INTRODUCTION

It is with great pleasure that I announce the release of Koha 3.12.0, the latest stable release of the Koha open source integrated library system. Koha is the first free and open source software library automation package (ILS). Development is sponsored by libraries of varying types and sizes, volunteers, and support companies from around the world.

Koha 3.12.0 is a major release, with numerous new features, enhancements, and bugfixes. Koha 3.12.0 is released under the GNU General Public License version 3 or later.

Koha can be downloaded from http://download.koha-community.org/koha-3.12.00.tar.gz or—on apt-based Linux distributions—using .deb files from Koha’s apt repository at http://debian.koha-community.org/koha/. For installation documentation, see http://wiki.koha-community.org/wiki/Installation_Documentation or the INSTALL files in the tarball.

This release note document discuss some of the highlights of the Koha 3.12.0 release. For a complete listing of everything in Koha 3.12.0, see the text release notes at http://git.koha-community.org/gitweb/?p=koha.git;a=_blob;f=misc/release_notes/release_notes_3_12_0.txt;hb=3.12.x or in the tarball. The English version of the Koha manual is available at http://manual.koha-community.org/3.12/en/. As of the date I am writing, the manual for Koha 3.12 has not yet been translated into any language other than English.

The Koha 3.12 release cycle has been a busy one. Since the release of Koha 3.10.0, the development team has added 1470 patches to Koha, comprising some 21 new features, 160 enhancements, and 440 bugfixes. The result, I am sure you will agree, is the best version of Koha yet.

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**CONTENTS**

**Introduction** 1

**New features in Koha 3.12** 3

**OPAC** 3

- Patron self-registration — Right to left support for the OPAC — Support for embedded HTML5 audio and video — Display shelving location and call number in XSLT results — Highlight patrons' home library's holdings — Add iDreamBooks.com enhanced content to the OPAC

**Staff client interface** 6

### Staff client makeover

**Circulation features** 7

- Allow fine calculations to exclude grace period — Preference to control whether returning a lost item refunds cost — Add renewal duration to circulation rules — Add an e-mail renewal notice — Allow librarians to prevent patrons from repeatedly reserving an item

**Acquisitions, cataloging, and serials** 8

- Link subscriptions to the acquisitions module — Subscription closing — Updated MARC21 fixed field plugins

**Administration** 9

- Plugin system — Associate authorized values, etc. with particular libraries — Track clicks on external links

**Tools** 10

- Allow koc uploads to go through process queue — Tool for converting MARC21 field 440 into 490/830

**Authentication methods** 10

- Improved LDAP authentication — Mozilla Persona authentication support

**Plumbing** 10

- Debian packaging

**Enhancements** 12

**General** 12

- Translations — Improved boolean searching — Code cleanup

**OPAC** 13

- Add missing MARC21 fields to OPAC details display — Hide selected note fields on the OPAC

**Staff client look and feel** 13

- Make alphabet localizable

**Acquisitions, cataloging, and serials** 14

- Divide budget periods into two tabs — Link to MARC preview directly from staff client detail view — Highlight the current item on the edit items screen — Analytic records for NORMARC

**Bugfixes** 15

- By default do not show fully-received baskets — “Hidden” value hard to understand in frameworks — Circulation action logs record biblionumber instead of item number
NEW FEATURES IN KOHA 3.12

OPAC

Patron self-registration (bug 7067)

This feature makes it possible for patrons to register for an account and edit their account details on the OPAC. The manual contains complete instructions for the feature, but the key system preferences are:

- PatronSelfRegistration
- PatronSelfRegistrationAdditionalInstructions
- PatronSelfRegistrationBorrowerMandatoryField
- PatronSelfRegistrationBorrowerUnwantedField
- PatronSelfRegistrationDefaultCategory
- PatronSelfRegistrationExpireTemporaryAccountsDelay
- PatronSelfRegistrationVerifyByEmail

Right to left support for the OPAC (Bugs 8061 and 10017)

Although Koha has always supported right-to-left languages in records and translations, the left-to-right layout of the OPAC has never been entirely friendly to Arabic (and other right-to-left language) users. Koha 3.12 adds full support for a right-to-left layout.
Support for embedded HTML5 audio and video (bug 8377)

This enhancement uses information from MARC field 856 to generate the appropriate HTML5 code to embed a media player for the file(s) in a tab in the OPAC and staff client detail view. This patch supports the HTML5 <audio> and <video> element, and adds basic support for the <track> element, though the latter is not well-supported on current browsers. This feature is controlled by the HTML5MediaEnabled and HTML5MediaExtensions sysprefs.

