited our library system by increasing the available resources and materials we have access to. There are very few materials we cannot get via our PINES (Public Information Network for Electronic Resources) network for our patrons.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

Needs better and simpler reporting features. More canned reports would help.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

More data options could be displayed, in many instances one has to switch from screen to screen to perform a function, then find a book price, then find the patron data. There needs to be more ability to display and type longer note fields in billing. There needs to be some way to automatically remove billing for a lost book if that book is checked in by the system; it should not take librarian/user intervention. I will admit, almost every suggestion that "really works" does seem to get integrated into the system eventually. Maybe we all just need to remember to jot off a suggestion to tech support when something isn't working for us.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

The amount of time for data to show up on a patrons account is a bit long, especially when you have patrons lining up. Also there are too many steps between finding a book in the catalogue and having to go back to another screen, copy and paste the barcode number to get the info of who has a book checked out or the last time it was checked in. Also when pulling up a title, it only shows if we have a copy, and I have to click on the link to show other libraries' copies (which includes the whole state), yet I am not able to see who has copies just in my local system. Most problems relate to time issues.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

Having only dealt with Evergreen, I have no basis of comparison to other ILSs. I feel that Evergreen is very user friendly and works well overall. There are occasional problems, but I don't think they are negative reflections on Evergreen, and are more often caused by human error in cataloging or checking items in, etc. I would like to see improvements in the documentation and a Windows style help menu.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

I would like to have the ability to search by more specific types of formats, i.e., paperbacks only or large print only, etc, when I know I'm looking for only one type of item. I would like to have some customizable features so that my default would be as I like it when I'm logged in.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

No matter who you talk to, someone will always have an idea on how to make things better, but for a good and still high response time system, this is doing a fine job with a lot of room to grow in the future.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

Quicker responses to enhancement requests.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

Open source is a great model and holds promise for the future of Evergreen. But the product was undeniably launched prematurely—every staff member became an alpha tester in effect the first few months. I can't comment on the code, but the UI is poor almost top to bottom and the responsiveness of the system is `_severely_` lacking.

**Evergreen/Public/United States**

Make it easier to use. Example: should be able to scan a barcode to renew without having to go to the patron's account.

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Special/Australia**

The Horizon platform has been superseded and is no longer being enhanced. When Horizon no longer meets our needs, we will be looking at an ILS with a web 2.0 OPAC interface.

**Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Special/Australia**

The timing of the purchase of our system was not usual as the two companies merged during the process and the selected product was withdrawn from sale after we signed a contract—so our selection processes could not have anticipated this.

**Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Academic/Canada**

Random crashes (z39 server, OPAC, core system) have been a persistent problem for 5 years—not just for us, but for most other libraries with the same ILS. The vendor's recommendation to restart the system every night suggests memory-leaking code is at the core of the problem. The system's much-vaunted API provides no procedural or object-oriented libraries of code for any programming language. The support team has rarely been able to provide clear answers to our questions, and relatively basic support questions have languished in an open state for months.

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Special/Canada**

We are continuing to examine open source solutions in the future. Commercial ILS products are becoming very expensive. Commercial ILS vendors have also become "married" to relational database vendors, such as Oracle, to provide back end solutions to their products. This will result in a continued escalation in costs and will bring into question sustainability for many libraries.

**Winnebago Spectrum (Sagebrush)/School/Germany**

We are in the process of migrating to a new system.

**TechLibPlus (Open Text)/Academic/India**

It has to be replaced as soon as possible.

**SOUL (INFLIBNET)/Special/India**

A national institute developed SOUL software for Indian universities. As per the requirement of the clients (libraries), we work on the improvement part.

**Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/Israel**

The OPAC needs to be redesigned, with a Google-like feel to it. The end user experience is anachronistic compared to other Internet search programs.

**Winnebago Spectrum (Sagebrush)/School/Netherlands**

I have gotten used to how it operates, but initially, I found that it didn't seem very intuitive to me. The variety of ways to tailor various reports could be widened. Technically, it has been a very stable system, and appropriate for the scope of our operation. The only reason we are migrating to another system is that Follett, who bought out Winnebago, is phasing out tech support for our ILS.

**Custom (Local)/Academic/Pakistan**

It is a good ILS, but can be further improved. Suggestions for the improvement have already been forwarded to the concerned people, and they are working on them. Our ILS was developed internally and is being maintained / updated by our own experts. So, you can classify it as "Neither (open source nor proprietary)".

**Library World (Caspr)/Special/United States**

It allows some customization, which is good. It's a small system, but we're a small library. No OPAC is doing what I want for my patrons, but this is such a common complaint by so many librarians that I'm not sure it's worth mentioning.

**Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

We still are quite satisfied with SirsiDynix. However, the recent sale of the company does make us a little uneasy and we wonder how future developments will go.

**Circulation Plus (Follett)/School/United States**

Much more interactivity based on Web 2.0 technologies. We have purchased AquaBrowser as a

catalog interface to begin this process.

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

We currently have an RFP out for a new ILS and are seriously considering open source options.

**Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

There are many new features I would like our ILS to have, particularly for the patron interface (reviews, RSS feeds, list of popular items, etc). However, I don't want these improvements at the cost of stability. At this point, I'm almost scared to ask for new features for fear the product will turn out like the mythical Horizon 8.0 project.

**Voyager (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

Need a good spell checker in the OPAC, providing other optional spelling, i.e., "Did you mean...?"

**Liberty3 (SoftLink)/Special/United States**

Our ILS vendor, Softlink, is very proactive and responsive to user wants and needs for the Liberty3 product.

**Voyager (Ex Libris)/Special/United States**

Voyager is more complicated than is really necessary for a small library like ours. Some OPAC adjustments that seem like they ought to be quite easy to do start to require bits of coding on the server that are difficult without dedicated IT staff.

**Aleph 500 (Ex Libris)/Academic/United States**

The ILS could be improved if the vendor would opt for open source and allow customers to customize the code. Our consortium will be looking at open source ILSs during the next year and may move to one of those.

**Athena (Sagebrush)/Academic/United States**

Defunct. I think Follett bought out Sagebrush and killed it.

**Library.Solution (TLC)/Public/United States**

Our current system is ready for some improvements. The next major release of the software is due out in a couple of months, so that should take care of most of the issues that we might currently have.

**Circulation Plus (Follett)/School/United States**

Update to newer technology (ability to scroll, etc, move between applications with ease).

**Destiny (Follett)/School/United States**

Historical records of what books students have checked out so you can determine who has damaged a book.

**Polaris/Public/United States**

Needs an easy, free, reporting tool. Ours uses SQL or you have to pay a fee for the easier way.

## Final comments

### **Library World (Caspr)/Public/United States**

Price is the major consideration in our selection of an ILS. We are not finished automating yet.

### **Horizon (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

The product is fine. I am dismayed at annual support/licensing fees. Turmoil in the ILS market has seriously damaged the reputation of the product. There is no further development—the company is promoting a different product line as a replacement—a line we do not want. [Our cost data] excludes local staff time and travel expense.

### **Athena (Sagebrush)/Special/United States**

Small minor problems reported by a library should be fixed. I have been reporting the same problems for a decade now, and they still remain.

### **Unicorn (SirsiDynix)/Public/United States**

It is very buggy. They need better quality control and better support.

### **Library.Solution (TLC)/Public/United States**

I would like to see the PAC search capability improved. TLC has done a good job of keeping up with useful features such as RSS; integrated item reviews, character lists, summaries, etc; email/telephone notification; and other technologies.

### **Innopac (Innovative Interfaces)/Special/United States**

Ability to create records in XML.