KOHA and LIBSYS: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The present study is a comparative study of Library automation software. KOHA and LIBSYS are the two representations from the open source and commercial library software. The study aims to develop checklist for evaluation of library software which helps the librarian to evaluate and select library software and also investigated most desired features of integrated library software. Data collected from thirty four libraries in Kerala who incorporated the software. They were analysed and discussed in the paper.

Keywords

Library automation, Library software, Open source software, KOHA, LIBSYS.

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INTRODUCTION

One the important challenges before the librarians for automating the library is the selection of good integrated library system, which cater the needs of the library. Library automation software are available as commercial software and open sources software. Most of the libraries are not in a position to buy high priced commercial software due to severe budget constraint. Open source software are proved solution for this. Open source software is easily available and free of cost and committed to user's freedom to use, customize as per the need of library and redistribution of the program.

KOHA

KOHA is widely used open source software. KOHA is the first choice of the librarian who wants to automate library with open source software and those who wants a transition from commercial software to open source software. The software developed initially in New Zealand by Katipo Communications Ltd. KOHA was created in 1999 by Katipo Communication for Horowhenua Library Trust in New Zealand and the first installation went live in January,2000[1]. KOHA is released under the GNU General Public License and available to download[2]. Linux (any flavor like Fedora, Debian, Ubundu etc) is used as Operating system. Apache web server is required to serve the KOHA on web. The data entered in the KOHA are stored in MYSQL database. Perl is the programming language used in KOHA. Acquisition, cataloging, Circulation, Serial control, Members, Authorities, Report, OPAC, Administration are the basic modules available in KOHA.

LIBSYS

LIBSYS developed and marketed by LIBSYS Corporation, New Delhi is a fully integrated and multi user library and information management system. LIBSYS is completely a menu driven system in all of its functions. Its continuous growth for the last 12 years has made LIBSYS a de facto standard for libraries in India. LIBSYS is easy to operate and the library staff can begin to use it quickly without any prerequisites programming skills, it ensure high productivity because of minimal data entry requirement, maximum possible integration of functions and powerful search and query facilities[3]. LIBSYS developed in C language is currently available on the following range of computer system

and it can be modified to run on any other industry standard micro/mini/main frame system. LIBSYS supports almost all activities relating to acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serial system, readers service, article indexing system, OPAC System.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Shafi-Ullah, Farasat and Saima Qutab [4] elaborated library data migration from LAMP software to KOHA Software in six legislative assembly libraries in Pakistan. The paper identified several critical issues and their solution concerning to data migration within the local scenario. Chandrasekara M et al[5] attempted to study the various aspects related to the library automation using LIBSYS, NEWGEN LIB,NETLIB, WINISIS. The study identifies many problems related technical and financial. Egunjobi, R.A and R.A.Awoyemi[6] discussed Adeyami college of education Library automation process using the KOHA software. The study highlighted the strategies adopted major automation areas and various factors to be considered for library automation. The obstracles in library automation in Nigeria has been poor funding. Singh K.P and Dipti Gulati[7] described in the Open source software: new avatar in pricing environment. This paper highlighted the various types of open source software with their important features. Hussain, Shabahat, and Alam Ansari Mahtab[8] presented various search facilities available on a range automation software packages namely LIBSYS, ALICE for windows, VIRTUA. Kapoor, Kanta, and O. P. Goyal[9] conducted a comparative analysis of functionality of five web based OPACs available in Indian academic libraries. The study covers OPACs of LIBSYS, ALICE for windows, VLTS etc. Study observed that Federated searching for collections are limited. Vimal Kumar[10] that open source software was a revolutionary concept among computers and users. In these softwares users have the ability to run, copy, distribute, study, change, share and improve for any purpose.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To develop a checklist for the evaluation of software packages.
2. To evaluate LIBSYS and KOHA on the data collected.
3. To compare LIBSYS and KOHA on the data collected.
4. To find out the librarians opinion about the most desired and needed features of the integrated library system.

METHODOLOGY

For the evaluation of integrated library system, the five broad requirements are considered. They are Acquisition, Cataloguing, Circulation, Serial control module and Search facility. The study selected 18 academic libraries using KOHA and 16 academic libraries using LIBSYS in Kerala. A structured questionnaire was designed to obtain data from the librarians. The data hence was reduced to the statistical tables and simple table analysis done to draw conclusions.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Comparison of LIBSYS and KOHA Modules

Table 1:Acquisition Module

Features	ILS	Partially adequate	Adequate
Budget control	LIBSYS	33.33%	66.67%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Recording request	LIBSYS	50%	50%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Checking of Duplication	LIBSYS	16.67%	83.33%
	KOHA	57.14%	42.86%
Accession work	LIBSYS	50%	50%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Status of request	LIBSYS	33.33%	66.67%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Status of order	LIBSYS	33.33%	66.67%
	KOHA	0%	100%

The Acquisition modules of both integrated library system support various functions like budget control, recording request, checking duplication, accession work, status request, status of order in acquisition section. The acquisition modules of KOHA perform these functions more adequately than LIBSYS.