Display shelving location and call number in XSLT results (bug 5079)

Using the OpacItemLocation system preference, you can now choose to display shelving location or collection code in addition to call number in the search results on the OPAC if you use the XSLT view.
Highlight patrons’ home library’s holdings (bugs 7740 and 7674)

Two different but related developments will help large consortia patrons identify books they want. By enabling the HighlightOwnItemsOnOPAC system preference, libraries can configure Koha so that a particular library’s items can be emphasized and moved to the first position on the search results and details pages of the OPAC. To choose which branches items are emphasized, use the system preference HighlightOwnItemsOnOPACWhich. It has two modes. If set to PatronBranch, the items emphasized will be those of the same library as the patron’s library. If no one is logged into the opac, no items will be highlighted. If set to OpacURLBranch, the library is chosen based on the Apache environment variable BRANCHCODE, so that a search on http://branch1.opac.mylibrary.org/ can highlight branch1’s items and a search on http://branch2.opac.mylibrary.org/ can highlight branch2’s items.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Notes</th>
<th>Commentaires (0)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Collection</td>
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<td>Book Cart</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fiction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pleasant Valley</td>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairview</td>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For large consortia that acquire numerous copies of the bestsellers, it can be useful to separate the items that are held by a patron’s library from those held by other libraries in the system. Now you can, using the SeparateHoldings, OpacSeparateHoldings, SeparateHoldingsBranch, and OpacSeparateHoldingsBranch sysprefs!
Add iDreamBooks.com enhanced content to the OPAC (bug 8733)

iDreamBooks.com aggregates critical reviews of books. With this enhancement, Koha can embed snippets from those reviews, as well as the overall rating from the iDreamBooks.com site. The enhanced content is controlled by the IDreamBooksReviews, IDreamBooksReadometer, and IDreamBooksResults system preferences.

Intranet interface

Staff client makeover (bugs 9420 and 8913, among others)

Koha’s designers have been hard at work beautifying the staff client and bringing it in line with current web standards. Using a technology called Bootstrap, the staff client sports a new toolbar, all-new buttons and stylish dropdowns that are more attractive, more accessible, and more future-proof. Moreover, the Acquisitions module has had its navigation entirely overhauled to look more in line with other parts of the staff client. Finally, you will also notice that all the tables in the staff client have been updated as part of the makeover, along with many other incidental fixes.
**Circulation features**

**Allow fine calculations to exclude grace period (bug 4906)**

Depending on your library’s policy on grace periods, you may not want to charge patrons fines for the three (or however many) days they had it during the grace period, even if they return the book after the grace period is over. For example, if your library charges a fine of £0.10 per day and has a 3-day grace period, you can now choose (using the FinesIncludeGracePeriod syspref) whether John Smith will be charged £0.40 or £0.10 when he returns a book four days late.

**Preference to control whether returning a lost item refunds cost (bug 7189)**

If a patron pays to replace an item that they lost, then finds the item, does your library refund them the cost of the book? Not automatically because it wrecks havoc on your campus accounting package? Good news! Koha will respect that decision, and you can disable the refund with the Refund-LostItemFeeOnReturn syspref.

**Add renewal duration to circulation rules (bug 8365)**

Do you check out DVDs to patrons for 3 days, but only allow your patrons to renew them for 1 day, once? No? Well, if you wanted to you could, because the renewal duration is now set in your circulation rules, the same way the number of renewals allowed is set.

**Add an e-mail renewal notice (bug 9151)**

Your patrons can now receive e-mail notification that an item they have checked out has been renewed! There is a new notice called “RENEWAL” which is sent out to patrons when they renew items if the syspref RenewalSendNotice is turned on.

