

ILMS Implementation Approaches

Acquisition, Deployment & Practical Rollout Strategies

Meaning

ILMS implementation is the process of selecting, acquiring, installing, configuring, testing, and introducing an Integrated Library Management System into library operations.

1 Two Ways to Classify Software

Acquisition Model

How the software is obtained, owned, or created.

Examples: COTS/packaged, custom/bespoke, open-source.

Deployment Model

Where the software runs and how users access it.

Examples: SaaS/cloud-based, on-premises/self-hosted.

2 Acquisition and Creation Models

COTS / Packaged software

Pre-built software developed for many libraries or organizations. Provides standardized features and workflows; usually configured rather than built from scratch.

Custom / Bespoke software

Software designed specifically for one library. Matches unique rules and workflows but normally requires more time, cost, and technical support.

Open-source software

Source code is available for inspection, modification, and improvement. May be adopted and customized by the library or supported by a service provider.

3 Deployment and Infrastructure Models

SaaS / Cloud-based

The vendor hosts the ILMS and delivers it through the Internet, commonly under a subscription arrangement. The provider generally manages infrastructure, updates, and technical maintenance.

On-premises / Self-hosted

The library installs the ILMS on its own servers or infrastructure and manages hardware, security, updates, backups, and maintenance.

Important distinction: “Open-source” describes software ownership and access to source code. “Cloud-based” and “on-premises” describe deployment. Therefore, an open-source ILMS can be cloud-hosted or self-hosted.

4 Practical Implementation Approaches

Phased implementation — most common	Introduce the ILMS module by module (administration, cataloguing, circulation, OPAC, acquisitions, serials, reports). Supports gradual training and problem-solving.
Pilot implementation followed by rollout	Begin in one branch, department, service desk, or small collection. Test workflows, correct problems, then expand to the rest of the library.
Parallel running	Operate the old system and the new ILMS together for a limited period. Compare records and transactions before discontinuing the old system. Improves confidence but increases staff workload.
Direct cutover	Stop the old system on a planned date and begin using the new ILMS immediately. Practical mainly for small libraries with simple workflows and well-prepared data.
Incremental data migration	Transfer data in groups. Clean and check active catalogue records first, then migrate older records, patron data, and other information.
Consortium / centralized implementation	Several libraries use one shared or coordinated ILMS, agreeing on common standards, rules, and workflows, often with central technical support.

5 Typical Real-World Combination

- 1 Select** — Choose packaged, custom, or open-source software and decide whether it will be cloud-based or self-hosted.
- 2 Assess and plan** — Review library needs, data, staff, budget, infrastructure, risks, and implementation responsibilities.
- 3 Prepare data** — Clean, standardize, back up, and map catalogue, patron, circulation, and configuration data.
- 4 Pilot** — Test one branch, department, or service and train the staff involved.
- 5 Roll out in phases** — Introduce the remaining modules and branches in a controlled sequence.
- 6 Cut over and support** — Use parallel checking if required, complete the final transition, and provide ongoing support.

★ Exam-Ready Summary

Acquisition model asks: How is the software obtained or created? **Deployment model** asks: Where does it run? **Implementation approach** asks: How is it introduced into library operations?