Koha: DIY or not?

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19 persons

Koha: DIY or not?

Koha: an Open Source ILS

➜ You can download, install, use, modify, for free (€0).

➜ The 1st question:

   ➜ Does Koha fit my needs (functionally speaking)

➜ The 2nd question:

   ➜ Can I Do It Myself (DIY: Do It Yourself) or no ?

      ➜ It's Open Source, so yes, you've the permission

      ➜ "can" = do I have the resources & knowledge to DIY

Koha: DIY or not?

Koha: an Open Source ILS

➔ It does not mean it's not a project, like any other ILS implementation project ! Usual steps still apply :

  ➔ Installation

  ➔ Settings & parameters

  ➔ Migration

  ➔ Training

  ➔ Integration

  ➔ Support

Koha: DIY or not?

Koha: an Open Source ILS

➔ Requires both IT and librarian knowledge

Task	IT	Librarian
Installation	YES	no
Settings	no	YES
Migration	YES	YES
Training	no	YES
Integration	YES	little
Support	YES	YES

Installation

➜ Installing Koha is easy ... once you've already installed it once

➜ Not too hard for a GNU/Linux-skilled system administrator (and very easy on Debian)

➜ A lot of help available on Koha usual channels (IRC, Mailing list, wiki)

➜ You can expect to have a working Koha in less than 2 days (more for production, you'll have to deal with periodic cleaning, backups,…)

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Settings and parameters

➔ There are a lot **!!!** (400 "system preferences" and 20 tables to define according to your needs (branches, patron categories, item types, circulation rules,…)

➔ Everything can be set from the staff interface of Koha (no need for IT here)

➔ Plan several meetings, dig in Koha documentation, try, and change if it does not fit your needs.

➔ For a large library with several branches, expect a 2-3 months delay (not full time).

Migration

➔ Without any doubts the hardest part !

➔ Requires a lot of IT and librarian knowledge.

➔ Koha provides many tools to help

➔ Common caveats:

   ➔ Encoding (Koha full UNICODE)

   ➔ Biblio / authorities linking

   ➔ I want to migrate everything (including acquisition history, serials receiving history,…)

Migration

➔ The last thing you should do yourself. Be prepared to face many problems you don't expect.

➔ Solving those problems is a "one shot" learning.

➔ Koha community could be not as helpful as you'd like: migration problems are often specific to your data, very hard to reproduce & understand. Some problems are very common though, and you'll find help for them

➔ Expect 3-5 months for a 300k items library (can -and probably should- be run in parallel with settings & parameters)

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Training

➔ Koha is easy to use for librarians (daily work).

➔ Full training program in 3 days

➔ Invest more for librarians that will have to manage reports, and settings & parameters

➔ It's Open Source, don't hesitate to run a production, a test and a training Koha !

➔ Don't forget to train IT staff about Koha internals

➔ Koha community resources helpful (documentation on the website, wiki, http://schema.koha-community.org)

Integration

➔ **You'll probably need to integrate Koha in your global IT infrastructure**

   ➔ LDAP, CAS, Shibboleth

   ➔ OAI-PMH, z39.50 server, ILS-DI, NCIP2

   ➔ RFID, self-checkout

➔ **All of this is possible with Koha, but require some effort to understand how it works, and define settings & parameters**

Support

➔ Answer questions from librarians, solve technical problems (like zebra crashing)

➔ The best option is to have a team of a librarian and an IT

➔ Setup a tracking tool (mantis, bugzilla, redmine,…)

➔ Update/Upgrade

  ➔ A "bugfix" version is released every month

  ➔ A "major" version is released every 6 months

  ➔ All bugs and new features can be (and are) declared on bug.koha-community.org

    ➔ You can even apply bugfixes "every day"

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Conclusion

➔ Don't think it's easy !

➔ Don't think it's hard !

➔ You can change your mind: start alone, then ask a company.

➔ You can mix things: internal training, external migration (small overhead to expect if you choose this path)

➔ Your 1st freedom with a Free Software, is to have the choice!

➔ Ressource: http://www.koha-community.org, from here, you can find all our ressources (doc, IRC, mailing lists, wiki, bugzilla, DB schema) and http://kohaprojectgr.greeklis.org/