**Allow librarians to prevent patrons from repeatedly reserving an item (bug 9206)**

Is there anything you hate more as a library patron than when John Smith places a hold on a book he already has so that no one else can use it? Of course not! Other than the 1000-person queue for latest John Grisham thriller, nothing is more annoying than that. Lucky for you Koha 3.12 has a new syspref, AllowHoldsOnPatronPossessions which makes it possible to block that behavior.
Acquisitions, cataloging, and serials

Link subscriptions to the acquisitions module (bug 5343)

At long last, the feature you have all been waiting for is here! You can now create orders based on your serial subscriptions to track journal costs in the acquisitions module the same way you can track the cost of monographs.

Subscription closing (bug 8782)

Starting with Koha 3.12, it is now possible to close a subscription when the serial ceases publication or your vendor’s Big Deal becomes too big to justify.

Updated MARC21 fixed field plugins (bugs 9357 and 9358)

Twice a year the Joint Steering Committee updates the MARC21 standard. Koha’s fixed field plugins have been updated with the changes to the 006 and 008 field codes have been updated to be current with MARC21 update #15.
Administration

Plugin system (bug 7804)

Koha now includes a system for including plugins with custom functionality in the Reports and Tools sections of the staff client. However, caveat administrator! There are serious security implications of enabling this new feature (which is disabled by default): this feature enables your users to upload scripts that can be run with the full permissions of your web server user. If you still want to enable this feature, you can do so by turning on the system preference UseKohaPlugins and setting to 1 in koha-conf.xml. **Important: only install plugins from trusted sources!**

Associate authorized values, etc. with particular libraries (bug 7919)

Another feature that is very useful for library consortia is the ability to have certain shelving locations or patron categories that apply only to specific libraries. For example, a university library does not need patron categories for fifth, sixth, and seventh grade, and a middle school probably does not need patron categories for research fellows.

Track clicks on external links (bug 8917)

With this feature, you can turn on the TrackClicks system preference to track how many times a particular e-resource is accessed from your catalog.
Tools

Allow koc uploads to go through process queue (bug 8220)

The primary advantage to the Firefox offline circulation plugin when compared to the offline circulation desktop application, is the ability to add offline circulation actions to a queue so that multiple machines running offline circ can have their circ actions combined and ordered chronologically before being executed. This commit adds the ability to put actions from uploaded KOC files into this queue. In this way, both the FF plugin and the desktop application can be run side by side with no ill effects.

Tool for converting MARC21 field 440 into 490/830 (bug 5608)

In 2008 the Library of Congress obsoleted the 440 field in favor of a combination of the 490/830 fields. Unfortunately, this left many libraries with inconsistent data. A new command line script (misc/migration_tools/switch_marc21_series_info.pl) will automatically convert existing 440 fields to 490/830 fields in accordance with the guidelines from the Library of Congress.

Authentication methods

Improved LDAP authentication (bug 7973)

Koha can now authenticate against LDAP using a service account, in addition to authenticating against LDAP by either looking up a user or by binding directly to the user account.

Mozilla Persona authentication support (bug 9587)

Mozilla Persona allows you (and your patrons) to sign in to Koha using an email address without needing to remember another password. All you have to do is register with Mozilla Persona (https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/persona/), making sure the e-mail address registered with Mozilla Persona is the same as the one listed in Koha, and turn on the Persona syspref.

Plumbing

Debian packaging

The helper scripts provided in the koha-common Debian package have been extensively revised with better error-handling and reporting, and several useful new scripts have been added, including a koha-shell script (bug 8878) so that system administrators can easily get an environment set up for a particular instance, SIP management scripts (bug 9250), and a script for managing translations (bug 10041).
ENHANCEMENTS

In addition to the new features highlighted above, there have been numerous enhancements to existing features. This section highlights a few of the most interesting from among the 160 patchsets marked “enhancement” in Koha 3.12.0.

General

Translations

Koha 3.12 is translated into more languages than ever before! Complete or near-complete translations of Koha 3.12 for no fewer than nineteen (yes, 19!) languages are available, compared to fifteen for the 3.10.0 release, eleven for the 3.8.0 release, and nine for the 3.6.0 release. Moreover, the translations are better and more complete than ever before because during the last six months the Koha development team has been focusing on eliminating non-translatable strings from the Koha interface, and the installer files have been extensively updated for German, Italian, and Spanish! The following table shows the twenty-four languages that have had active translation work during the 3.12 release cycle.

