

Evergreen in the Czech Republic

Václav Jansa, Linda Jansová and Eva Cerniňáková

Prepared for EIFL *Themed week on Evergreen:
a FOSS library system solution* (September 26-30,
2011)

Who we are



Left to right:
Eva Cerniňáková, Linda Jansová and Václav Jansa

Our Evergreen:
<http://www.jabok.cuni.cz/opac/cs-CZ/skin/default/xml/index.xml>

What happened before Evergreen

- Jabok Library used a commercial software called KP-Sys (based on MS DOS and a FoxPro database).
- Bibliographic data were stored in UNIMARC format.
- Conversion to Evergreen involved about 16,000 bibliographic records, about 25,000 holdings and several hundred patron records.

Why we chose Evergreen

- Václav started to explore Evergreen while working on his bachelor's thesis (back in 2007 and 2008).
- Evergreen seemed to work for us better than Koha or NewGenLib.
- A consortial model proved as one of Evergreen's very tempting features.

What infrastructure we use

- Our home multipurpose computer is used for testing purposes.
- A virtualized Evergreen on a subnotebook was used when we were working on data migration.
- A better workstation is used for production purposes in Jabok Library.

How the implementation went

- The implementation has been a challenge for all of us.
- Data conversion was the most daunting task – we asked a skilled programmer to help us in the process.
- Translation to Czech is a necessity.
- Certain functions still need to be configured.

What 'people processes' were needed

- First, the IT admin started exploring things.
- Then others followed.
- Sharing experience and knowledge is of prime importance.
- Eva as a system admin in Jabok Library spent about a year testing Evergreen and training her colleagues.

What we see for the future

- We see a growing community of Evergreen libraries in our country.
- A successful launch of Evergreen in Jabok Library may serve as an inspiration for other libraries.
- Hopefully a company providing Evergreen-related services will come into existence.
- Beside Evergreen, we shall keep trying to promote the use of other open source tools in libraries.

Thank you for your attention!

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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is an honour for us to be invited speakers at today's workshop. Unfortunately the timing of the workshop has not worked for us very well, so we asked Simon to speak for us and Simon kindly agreed to provide us with this service.

Who we are



Left to right:
Eva Cerniňáková, Linda Jansová and Václav Jansa

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First of all, let us introduce ourselves.

Back in 2007 Václav Jansa was the first one of us to come across Evergreen. Václav is a Linux enthusiast (and in many cases a Linux evangelist) who works for the National Technical Library in Prague as an IT admin dealing mainly with infrastructure issues and with operating systems. In 2007 he was writing his bachelor's thesis focused on the use of open source software in education. And because schools tend to operate libraries, it was only natural that Evergreen came up as one of the viable options for these libraries. Since 2008 Václav serves as an IT testing server admin and since 2011 as live installations admin.

Linda Jansová is an information specialist (or a librarian if you prefer) who came across Evergreen while proofreading Václav's bachelor's thesis. As a result, she conducted several elective courses focused on Evergreen and open source software in general. At that time she was a Ph.D. student at the Institute of Information Studies and Librarianship, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague. The courses were organized together with Václav and other colleagues.

Eva Cerniňáková works as a librarian in Jabok – Institute of Social Pedagogy and Theology. As a student at the library school she took part in the courses and fell in love with Evergreen. As a library director (and a library system admin), she persuaded her colleagues to start experimenting with Evergreen. Eventually, these experiments have led to a successful implementation of Evergreen in the library. She is a vital force of our tiny little community – she encourages us to keep going when energy seems to be depleted. She is the one who uses Evergreen at work. The two others work on it in their free time.

In this talk we shall focus on Jabok Library (its OPAC is currently available at the URL you see on the slide) although we have also helped set up another Evergreen installation (in this case OPAC is not available on the internet yet) and cooperate with other libraries which consider switching from their current ILS to Evergreen.

What happened before Evergreen

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- Bibliographic data were stored in UNIMARC format.
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Jabok Library used KP-Sys, an aged commercial ILS provided by a Czech company. Upgrade to a newer version of the software would involve a significant amount of money and so a decision was made to go for Evergreen. The previous system was DOS-based, used a FoxPro database and UNIMARC as data format. For the reasons already mentioned the system was not upgraded for quite some time and so lacks the features which are now commonplace. It was necessary to convert data (both bibliographic and holdings data and patron data) exported from the previous system. The conversion involved about 16,000 bibliographic records representing about 25,000 holdings and several hundred patron records. We didn't have to migrate circulations thanks to the timing of the conversions (end of summer when most items have been checked in).

