Chapter 45
Unlocking the Unlimited Potentials of Koha OSS/ILS for Library House–Keeping Functions:
A Global View

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ABSTRACT

Drawing praxis from Bowen University, Nigeria and other libraries worldwide, the chapter unveils the limitless capabilities of Koha ILS to successfully manage core library house-keeping functions—cataloging, acquisitions, circulation control, patrons' management, OPAC, serials, and report generation—in one seamless whole. Web-based features like its flexibility, adaptability, interoperability, MARC, Z39.50, patrons' ability for online logging in, registration, renewal, and many more were revealed. Also, reasons for its global adoptability, benefits, likely challenges, and solutions from practitioners were also highlighted. The chapter concludes that despite the puny but eventually surmounted challenges, Koha holds unlimited potential for libraries of any shape/size by just garnering from the experiences of subsisting users of the software globally.

INTRODUCTION

Faced with growing users' expectations unleashed by current and emerging ICTs and a gradual decline in library revenue, librarians resorted to devising survival strategies to prune down cost and still meet users' expectations. This necessitated a cautious and gradual move towards Open Source Software (OSS)/ Integrated Library Systems (ILS), which has since proved to be a fortuitous move as more libraries are now assuming direct responsibility of anchoring their house-keeping functions and continue to satisfy their growing users' expectations at drastically reduced costs rather than been subjected to the vagaries of software vendors under the proprietary cloud. This has made OSS to become a very popular point of discussion in the library world (Breeding, 2007; Corrado, 2007; Wrosch, 2007). The growing interest among librarians concerning OSS is further reinforced by the fact that the May/June 2007 issue of American Library Association (ALA) TechSource's Library Technology Reports focused on free and OSS (Singh, 2014).

Consequently, this has led to renewed interests, research and experimentations in OSS/ILSs implementation, adoption and use in libraries as demonstrated by an avalanche of research articles on the subject resulting in the gaining of better understanding of the potential uses and capabilities of Open Source Software (OSS) in libraries. Leading the pack of these growing OSS/ILS according to Breeding, (2012) are *Koha* and Evergreen.

As an antecedent to this growing interest in OSS/ILS a lot of libraries worldwide have implemented and are using *Koha* Integrated Library System (ILS) while many more are at varying degrees of adoption and implementation. Some of the reasons for its popularity, acceptance and adoption include being an Open Source Software (OSS), enjoying robust vendor, technical and other supports from community of users (*Koha* Community), its user friendliness, being web based, its support of RSS feeds and social media applications e.g. tagging, its expansiveness (ability to accommodate grown and growing collection), and its interoperability with other databases (Z39.50 allows data import from Library of Congress, Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme, OCLC, etc.), to mention a few.

Moreover, the literature abounds with *Koha* adoption, implementation, utilisation, challenges, comparative advantages over others in its category, checklist for evaluation and every other aspect of its unlimited potentials. Interestingly, Bowen University Library (BUL) is the first library in Nigeria to have fully utilised the whole range of modules (Ojedokun, Olla & Adigun, 2016; ProjektLink, 2010) although not without its attendant challenges which were eventually surmounted, thus giving her a leading edge over other libraries using the software.

Drawing examples from Bowen university and other libraries worldwide, this paper presents time tested and ever increasing potentials of *Koha* OSS/ILS to manage successfully the house-keeping functions of any library.

Objectives

This paper aims to go beyond the theoretical by showcasing the unlimited potentials of *Koha* ILS for library's house-keeping functions of

1. Cataloging
2. Acquisitions
3. Circulation

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