To learn more about how Koha is translated or help out, see http://translate.koha-community.org/
Improved boolean searching (bug 9239)

Starting with version 3.12, Koha shares Evergreen’s powerful boolean search-friendly query parser module. With this module, librarians will be able to perform complex—but comprehensible—boolean searches such as the following:

- (“harry potter” && (stone || chamber)) && (author:rowling || subject:rowling)  
  {Search for Harry Potter books by or about Rowling with the word “stone” or “chamber”}

- “grisham, john” && acqdate(2011-)  
  {Search for books by John Grisham acquired since 2011.}

To enable the new query syntax, just turn on the UseQueryParser system preference.

Code cleanup

Less visible than many of the other enhancements described in these release notes, but no less important, are the numerous behind-the-scenes changes to Koha’s code, making it more maintainable, more efficient, and—always important to a programmer—more elegant.

OPAC

Add missing MARC21 fields to OPAC details display (bugs 8877, 9356, and 9363)

The Koha 3.12 release adds several MARC21 fields to the default OPAC details display when XSLT is enabled, including: patent information (MARC21 field 013), report number (MARC21 field 088), dissertation note (MARC21 field 502), and participant/performer note (MARC21 field 511).

Hide selected note fields on the OPAC (bug 9162)

A common request from Koha libraries is a way to hide private—or incomprehensible—notes from the OPAC. With the new NotesBlacklist system preference, it will be possible to do just that!

Staff client look and feel

Make alphabet localizable (bug 2832)

A series of links in Koha’s patrons module allows librarians to browse through patrons. Starting in 3.12, libraries can customize what letters appear in that list using the alphabet system preference so that—for example—patrons with last names that start with ‘Ø’ can be found through the browse interface as well as those whose names start with letters used by the English alphabet.
Acquisitions, cataloging, and serials

Divide budget periods into two tabs (bug 8117)

Budget periods are now displayed on two separate tabs: active and inactive. This will make working with the budget feature of Koha much easier for libraries who have been using Koha for acquisitions for a long time, or have many distinct budgets.

Link to MARC preview directly from staff client detail view (bug 6945)

Koha’s expanded and tabbed MARC views are well-designed, and go a long ways toward making the complex format comprehensible and approachable. Unfortunately, for MARC experts, they can also slow down the cataloging workflow. Starting with Koha 3.12, it is possible to view a raw MARC record in the staff client the same as it is in the OPAC.

Highlight the current item on the edit items screen (bug 9154)

For records with a lot of items, it can be hard to keep track of which among the many items listed you are currently editing. To help address this problem, Koha will now highlight the row of the current item.

Analytic records for NORMARC (bug 9213)

NORMARC joins the alphabet soup of MARC formats for which Koha provides working analytic record support out-of-the-box. The analytic features originally implemented in MARC21 and UNIMARC have been extended to NORMARC, rounding out Koha’s analytics support to all three of the major MARC flavors supported by Koha.
BUGFIXES

By default do not show fully-received baskets (bug 9824)

A change in Koha 3.8 caused a regression in the Acquisitions module, resulting in all baskets showing up when viewing a vendor, rather than just new baskets and baskets with items still to receive. Because some libraries may have been depending on the behavior in 3.8 and 3.10, the default behavior of showing only baskets that are new or have items still to receive has been restored, but the ability to show all baskets has been added.

"Hidden" value hard to understand in frameworks (bug 9894)

One of the hardest-to-understand parts of configuring your MARC frameworks has always been the "Hidden" configuration switch that controls a subfield’s visibility in the cataloging module and expanded MARC views. The confusing “enter a number between -9 and +9” has been replaced by much friendlier checkboxes.

Circulation action logs record biblionumber instead of item number (bug 7241)

A longstanding bug in Koha’s log viewer meant that the links to items in the logs did not work correctly in earlier versions of Koha. Unfortunately, this bug resulted in data loss. In order to provide a usable link, the log history has been filled out with links to the first item of bibliographic records that had items circulated, even if the actual item that circulated was one of the other items on the record.

Important: your circulation logs may not link to the correct item record.