

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### 1. What is COOL?

The Consortium of Ohio Libraries (COOL) was formed by a group of independent libraries wanting a solution to increasing ILS fees, unresponsive vendors, limited ILS functionality, obsolete software, and lack of in-house technical support. COOL felt the open source Evergreen ILS was the answer to these problems and partnered with OHIONET in Columbus, Ohio to administer the support. COOL currently consists of 11 Ohio public libraries. The consortium allows for the ability to add and grow library services at an economical cost, while providing libraries the ability to maintain uniqueness and local control.

### 2. How do I find more information about COOL?

More information about COOL is available at [http://info.cool-cat.org/?page\\_id=2](http://info.cool-cat.org/?page_id=2). The Chair of the Executive Board can also be emailed at [info@info.cool-cat.org](mailto:info@info.cool-cat.org).

### 3. What is open source software?

Open source software is software in which the source code is available to the general public for use and/or modification from its original design, free of charge. Open source code is typically created as a collaborative effort where programmers improve the code and share the changes within the community. The rationale for this movement is that a group of programmers not concerned with proprietary ownership or financial gain will produce more useful and bug-free products for everyone to use. The concept relies on peer review to find and eliminate bugs in the program code, a process that commercially developed and packaged programs do not employ. Source: [webopedia.com](http://webopedia.com)

### 4. What is the Evergreen ILS?

Evergreen is an open-source, scalable integrated library system used by over 1000 libraries around the world. Evergreen provides a feature-rich ILS with capabilities for circulation, cataloging, billing, reporting, acquisitions, serials, resource-sharing, and much more. As open source software, Evergreen's features and support are driven by its users.

### 5. Why did COOL choose an open source ILS?

Choosing open source software allowed COOL to get superior software at a fraction of the price. Member libraries were liberated from the traditional vendor contract requirements, dictates, timetables, and ongoing upgrade expenses.

### 6. How do I learn about the features in the Evergreen ILS?

To review features in Evergreen releases, visit [http://wiki.evergreen-ils.org/doku.php?id=faqs:evergreen\\_roadmap](http://wiki.evergreen-ils.org/doku.php?id=faqs:evergreen_roadmap). Once there, click on the version to learn about features. Before doing this, a general email to COOL may be faster.

### 7. How and when are new features added to the Evergreen ILS?

Evergreen is continually enhanced by skilled, experienced, and trusted developers in the community. New versions are regularly released. COOL installs new releases one to two times each year. COOL also enhances Evergreen by contributing code through OHIONET and by contributing funds to ongoing projects in the Evergreen community. Enhancements are later received through new releases. Of course, one of the great advantages of Evergreen is that COOL sets its own development priorities and implements changes on its own timeline.

## **8. How much does it cost to join COOL?**

Since COOL uses Evergreen, an open source ILS, there is no cost for the software. However, there are costs associated with support and hosting. There are also some nominal fees associated with additional services related to membership. Pricing is based on the legal population size of the member library. For example, if Anytown Public Library's population makes up 10 percent of the total population served by COOL, then Anytown Public Library is responsible for 10 percent of the total cost.

## **9. Will my library patrons lose access to materials they can get today?**

This question is difficult to answer. If you currently belong to a larger consortium, it may be assumed patrons will lose access to the millions of available titles. However, a larger consortium also serves a larger population, so more people are competing for those items. We have found that most requests can be filled quickly through COOL, and in the few instances we are not able to fulfill requests, we simply buy the item for the collection. Some COOL members use OLS-MORE to supplement requests, but the orders through OLS-MORE are minimal.

## **10. Will my library have to change our library policies to be a member of COOL?**

While joining COOL gives you a good opportunity to re-evaluate local policies, there is no need to make changes to be a COOL member. Evergreen can easily accommodate individual policies. Member libraries do agree to adhere to the COOL Principles of Cooperation ([http://info.cool-cat.org/?page\\_id=31](http://info.cool-cat.org/?page_id=31)) to facilitate resource-sharing between libraries.

## **11. What is my role in COOL?**

Each COOL library contributes resources to the consortium to expand services and materials available for each library's community. This is accomplished by processing requests daily to share circulating resources with consortium libraries, being responsible for circulation, retrieval, and return of borrowed items, and updating patron information annually to keep contact information current.

COOL Libraries are encouraged to contribute expertise wherever they can. Directors meet monthly. Other user groups, such as catalogers, also meet regularly. Member libraries maintain contracted delivery service through the statewide resource-sharing system.

## **12. Who do I call when I need help?**

Email lists and a reporting system exist to facilitate communication. COOL members are generous with their time, answering questions and visiting libraries.

## **13. What training is provided?**

New libraries are paired with an existing COOL member library and guided through the migration process with support from OHIONET and Equinox. COOL members share documentation of their internal workflows, and substantial documentation about Evergreen is available online at <http://docs.evergreen-ils.org/>. The Sitka Evergreen Training Manual is also very helpful. It can be found at <http://docs.sitka.bclibraries.ca/Sitka/current/html/>.

## **14. How do I join COOL?**

Prospective members may apply to join by submitting a completed Membership Agreement form to the Chair of the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall vote on all prospective membership applications.