

Open source software adoption for library management; issues and challenges

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Though there are different kinds of Integrated Library Management Systems (ILMS) available, introduction of Open Source Software (OSS) has proved to be fruitful. KOHA is the mostly used open-source integrated library management system around the world. Recently University of Moratuwa migrated from a proprietary system to KOHA. Social & technical barriers faced in the process is discussed here. Developing new features in KOHA to be compatible with the existing features in the proprietary system had been the biggest challenge met by the researchers.

High implementation cost, annual maintenance fee, obtaining frequent updates, and uprising new requirements are the problems in using a proprietary system. Emphasizing the need of new system to the staff, installation and testing parallel to the existing system, and data migration were the main challenges

*Abstracts of the 2015 International Conference in Information Science
(ICIS 2015)
National Institute of Library & Information Sciences (NILIS), University
of Colombo, Sri Lanka
13 November 2015*

faced. University of Moratuwa Library was able to handle all these challenges and is sticking into a slow, but steady migration schedule.

It is concluded that migration to a new ILMS is a challenging and a risky task. However, it is not impossible to do, especially when the new system is open source. That gives the implementing organisation to customise with ease, to suit local needs. However, having ready-access to IT expertise is a necessity.

Key Words: integrated library management systems; library automation; open source software; Koha library software