Why we chose Evergreen

- Václav started to explore Evergreen while working on his bachelor's thesis (back in 2007 and 2008).
- Evergreen seemed to work for us better than Koha or NewGenLib.
- A consortial model proved as one of Evergreen's very tempting features.

As mentioned in the introduction, Evergreen was discovered in the process of writing of Václav's bachelor's thesis. In 2008 Václav compared it with other then available systems (especially with Koha and NewGenLib) and it appeared that Evergreen would work as the best choice. Also the fact that Evergreen supports a consortial model (a sort of union catalog) played an important role. Our current project is a pilot but potentially it can be useful for library networks or groups of libraries working together. (Note that the Czech Republic has slightly over 10 million inhabitants and about 6,000 registered libraries). We hope that our initial attempts will not go unnoticed by the library community (we try to inform about our efforts at professional events, by writing papers etc.).

What infrastructure we use

- Our home multipurpose computer is used for testing purposes.
- A virtualized Evergreen on a subnotebook was used when we were working on data migration.
- A better workstation is used for production purposes in Jabok Library.

For testing purposes we use our home multipurpose computer (a workstation, server and router at the same time). We use XEN (CentOS) virtualization which enables us to have – at the same time – some five or six virtual servers with Evergreen running.

When working on data migration, we used a virtualized Evergreen on a subnotebook with 4GB RAM and Dual-Core ULV processor. At this time, we were on our vacation and so we couldn't bring along a better-equipped machine and use it on the beach :-).

For production purposes Jabok Library uses a better workstation (3-core 64 bit Phenom CPU, 6 GB RAM, 2x 500 GB HDD with RAID1, CentOS 5, one production and one testing server under XEN virtualization with virtual servers using Debian Squeeze).

How the implementation went

- The implementation has been a challenge for all of us.
- Data conversion was the most daunting task – we asked a skilled programmer to help us in the process.
- Translation to Czech is a necessity.
- Certain functions still need to be configured.

Evergreen implementation was, of course, a challenge for all of us involved. We successfully managed to explore Evergreen in its latest versions and to convert data. Data conversion was actually the most daunting task because we couldn't find any open source software to convert UNIMARC data to MARC 21 data. So we asked Miloslav Nič, an XML evangelist and an experienced programmer, to help us in the process.

Furthermore, we have worked (and will continue to do so in the future) on translations. With primarily Czech audience in mind, Evergreen is supposed to speak Czech rather than English or French :-).

In Jabok Library we still need to configure certain functions such as the correct behaviour when it comes to circulation modifiers and loan duration or printing Czech characters. Some of these may end up as bugs reported in Launchpad. The thing is that pretty often we need to use Czech characters and so we can test Evergreen full UTF-8 compliance.

What 'people processes' were needed

- First, the IT admin started exploring things.
- Then others followed.
- Sharing experience and knowledge is of prime importance.
- Eva as a system admin in Jabok Library spent about a year testing Evergreen and training her colleagues.

We proceeded in the following order: First of all, the IT admin started exploring things. Then he taught others or helped them understand things which could be clarified from the viewpoint of the system as a whole. The knowledge and experience gained during the project is shared, so when one discovers how something works or could work, the others don't have to start from scratch.

Eva as a system admin – together with her two colleagues – spent about a year testing work processes on Evergreen 1.6. They also created brief manuals for users (draft of manuals in Czech were also created during the elective courses at the library school).

What we see for the future

- We see a growing community of Evergreen libraries in our country.
- A successful launch of Evergreen in Jabok Library may serve as an inspiration for other libraries.
- Hopefully a company providing Evergreen-related services will come into existence.
- Beside Evergreen, we shall keep trying to promote the use of other open source tools in libraries.

Currently we are about to let our library community know about the successful launch of Evergreen installation in Jabok Library. We hope that we shall also succeed in helping other libraries migrate to Evergreen (in the first phase those we started cooperating with in the courses at the library school). In the course of time, a company can be created which will provide Evergreen-related services to both small libraries and bigger consortia and will have programmers available who will be able to fully participate in the international Evergreen community.

We are also trying to use and promote other open source tools for a variety of purposes. So far there is no explicit government support for open source software but the situation may change as library budgets are shrinking.

Thank you for your attention!

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At this point we would like to thank you for your kind attention! A big thank you also goes to Simon for presenting our topic.

In case you wish to ask any questions, please feel free to get in touch with us via e-mail (linda.jansova@gmail.com, vaclav.jansa@gmail.com or cerninakova@gmail.com).