

FRANCE

BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

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ANNUAL REPORT TO CDNL 2009

Some of the key issues considered at BnF in 2008 are as follows:

A new strategy for the three-year period 2008-2011

The BnF has initiated a process of strategy development that will be based on a long-term programme. In 2008, we focused on these new strategic priorities and developed the infrastructure to support innovative projects. This process led us to set up a performance based contract that plans out our goals, actions and priority commitments to our supervisory Ministry. Six specific goals have been defined for the years 2008-2011. The BnF will aim:

- to become a reference digital library;
- to enrich and preserve its national collections;
- to complete the renovation of the Richelieu quadrilateral area (Richelieu site);
- to reach a larger audience and answer users' requests;
- to be committed to serious national, European and international issues;
- to prepare for future technology changes.

Finalization of the performance contract was momentarily suspended during the last quarter of 2008 because of the audit realised by the Department of the Treasury at BnF. This audit requested by the Ministry of Culture and Communication which has been working out its own performance contract, comes within the framework of a national policy aiming to enhance public services. To begin with, a number of policies have been defined to improve services in the fields of acquisitions, cataloguing and reprographic services.

The performance contract needs to result in a range of internal projects. As these projects need day-to-day management and assessment, all departments have worked out their own priority actions in 2008.

Further partnerships for a new version of Gallica digital library

A new version of Gallica digital library has been put online recently that offers new documents and applications (<http://gallica.bnf.fr>)

Today, Gallica is a digital library that provides access to a wide variety of material: documents digitised from the BnF's collections, digital collections belonging to partner libraries, copyrighted magazines and a selection of recently published books available at e-retailers in the context of a test phase launched in March 2008.

Gallica interface has been made more user-friendly and new applications have been progressively added: private account, RSS flows informing about the documents that were recently put online, material available in audio-format... All documents digitised in text mode can be listened to, which allows all types of users and particularly visually impaired users to listen to the document that is being consulted page after page.

As the digital library should reflect the variety and richness of collections kept at BnF, mass digitisation programmes were set up in 2008 to digitise special collections such as manuscripts,

prints... They complete the major digitisation programmes launched in 2007 concerning printed documents and press material.

Gallica aims to become a French digital library open to the largest number of collaborators. We have already begun to work with a number of partner institutions or firms interested in digitisation projects. In July 2008, the BnF President has been commissioned by the National Center for the Book to coordinate the development of digital operations in French libraries. This is intended to coordinate libraries' initiatives and share resources in the fields of collections digitisation, digital document acquisitions and long-term data storage. Gallica digital content is also used to populate the European digital library and the digital libraries of French-speaking countries that are collective gateways launched in 2008, providing access to heritage collections.

The development of the European digital library and the digital libraries of French-speaking countries

The BnF has been deeply involved in the development of Europeana, the prototype of the European digital library. We have taken significant steps forward in making European heritage collections available via this portal providing multilingual access to subjects and launched in November 2008. It has also been an opportunity for new partnerships between libraries, archives, museums and European audiovisual institutions. After playing a major part in initiating the project, the BnF has now become the main contributing institution with 300,000 digitised documents (books and press booklets) taken out of its collections, being offered on the launch of the prototype.

2008 has also been an important year for the implementation of a digital library devoted to documentary heritage resources of French-speaking countries. As a result, the portal of the Network of digital national libraries from French-speaking countries (RFBNN) was launched in Quebec in October 2008 during the XII Summit of French-speaking countries. Since the end of 2008, the gateway (<http://www.rfbnn.org>) has been providing access to the following material: about thirty periodical newspapers, about twenty magazines, some books, maps, plans and archives taken out of the heritage collections from about ten institutions of French-speaking countries.

We have been deeply involved in the development and organisation of the network and the BnF press material was widely used to populate the portal. We also provide advice and training opportunities to national libraries from Southern French-speaking countries intending to initiate digitisation projects.

Renovation of the Richelieu site is under way

In 2008, the staff and visitors of the Richelieu site were given the opportunity to note the first concrete operations achieved in the context of the huge renovation project of BnF historical site. We have begun moving collections to the Bussy-Saint-Georges site, located outside of Paris. Alos, some preliminary work has been launched that was absolutely essential before the huge renovation work. The site will remain open all through the renovation period.

The renovation budget was also clarified and confirmed in 2008. One of the capital renovation works launched by the Ministry of Culture and Communication, the renovation of the Richelieu quadrilateral area has been included in the national relaunch plan at the end of the year.

Improving and assessing services to users

We have tried to improve and extend on-site and online services proposed to our users. In the Research library, new services have been made available such as private access to the internet and the possibility to take pictures of public domain documents with a private camera.

