Open source integrated library systems in academic libraries in Uganda: initial results

Philliam Adoma, Muni University, Arua, Uganda
Dr. Shana Ponelis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, WI, USA

IFLA WLIC IT Section Satellite Meeting: “Open source: Transforming Information Access in Libraries”
Stellenbosch University, South Africa
13-14 August 2015
Outline

• Introduction
• Purpose and objectives
• Contribution
• Research methodology
  – Limitations
• Results
  – Perception
  – Adoption
• Conclusion
• Acknowledgements
Introduction

- Library automation in Ugandan academic libraries started at Makerere University in 1999 with a proposal for funding to SIDA/SAREC for integrating use of ICT in library operations (Sager & Karin, 2005).
- Subsequently many libraries in Uganda, for example, Kyambogo University (Buwule, 2014), have embarked on automation projects with varying degrees of success.
The Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL) is a registered non-profit association established in December 2001.

Objective:

- to facilitate effective and efficient collaboration and resource sharing among university and institutional libraries in Uganda

- in order to strengthen the library services provided to the students, staff and other patrons of these institutions.

CUUL recommended and encouraged adoption of Koha open source ILS in all Ugandan libraries and arranged training for its members in 2011.
Purpose and objectives

• **Purpose** of this study is to better understand the current ILS landscape in Ugandan academic libraries, particularly with regard to the adoption of open source (OS) software.

• **Objectives** are to determine:
  
  – the perception of open source ILS and the adoption thereof in academic libraries in Uganda, and
  
  – whether academic libraries in Uganda are adopting or abandoning open source ILS and their motivations.
Contribution

• Serve to better inform librarians in Uganda and beyond when making a decision about open source ILS for automation of their libraries.

• May be useful to CUUL given their efforts to support library automation in Ugandan academic libraries.

• May also be valuable to ILS vendors of proprietary/commercial ILS and third party/commercial affiliate support providers for open source ILS with respect to adoption of their software in Uganda.
Research methodology

• Data collected using web-based questionnaire
  – Open-ended and closed-ended questions
  – Based on a review of the literature on ILS adoption globally in both developed and developing countries (Boss, 2008; Breeding, 2008; Breeding, 2009; Breeding, 2014; Egunjobi & Awoyemi, 2012; Emmanuel & Sife, 2008; Hopkinson, 2009; Kumar & Abraham, n.d.; Müller, 2011; Pruett & Choi, 2013; Singh, n.d; Singh, 2013; Singh & Sanaman, 2011)
  – Consisted of four parts:
    1. Consent to participate in online survey research
    2. Demographic information
    3. Current and future library automation situation and ILS used
    4. Perception of open source
Research methodology

- Distributed to CUUL members
- Usable responses after three-week period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Response rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual CUUL members contacted</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic libraries in Uganda</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Data analysed using a sequential mixed data analysis approach with aid of spreadsheet software (Teddleie & Tashakkori, 2009)
Limitations

• Questionnaires were not sent to the persons in charge of the ILS at each of the institutions:
  – some of the data in second part of questionnaire on the current and future situation with regard to the ILS might not be fully reliable, particularly in larger libraries with greater separation of duties
  – but some degree of triangulation was achieved with multiple librarians responding from larger universities in the Central region.

• Some universities do not have reliable Internet access and rely on Internet cafes or more costly dial-up modem connections:
  – web-based questionnaire biases the responses towards librarians at libraries with reliable and affordable internet access.
  – may explain the lower relative response rate from regions other than Central region.
Results: perception

Familiarity with open source ILS solutions

- Koha is by far the most recognised OS ILS.
  - High level of recognition is likely result of CUUL’s efforts to promote Koha amongst its members and the target population being drawn from CUUL members.
Results: perception

Majority of respondents (17, 77%) indicated that they consider OS ILS to offer improved functionality over available proprietary/commercial ILS.
Results: perception

• Main **drivers** for OS ILS adoption:
  – Ability to customize the ILS to meet a library’s unique needs (19, 90.5%)
  – Lower explicit financial commitment, namely purchase/acquisition cost and annual licence fees (both 19, 90.5%)

• Main **barriers** to successful OS ILS adoption:
  – Need for in-house staff expertise to customise the ILS (17, 77%) combined with a lack of availability of adequate user training (16, 73%)
  – Followed closely by lack of adequate technical support, both during and after implementation (both at 13, 59%)
Results: adoption

- Majority of the responding libraries (8, 62%) currently operate an open source ILS.
- Although none of the responding librarians are unsatisfied with the open source ILS in their respective libraries only just under a third are ‘very satisfied’.
Results: adoption

- None of the participating libraries were considering abandoning OS ILS solutions they adopted.

- Both libraries *with proprietary ILS* were considering migrating to an open source ILS (Koha) even though librarians from both perceived proprietary/commercial ILS to offer superior functionality.

- Two libraries that are *not automated* are also both considering adopting an open source ILS (Koha) with cost being the main consideration.
Conclusion

- CUUL’s awareness campaign is paying dividends in terms of recognition and adoption of Koha OS ILS amongst Ugandan academic libraries.
  - OS ILS is seen as viable option to automate in the face of ongoing budget constraints
- But libraries may be failing to take total cost of ownership into account possibly resulting in lower satisfaction.
  - It is costly to ensure adequate in-house skills and technical support to support a successful open source ILS implementation that includes the necessary customization to meet unique needs.
Acknowledgements

• The authors express their thanks to all the librarians who were willing and able to take the time to complete the questionnaire and to share their knowledge and insights regarding integrated library systems in general and in their institutions in particular.

• The financial assistance of the Carnegie Corporation of New York towards the presentation of this research at the IT Section IFLA Satellite Meeting is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the authors and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Carnegie Corporation.
Thank you for your time

Questions? Comments?

p.adoma@muni.ac.ug, philliam.adoma@gmail.com

ponelis@uwm.edu

shanaponelis

http://www.linkedin.com/in/sponelis

@ShanaPonelis
References

Kumar, V., & Abraham, T. (n.d.) Eight things you should know about open source integrated library systems.