



Koha Open Source Library Management System: The University of Guyana Library Experience

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Abstract

Prior to computerisation, library tasks were performed manually and independently from one another. The use of the punch card system by the University of Texas in 1936 to manage library circulation was one of the first attempts at mechanisation in libraries. Thereafter, and particularly after the 1960s the library and information science landscape was significantly influenced by an influx of computer technologies. Chief among these was the integrated library system (ILS) also referred to as the library management system (LMS).

During the late 1990s, with the growth of the Internet, the use and need for library management systems grew exponentially. ILS vendors not only increased the number of services offered but also their prices, giving rise to the introduction and testing of open source library management systems in the early to mid-2000s.

Because of all the technological advances taking place, and the need to remain relevant, the University of Guyana Library (UGL) was forced to reconsider their approach to automation. In 2007, after careful research the UGL adopted Koha, an open source software (OSS), to automate its services. Koha is the first OSS for library management systems, and is now in use worldwide. This was the first implementation of Koha in Guyana.

This presentation will describe the selection process that led to the implementation of Koha 3.8 LMS, as well as highlight the challenges, issues and benefits derived. It is hoped that the experience from this venture into the use of OSS will influence other libraries in Guyana and regionally.