In 2008, the BnF entered the social web. To be in line with the Web 2.0 features, we have created, during Summer 2008, a first blog devoted to books for young people on the occasion of the exhibition entitled « Babar, Harry Potter and Co. ». Following this successful experiment, we created a second blog that was put online on the ten-year anniversary of the Research library at the François-Mitterrand site, in December 2008. Now known as the Readers' blog, it is intended to enrich exchanges between BnF services and searchers and users in general through interactive dialogues.

To better know our users and their wishes and assess the services offered, we carried out a survey concerning uses of all BnF sites and uses of the website. The results revealed continuity with the previous survey done in 2005. Once again, they reveal that the BnF services fulfil the needs of a majority of users (all sites taken into account) even if some of them might be improved: food and lounge areas, reprographic services in the reading rooms, infrastructure of the website – ergonomics,

graphics, research tools. This survey also help us learn more about visitors' uses; for instance, there is major and regular public interest in cultural events and BnF's website. Documentary material available in the Reference library has been less consulted than before; one might also note that these reading rooms are mainly frequented by schoolchildren and students.

Improving services offered in the Reference library

Considering the above mentioned elements of information, we have given much thought to enhancing services offered in the Reference library and reaching larger categories of users.

Legal deposit of internet material available in the reading rooms

Since April 2008, the archives from French domain websites have been available in the BnF's reading rooms. Web digital content collected through automatic harvesting and focused crawls has been archived through legal deposit. Bulk harvesting is done in partnership with the American Foundation called Internet Archive. The selection of websites is made by the BnF's librarians and staff from provincial institutions in charge of legal deposit and associated with the BnF. Legal deposit of internet material is available to anyone with a reader's card for the Research library.

To browse the archives, users just need to type in the web address; they can also use keyword searching or search paths such as electoral campaigns' websites or private and literary diaries.

Adopting a preservation charter

In 2008, new documents enriched the BnF's collections through legal deposit and current acquisitions or acquisitions of heritage material. The BnF has also received numerous bequests of works or private archives from authors and artists. Over the past year, we have given much thought to the safety of our collections and completed a preservation charter defining strategic principles and goals of our preservation policy. In this context, major measures have been taken to reinforce security of spaces and collections at all sites.

Cultural events and educational activities to promote our collections

In 2008, a rich programme of cultural events was proposed to the BnF audience: lectures, stage reading, meetings with authors, concerts and symposiums. We wished to highlight encyclopedic knowledge and started the cultural season with a new series devoted to concerts never done before (Inédits musicaux de la BnF) and another one devoted to "Debates" (Grands débats) focusing on history and current affairs. These events were appreciated by a very large audience. Some sessions proposing presentation of manuscripts or focusing on the history of prints or records were done by librarians specialised in the field and were also much appreciated.

We were also deeply involved in organising and coordinating on-site and off-site exhibitions (in French provincial towns and major cities worldwide). 16 exhibitions have been organised at BnF and 176 other ones presenting over 5,000 documents in France and foreign countries. Two exhibitions have proved particularly popular: « L'enfer de la Bibliothèque » at the François-Mitterrand site and « Prenez soin de vous », the contemporary art settings of Sophie Calle (Richelieu site) formerly presented at the Venice Biennale.

In 2008, we took significant steps forward in educational activities focusing on books and the Library. Two educational learning kits introducing learners to the history of books and a variety of discovery paths have been proposed to teachers and schoolchildren.

2008 Key figures

- 69,958 books, 321,991 periodical newspapers and 74,004 other printed and audiovisual documents have been collected through legal deposit in 2008.
- 28 terabytes of data have been collected through legal deposit of internet material, for a total of 136 terabytes of digital content made available to searchers at the end of the year.
- 10.8 M bibliographic entries and over 5 M authority records (256,000 new records) available via the BnF Catalogue général (formerly called BN Opale +) at the end of 2008.
- 950,381 readers used the reading rooms (all sites taken into account). 1 339 641 items circulated.
- 15 M persons visited the BnF's website, i.e 41,000 per day.
- 450,000 documents have been made available online via Gallica digital library, i.e 87,000 monographs, 2,200 titles of periodicals and magazines amounting to 340,000 booklets, 230,000 iconographic documents and nearly 5,000 maps and plans and over 500 sound documents taken out of the BnF's digitised collections, plus 4,500 documents belonging to partner libraries and nearly 5,000 recently published books available in the context of a test experiment led in partnership with printers. 3 133 929 persons visited the library, 40% more than in 2007.

- 353,917 visitors attended cultural events presented in public spaces, among which 255,066 visited the temporary exhibitions.
- 18,483 persons attended over 130 events organised in the auditoriums.
- 2,673 officers (i.e 2440 full-time equivalent staff) counted at the end of 2008 among whom 67% benefited from training sessions during the year.
- A growing annual budget (280,6 M€) in comparison to 2007 (238,8 M€) because of the new charges caused by the coming of the Joie par les Livres and the settlement of an administrative dispute.

An extensive version of this annual report will be available in July on the BnF's website (<http://www.bnf.fr>: La Bibliothèque> Connaître la BnF)