
BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

ANNUAL REPORT TO CENL 2009

Key facts

- A new strategic plan has been developed outlining the BnF's specific goals for 2008-2011.
- A new version of Gallica digital library with new services and increased stakeholder involvement.
- BnF has also been heavily involved in the development of Europeana, the European digital library, and the Francophone digital portal, which were both launched in 2008.
- Renovation is underway of the Richelieu quadrangle, an historic site, home to the BnF's special collections since the 18th century.
- Measures have been taken to improve our research tools.
- Two exhibitions have proved particularly popular – “L'Enfer de la Bibliothèque, Eros in secret” [Hell at the Library, Secret Eros] and “Prenez soin de vous” [Take Care of Yourself], a contemporary art installation by Sophie Calle.

Performance contract for 2009-2011

In 2008, the BnF focused on defining new strategic priorities and developed the infrastructure to support innovative projects until 2011. This process has led us to draw up a performance contract that defines our goals, actions and priority commitments to the regulatory authorities. Six strategic goals and results targets have been established that will focus on:

- the digital library;
- collections;
- the Richelieu site and built heritage;
- users and user services;
- national and international commitments;
- sustainable development and implementation of new management systems.

The finalization of the performance contract was momentarily suspended during the last quarter of 2008 due to an audit of the BnF, carried out by the General Inspectorate of Finance within the framework of a national policy to enhance public services. This audit was requested by the Ministry of Culture and Communication which has been drawing up its own performance contract. Preliminary outcomes of the audit have focused on measures to optimise resources in acquisitions, cataloguing and reprographic services.

Further partnerships for Gallica digital library

A new version of Gallica digital library has been launched recently, offering new documents and services (<http://gallica.bnf.fr>). Gallica now provides access to a wide variety of materials: documents digitised from the BnF's collections, digital collections belonging to partner libraries, copyright journals and a selection of recently published books available for purchase from e-tailers as part of an experiment launched in March 2008. Since spring 2009, over 800,000 documents have been available via Gallica, including digitised manuscripts, sound documents, music scores, some 100,000 books, 230,000 images and over 400,000 periodical issues.

Gallica's interface has been made more user-friendly with the progressive addition of new functionality including personalisation, RSS feeds providing information about recently digitised material and text vocalization which enables all types of users, notably the visually impaired, to listen to digitised material in text mode as they consult each web page.

As the digital library should reflect the variety and richness of the BnF's collections, mass digitisation programmes were set up in 2008 to digitise specialised collections such as manuscripts, prints, etc. They complete the mass digitisation programmes launched in 2007, concerning printed documents and press materials.

Gallica aims to become a French digital library, open to the largest number of stakeholders. The BnF has already begun discussions with public and private French partners interested in digitisation projects. In July 2008, the President of the BnF was commissioned by the National Centre for the Book (Centre National du Livre) to coordinate the development of digital operations in French libraries. This is intended to coordinate and share libraries' initiatives in the fields of collection digitisation, digital document acquisitions and long-term preservation.

Gallica is also a provider of the European and Francophone cultural heritage portals, launched in 2008, in which the BnF plays an important role. Since November 2008, all Gallica content has been accessible via Europeana, which provides multilingual access to digitised items from European libraries, archives, museums and audiovisual institutions. The portal of the Francophone national digital library network, launched in October 2008, (<http://www.rfbnn.org>) focuses on press collections.

Richelieu site renovation underway

In 2008, the Richelieu site's staff and visitors were able to witness the essential preliminary work of the major renovation project of this historic site. The BnF began moving collections to the Bussy-Saint-Georges site, located outside of Paris. The removal of the collections is being accelerated in 2009 as we have planned to move 27 kilometres of collections, mainly to the François-Mitterrand site.

One of the key challenges is to maintain the accessibility of material while collections are being moved, thus reading rooms will remain open and the already transferred material will be brought back on request to the Richelieu site via a shuttle service.

The renovation budget was also clarified and confirmed in 2008 as the renovation of the Richelieu quadrangle was included in the end-of-year French economic recovery plan.

