



OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE FOR LIBRARIES

GPLS developed the Evergreen Integrated Library System software platform specifically for use in PINES libraries, a statewide consortium comprised of 285 public libraries and affiliated service outlets in 143 counties. PINES offers Georgia citizens a shared catalog of more than 10 million items, with a single library card that is welcomed in all member libraries. Boasting more than 2.6 million registered cardholders, PINES is a national leader in library cooperation and resource-sharing.

Work on the program began in June 2004. Evergreen developers relied on input from the end-user community to guide their design of the program. It is open-source software, which means it is royalty-free, and its license permits anyone to study, change and improve the software and to distribute the software either as is or after modifications have been made. The software offers numerous advantages for library staff:

- It was originally designed and implemented specifically to meet the needs of Georgia's PINES libraries.
- It provides software developers and users direct access to the source code, making it possible to implement suggested changes, improvements and enhancements to the software.
- It enables software developers to implement bug fixes and feature requests without extended downtime.
- It enhances resource-sharing and interlibrary cooperation.
- It allows PINES to set loan periods, fine levels and rules for placing holds and sharing materials — needs that are unique to such a statewide consortium.
- It allows librarians to quickly create linked lists for patrons, allowing patrons to keep up with school recommended reading lists, titles relating to assigned school projects and annotated bibliographies for suggested reading choosing .
- It will grow and evolve as needs change.

With Evergreen, library patrons enjoy a range of do-it-yourself services from home or library workstations, including:

- the ability to securely change personal login name, PIN and email addresses.
- the ability to place, cancel and view holds on books and other circulating items.
- the ability to modify how they prefer to be alerted of available holds.
- the ability to view fines owed.
- the ability to create and share, if desired, lists of books already read, lists of books desired and other recommended reading lists of their choosing — and view and place holds directly from these lists.
- the ability to change screen views and enlarge print for easier viewing and improved readability.

The Evergreen-based public access catalog also offers enhanced search features that allow users to:

- place a single hold that can be filled with a copy from multiple versions or formats of a work.
- select specific material formats from the catalog's front page.
- enjoy spell-checking and search suggestions similar to those used by commercial search engines and retailers like Google and Amazon.

Because Evergreen runs on the Linux operating system and inexpensive commodity hardware as opposed to a proprietary system, it can also save organizations — and taxpayers — hundreds of thousands of dollars in software maintenance costs, licensing fees and hardware costs.

The Evergreen-powered Web-based PINES catalog is now available at www.gapines.org.

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