

Kent County Public Library Selects Evergreen

CHESTERTOWN, MD (January 28, 2008) -- Kent County Public Library in Maryland has selected Evergreen as their next-generation library automation system. Equinox Software and Alpha-G Consulting have partnered to provide migration, on-going support, and consulting services.

A library automation system serves as the technological backbone of the library, facilitating circulation and cataloging of library materials as well as letting patrons search for items online. The Evergreen system was originally created by the Georgia Public Library Service for use in its libraries and has been made available to the libraries worldwide through an open-source license.

Kent County Public Library will become the first Evergreen-powered library in Maryland. As one of the smaller library systems in the state, there is plenty of freedom to try out new ideas. Director Jerry Keiser first came across the idea of an open-source library automation system, and presented it as a challenge to his staff. They became enthusiastic supporters after experimenting with Evergreen. Their goal now is to be up and running on their new system this May.

“We’ve chosen Evergreen because we believe it’s our best option to improve services to patrons while getting the best bang for the taxpayer’s buck, and at the same time, it lays the groundwork for collaboration with other library systems in the state. It’s a win-win situation,” said Keiser.

A number of other library systems in Maryland have expressed interest in the potential of open-source systems like Evergreen and are watching to see how things go in the Kent County migration. In fact, one of the reasons Kent County selected Evergreen is that the system was developed for a consortium composed of multiple independent libraries that wished to share a single catalog of items while maintaining their independent governance. For instance, if the Kent County school system’s libraries or other public libraries in the state are interested in making it more seamless for patrons to borrow items across county and institutional boundaries, sharing a single automated library system like Evergreen could be the solution. If this sharing happened on a wide scale, this would give Maryland residents ready access to the broad array of materials owned by Maryland’s libraries—just as users at Evergreen libraries have in Georgia.

Karen Collier of Kent County Public Library said, “I think open-source software in general and Evergreen in particular have the potential to become very popular in the library world. I know we’re ready to take the plunge. Evergreen’s success in Georgia and its ongoing momentum in development point to a great future for Evergreen and we’re excited about becoming a part of it.”

Brad LaJeunesse, President of Equinox, remarked, “The beauty of adopting an open-source system like Evergreen is that a library system can be actively involved in development and maintenance if they choose to, or they can pay a company like Equinox to take care of everything for them, like a traditional software vendor would do. The important point is they have the choice.”

About Kent County Public Library

The Kent County Public Library serves the 19,500 citizens of rural Kent County, on Maryland’s scenic Eastern Shore. The library has its main branch in historic Chestertown, the capitol of Kent County, and two smaller branches in the towns of Rock Hall and Galena. Its focus is on providing information, materials, and services to support the community’s interests in popular cultural social trends, and self-directed learning; offering community members the opportunity to meet and interact with others in the community; and supporting the development of skills in finding, evaluating and using information effectively. Kent County

Public library was recently nominated for *Library Journal's* Best Small Library in America Award for its ongoing improvements in services to patrons.

Further information about Kent County Public Library's decision to switch to Evergreen is available on their blog at <http://kcplinnovations.blogspot.com/>.

About Evergreen

Evergreen is an enterprise-grade open-source ILS initially created to support Georgia PINES, a consortium of over 270 public libraries. Since its debut in September 2006, Evergreen has received significant attention from around the world, including the reception of a Technology Collaboration Award and grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Additional Evergreen implementations include a growing consortium in British Columbia, Canada, and new implementations planned for Indiana and Michigan. Evergreen was designed from the ground up to be a flexible, fault-tolerant system capable of supporting libraries of all sizes. Boasting a myriad of standards-compliant methods to access and control data, Evergreen is a robust platform that evolves with the needs of even the most complex library system or consortium.

About Equinox Software, Inc.

Libraries interested in joining the open-source software revolution often face concerns over where to find the technical expertise to take advantage of their desired software products. Equinox Software Inc., based in Norcross, Ga., is a firm dedicated to working with libraries in all aspects of Evergreen, the enterprise-grade, open-source Integrated Library System (ILS).

Founded by the original Evergreen designers and developers, Equinox offers a wealth of experience and expertise in Evergreen development, support and integration. Equinox specializes in customized packages designed for the specific requirements of individual libraries and consortia. Instead of one-size-fits-all support, Equinox works closely with libraries to ensure Evergreen is implemented in the manner that best fits their individual needs. In addition to support, custom development and integration services, Equinox offers complete Evergreen hosting packages for libraries wishing to outsource their ILS infrastructure needs.

For more information on Equinox Software, please visit <http://www.esilibrary.com>.

About Alpha-G Consulting, LLC

Alpha-G Consulting provides services and add-on products to libraries (principally users of the Horizon library automation system). Alpha-G has been providing its clients with personal attention, backed by expert knowledge, since 2001. Alpha-G has more than 250 customers world-wide, including libraries in North America, Europe, and the Asia/Pacific region. Alpha-G's consultants are library automation veterans who enjoy the challenge of providing effective solutions to problems that vex librarians and library users.

For more information on Alpha-G Consulting, please visit <http://www.alphagconsulting.com>.

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