Table 2:Cataloguing Module

Facilities	ILS	Partially adequate	Adequate
Cataloguing Facility	LIBSYS	33.33%	66.67%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Editing/deleting Catalogue Record	LIBSYS	16.67%	83.33%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Barcode Label	LIBSYS	0%	100%
	KOHA	0%	100%

The cataloguing modules of both integrated library system support basic function of cataloguing section include entering data, editing and deleting records, creation of barcode label. The acquisition modules of KOHA perform these functions more adequately. LIBSYS performs these functions inadequately or with minor limitations.

Table 3: Circulation Module

Facilities	ILS	Partially adequate	Adequate
Registration of user	LIBSYS	0%	100%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Issue and Return of books	LIBSYS	0%	100%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Renewal	LIBSYS	0%	100%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Reservation	LIBSYS	33.33%	66.67%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Fine receiving	LIBSYS	16.67%	83.33%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Stock taking	LIBSYS	50%	50%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Membership card creation	LIBSYS	66.67%	33.33%
	KOHA	0%	100%

Basic functions of a circulation module is registration of user, issue and return of reading material, renewal, reservation, fine receiving, stock taking, membership card creation. Circulation modules of the KOHA and LIBSYS perform adequately. Comparing with LIBSYS software KOHA perform the functions more adequately.

Table 4:Serial Control Module

Facilities	ILS	Partially adequate	Adequate
Creating Purchasing Order	LIBSYS	50%	50%
	KOHA	57.14%	42.86%
Receipt of Issue	LIBSYS	33.33%	66.67%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Cataloging	LIBSYS	0%	100%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Details of Current holding	LIBSYS	0%	100%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Administration of Bindings	LIBSYS	33.33%	66.67%
	KOHA	0%	100%
List of Serials Holdings	LIBSYS	0%	100%
	KOHA	0%	100%

Serial management in a library is a complicated work. The integrated library systems KOHA and LIBSYS perform the functions adequately with minor limitations.

Table 5:OPAC Module

Searching Facilities	ILS	Partially adequate	adequate
Key word Searching	LIBSYS	33.33%	66.67%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Field wise searching	LIBSYS	50%	50%
	KOHA	0%	100%
Boolean Searching	LIBSYS	33.33%	66.67%
	KOHA	0%	100%

KOHA facilitate the searching methods includes Keyword searching, field wise searching and Boolean searching more adequately while LIBSYS facilitate these search methods with minor limitation.

Librarians' opinion about other features of Integrated Library System

Price of the software and easiness to use

All librarians are satisfied with KOHA on its price wise affordability. According to librarians opinion KOHA was rated as the best. On a question regarding easiness to use 57.14% librarians are satisfied with KOHA and 50% are satisfied using LIBSYS.

Documentation and training

All librarians are unsatisfied with the documentation provided by LIBSYS and 57.14% are satisfied with the documentation provided by KOHA. 50% librarians are partially satisfied with the training facilities of LIBSYS and 57.14% Librarian are not satisfied with the training on KOHA.

Maintenances and support and online help

50% of librarians are satisfied with maintains and support provided by LIBSYS. All librarians are partially satisfied with the maintenances and support provided by KOHA. Majority of librarians (66.67%) are partially satisfied with the online help offered by LIBSYS. Majority of librarians (57.14%) are satisfied with the online help from KOHA.

Error free and speed

Majority of librarians (83.33%) accepted that LIBSYS is error free and all librarians partially accepted that KOHA is error free. Majority of librarians (83.33%) are partially satisfied with the speed of LIBSYS and majority of librarians (57.14%) are satisfied with the speed of KOHA.

Availability of all desired software module

All librarians are fully satisfied with the modules in LIBSYS and KOHA software

Table 6:General Comparison of the software

Criteria	Libsys	Koha
Developers	Libsys corporation, New Delhi	Koha Community
Current Version	LIBSYS 7	Koha 3.14
Type and License	Commercial	General Public License (GPL)
Operating System	UNIX, LINUX, WINDOS	LINUX,UBUNDU, DEBIAN,WINDOWS
Web server	Apache	Apache
Language	C	Perl
Database	Proprietary, Bibliographic database ORACLE, MYSQL	MYSQL
Supported format	MS office, PDF	Open Office, PDF

SUGGESTIONS

The analysis of data has led further to propose some valuable suggestion to overcome the barriers faced by library and information science (LIS) professionals in using integrated library systems.

1. Lack of technical information to install and maintain open source software and lack of technical support are serious problem as stated by librarians. Training courses, seminars, workshops etc should be conducted at national level and state level to technically educate LIS professionals.
2. Other than the library staff one technically trained person to be appointed as Technical officer to take care of the technical aspect.
3. The need for the up gradation of the software should be informed well on time to management.
4. Commercial vendors are charging heavily on their products and up gradation. So maintenance should be made free.
5. Check list used in the study will be useful for selecting software for library.

CONCLUSION

According to reviewed literature commercial software LIBSYS found to be the most recommended software. However software evaluation reveals a different picture. According to the acquired result, KOHA was stronger in different modules. These findings present KOHA as a stronger candidature due to availability of almost all the desired software modules. KOHA is a free of cost software, which seems to be in first place according to the librarians opinions. It is gaining popularity among librarians due to the availability of all the desired modules. That is the reason why most of the libraries are switching to KOHA. Commercial software can only survive when they will work for the welfare of the society along with their business.

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