From Tomcats to Tomahawks:

Experiences of the Voyager 7 upgrade at the University of Plymouth

Amanda Southam (Senior Subject Librarian & functional SFX Manager)
Jayne Moss (functional OPAC manager)

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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!

..... 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!!

Holdings Information

The pop-up book of gnomes.

Title: The pop-up book of gnomes.
ISBN: 0722635742
Description: [10]p : chiefly col ill ; 28cm.
Format: Book
Subjects: English fiction
Notes: children's stories in English 1900- texts pop-up books

Holdings Information

Location: School Experience Collection
Shellmark: JP POD
Number of Items: 1
Status: Available
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?