

# ILS Platform Overview

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Prepared by SWAN ILS Committee, June 2013

## Summary

The ILS Committee has reviewed 9 integrated library system (ILS) products. We learned that some of the platforms have experience working with large consortia customers and others are used primarily by stand-alone libraries. Some of the systems are flexible and easy to customize while others are more tightly controlled. Some of the platforms are open-source which means that new features are continually being developed by a variety of developers. Other systems are provided by vendors that have regular release schedules, offer custom development and/or use a customer user group to provide development feedback.

## Nine Platforms Considered by the SWAN ILS Committee

This list is not intended to be comprehensive of all existing ILS software in the marketplace that will have a presence at ALA Chicago 2013 Exhibits. However, the ILS Committee conducted interviews to get an overview of the following ILS software platforms.

### Alma (Ex-Libris)

Alma's largest consortium is Orbis, which has 37 academic libraries in Washington and Oregon. There are currently no public library customers. The system is entirely web-based and cloud-based. There is no OPAC, so customers use an overlay discovery layer product such as Primo or Bibliocommons.

### Evergreen (open source, Equinox Software)

Evergreen was designed for a large consortial environment (140 public libraries in Georgia). Other large consortial clients include libraries in the states of Indiana and South Carolina. Their largest circulation is King County with 22 million circs/year. There are no size limits. You can set rules for the whole consortium or at the library level, or set up groups within the consortium. Evergreen is currently desktop client-based, but the community is working on a web-based version.

### Koha (open source, ByWater Solutions)

Koha's largest consortia include MassCat, a consortium of 71 multi-type libraries. SWAN would be their largest client in terms of annual circ, but not in bibs or number of libraries. Koha has no size limits. Client is web-based. There is a large development community, so adding functionality can happen more quickly than in a vendor-based environment.

### Kuali OLE (open source, not vendor supported yet)

Kuali OLE is an open-source system that is being developed by a group of academic libraries. University of Chicago will be the first to go live this summer. They are not currently working with any public libraries.

## **Polaris**

Polaris' 675 customers are primarily public libraries. Large consortial customers include Illinois Heartland (IHLS), with 427 libraries, and The Regional Automation Consortium (TRAC) in Alberta, with 170 libraries. The system has no limits on bibs or items. They are migrating to a web-based client in the next three years. They are also focusing on working with 3<sup>rd</sup>-party vendors, and currently have relationships with 60 partner products.

## **Sierra (III)**

Sierra has over 125 live installations, and their largest consortial customer is Indian Head Library System in Wisconsin. Sierra has the same size limits (locations, patron and item types, etc.) as Millennium; they will consider raising limits upon request. Screens and terminology are designed to be similar to Millennium, to make training and migration easier on staff. Sierra is desktop client-based.

## **Symphony (Sirsi/Dynix)**

Large consortial customers include RSA in Illinois (260 libraries). While there are no technical limits to the system, there are practical limitations for operations. They will be releasing a web-based circ client in June.

## **Virtua (VTLS)**

Virtua has a variety of consortial configurations, depending on the level of autonomy members want. Their largest consortium is 227 academic and public libraries in Western Switzerland. Their largest U.S. circulation is Queens Library with 30 million circs/year; Hong Kong has 60 million. They have not yet run up against any size limitations. Virtua has a configuration tool that allows for setting policies (location, patron, item types, etc.) at a granular level. The staff client provided limited information on each screen.

## **World Share (OCLC)**

World Share is relatively new; the largest consortium to date is an academic consortium of 7 libraries in Nebraska. World Share is developing "groups" which will allow greater autonomy of libraries, essentially functioning as a stand-alone but then sharing patrons, bibs, and items. There are no limits because it is cloud-based. Circulation was developed first, then acquisitions. OCLC will be bringing in interlibrary loan next, and then cataloging.