An analytical study of open source library software

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The paradigm shift emerges with the advancement of technologies in all sectors and this has shed light on libraries to improve their services for users. In the new millennium, academic libraries tend to use open source library management software than proprietary software due to the advantages of managing, customizing, distributing and sharing the source code for any purpose. As there are numerous open source library management software available, librarians are facing the challenge of selecting the most appropriate one for their library. The objective of the study was to analyse the selected open-source Integrated Library Software (ILS). NewGEnLib, Koha, Evergreen and PhpMyBibli (PMB) were selected based on the usage and popularity. Through an extensive review of literature, evaluation criteria were identified and divided into three categories; documentation, general features and services. Under each category and each module, many sub-functions were considered. The system designs are deferred from their development purposes, expect services and target libraries. All have enriched variety of features and functions and they have covered elementary library modules such as acquisition, circulation and open public access catalogue. They also have different sub options. The capacity of the database, interfaces, licensing, user manuals, discussion forums, versions vary from system to system. Among the studied software, Koha open source ILS has covered more features, modules with many options and other criteria. Furthermore, it can be used easily with or without any modifications. By conducting this evaluation process, the study recommended that library professionals should conduct software evaluation before implementing library automation process by considering existing library services, future requirement and capacity of the library, users and the staff.

Keywords: library automation; library software; open source integrated library software; software evaluation