



February 27, 2015

Greetings,

The SWITCH Library Consortium, which oversees an inter-institutional delivery service and handles the library automation software for your library, would like to announce a major decision made by the SWITCH Library Directors committee regarding a change in software. As of June 2015, SWITCH will change its integrated library system (ILS) software from Innovative Interfaces' Millennium to Koha, an open-source product supported by ByWater Solutions. The integrated library system software is used daily by our member libraries for acquisitions, cataloging, circulation, serials, materials booking, reserves, and more. It provides statistical reports on all record types in our shared database allowing staff to pull accurate counts of materials representing their library collections. It also provides staff with transactional statistics on patron searches, TOPCAT usage online, circulation activity, and requests.

While SWITCH has thoroughly benefited from using Innovative Interface's Millennium software as our shared automation system, it's 'End-of-life' period is drawing near. Full support for Millennium ends in December 2015. Additionally, SWITCH's server contract with Innovative expires in 2015 and the company will no longer offer a server lease program. SWITCH took the opportunity in 2013-14 to research viable library automation products for its members. In March 2014, a formal ILS recommendation was presented to the SWITCH Library Directors and gained approval. Although no one ILS product stood out in all of the categories thoroughly researched, Koha was found to be the most cost-friendly long-term while offering the most functionality for our needs and compatibility with existing SWITCH hardware.

Here are some answers to some possible questions about Koha you may have:

How will the switch from Millennium to Koha affect our campus systems? Will we need to make major changes to accommodate Koha?

Millennium does not interact with most campus software, so during the transition to Koha the majority of campus systems should not be affected. The one exception is if your institution exports patron records from campus ERP systems for import to Millennium on a regular basis. The output files expected from these exports will likely change in format to a CSV file. Please contact us if your library does these imports, and we will send a template file for your campus to model the exports after.

Is there anything missing from this new library automation software?

Although Koha is a comprehensive library system, unfortunately, it does not currently come with a Materials Booking component. SWITCH libraries using the Bookings mode in Millennium will need to secure an alternative means for booking equipment, and should contact our office for more information. We greatly apologize for any inconvenience this may cause for your institution.

Will we need to install any new software in order to implement Koha?

Koha is web-based, so no client software is required. However, it is recommended that staff workstations have Firefox installed, which is the preferred web-browser for staff functionality. From the perspective of patrons, the online catalog is browser based. Students and non-library staff do not need any new software and Koha supports any operating system.

Our organization has a firewall. What kind of ports does Koha require open?



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At this point, our office knows that Koha requires the following ports:

- SSH, port 22 (SSH)
- Online catalog; web services; port 80
- Koha staff functions, port 8080
- SSL web traffic (https), port 443
- LDAP connectivity, port 389 or 636 (for Idaps)
- OCLC Connexion Client, port 8001
- Z39.50 outbound port 210 (although additional ports may be needed depending on the target)
- Z39.50 inbound port 9998 or 9999

SWITCH will notify all IT departments at our member institutions, if and when our office learns of any additional ports needed from our new vendor, ByWater Solutions. SWITCH will begin working with them in January 2015 when we will migrate our TOPCAT database and map out our implementation.

I am uneasy that anyone can look at the source code for Koha. Is Open Source software really secure?

There is good reason to think that adequately maintained and supported open source software is just as secure as any proprietary product. One empirical study of security vulnerabilities studied concluded: *"The empirical results have shown that open source and closed source software do not significantly differ in terms of the severity of vulnerabilities, the type of development of vulnerability disclosure over time, and vendors' patching behavior. Although open source software development seems to prevent 'extremely bad' patching behavior, overall there is no empirical evidence that the particular type of software development is the primary driver of security. Rather, the policy of the particular vendor determines the patching behavior."* [1]. The Koha development community is large and highly active, with hundreds of libraries using the software worldwide and patches and bug fixes being released every month. We are confident that Koha will be a secure option for our organization.

Please let us know if you have questions and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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Coordinator of Services

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Systems Integration Specialist

[1] Schryen, Guido. "Is Open Source Security a Myth?" *Communications of the ACM*. (May 2011): 130-140. Accessed 9 May 2014, http://0-search.ebscohost.com/topcat.switchinc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie_ip,cpid&custid=s6221988&db=buh&AN=60863987&site=ehost-live&scope=site.