From Tomcats to Tomahawks:

Experiences of the Voyager 7 upgrade at the University of Plymouth

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The bigger picture

- Role of functional manager – to liaise between systems librarian/developers and the end user

- Felt that the OPAC was in need of a facelift

- University of Plymouth's usual philosophy is to "wait and see" with any major upgrade

So why the hurry?

- Phantom holds were a big problem

- We preferred the simpler look of the Voyager 7 OPAC

- The tomcat skin appeared to offer greater flexibility – promise of customisable style sheet tantalising!

- Relatively minor tweaks would give us a very different look – i.e. 'more for less'

Preparing

- Discussed and chose a suitable date in August 2008

- Philosophy was 'keep it simple' – out of the box was 'good enough'

- Minimal checklist of changes to terminology

- Made changes on test database and began testing

- Big question marks over the Request system

Hold your breath . . . Ouch!

- Testing appeared to be successful

- Skin added

- Suddenly PIN numbers stopped working

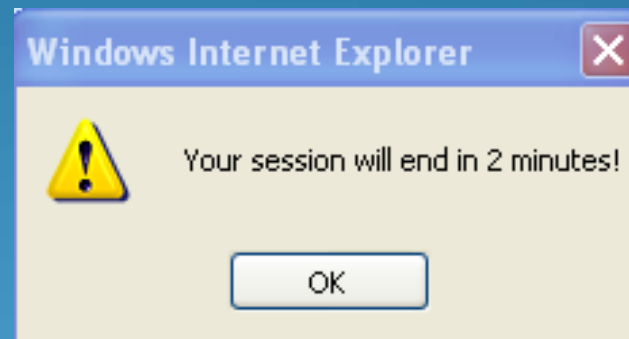- Upgrade deferred until problem resolved

- Still had question mark over the Request system

The pain continued!

- Our development team fixed the PIN problem, but …..

….. an annoying timeout message appeared!

Windows Internet Explorer

⚠ Your session will end in 2 minutes!

OK

….. and as feared, there was no way of accessing the Inter-library loan request screen

The pain continued!

- Other problems began to manifest themselves:

  - We wanted the front page bypassed – thought it would be easy …

The fix

- Our developers had to create an HTML redirect to solve the front page bypass

- Interlibrary loans – temporary workaround found

The fix

- Creation of a dummy bib record linked to Interlibrary request tab

How was it for our users?

- Timing meant minimal disruption to students and academic staff
- Initial confusion over requests

- Improved look of the OPAC
- Phantom holds fixed –random requests instead!!

Example of random hold!!

Lessons learned

- Don't be too gullible

- Manage expectations

- Our 'wait and see' policy is less stressful

- Be part of the initial testing team

- Anything else learnt by you?

Thank you!

Any questions?