Collection enhancement

In 2008, the BnF's collections were enhanced through legal deposit, acquisitions of contemporary and cultural heritage material, numerous donations and bequests of works and private records from authors and artists. The following material entered the BnF's collections: 69,958 books, 321,991 deposits of journals and newspapers, 74,004 special documents from publishers, 28 terabytes of digital content collected through legal deposit of internet electronic material, 81,610 documents collected through acquisitions, donations or bequests. Several outstanding pieces enhanced the heritage collections including two national treasures – the illuminated manuscript of “La vie de Saint-François d’Assise” (The Life of St Francis of Assisi) and a collection of poster proofs by Toulouse Lautrec. The BnF's collections have been enriched by a number of photographic archives, the complete collection of Julien

Gracq's autograph manuscripts, Raymond Aron's writings as well as literary manuscripts and archives of great writers of French detective fiction such as Jean-Patrick Manchette, Gaston Leroux and Albert Simonin.

Adopting a reference document for preservation policy

Over the past year, BnF has made great strides towards the conservation and security of its collections as well as completing a reference document defining the strategic principles and goals of its preservation policy. This document concerns heritage collections accessible on all types of media including substitute media matrices and forms the basis for the planning of priority preservation measures over the coming years.

Major measures have been taken to reinforce security of spaces and collections at all sites. Collection moves are carried out according to a number of specific measures including a dedicated bus shuttle service for moving collections. Document traceability is ensured via secured premises for the deposit and removal of collections, transport notes, parcel labelling and register signing.

Towards a Bibliographic Information System

Different ways have been explored to improve the library's catalogues and adapt the Bibliographic Information System to changing technology in web applications and bibliographic services. Our initial focus was on updating interfaces for public use, improving technical maintainability and participating in innovative fields of activity. A technical state-of-the-art study was also undertaken in parallel with in-house work sessions, resulting in a decision to focus on the reliability and quality of our services, particularly in the field of data production and delivery. This survey will allow the planning of the first measures in 2010.

Improving and assessing user services

The BnF has endeavoured to improve and extend on-site and online services to users. In the Research library reading rooms, users can now access the Internet via their own personal computers and take photos of public domain documents with a private camera. Since April 2008, the archives of the French Internet domain have been available in the BnF's reading rooms. Digital resources to which BnF subscribes have been accessible off-site by remote users since May 2009. During the experimental phase, this new service will provide about 60 databases and nearly 35,000 electronic periodicals and monographs to readers holding an annual Research library card.

Since summer 2008, several blogs have been developed to facilitate exchanges between the BnF services and researchers and general users through interactive dialogues.

A reform project for the Reference Library aims to enhance services and reach a larger public with reflection in the areas of documentary policy (rate of weeding and collection renewal), digital resources, implementation of cross-disciplinary resource centres, improving the reception of users and introducing mediation services and supplementary facilities such as food areas and bookshops.

Strengthening national cooperative programmes

At a national level in 2008, there was a deep and shared reflection on the goals and priorities of the national cooperation policy. Detailed analyses, focusing both on the library and exchanges with our partners, have led us to make digital technology a priority for our cooperative programmes policy. As a result, we have decided to collaborate and develop,

make available and enhance a variety of digitised national heritage collections, wherever they are housed and whoever the holders are. Gallica digital library, which is open to the largest number of stakeholders, is the main basis for this digital cooperation.

The French Union Catalogue (Catalogue collectif de France, <http://www.ccf.fr.bnf.fr>) continued to develop in 2008. This tool for national cooperation, allowing the location of over 20 million documents (texts, images, sound documents, videos) which are hosted at the BnF and in the main public, university and research libraries in France. Enhancements include new search functionality and making available new collections such as manuscripts as well as older collections which have been added to the catalogue through retrospective conversion.

A dynamic international involvement

More than ever, we aim to provide wider access to heritage collections and promote cultural diversity and play as great a role as our sister institutions worldwide hence our deep involvement in developing both Europeana and the portal of the Francophone digital national library network.

Among other fruitful opportunities for the European action of the BnF were the research and development projects conducted with the support of the European Commission. This commitment intensified in 2008 and 2009 with the BnF's participation in programmes aiming to:

- provide better access to digitised collections (IMPACT);
- improve access to copyrighted documents in respect of author rights (ARROW);
- promote awareness of the virtual collection of the Silk Road Dunhuang manuscripts (IDP-CREA);
- facilitate universal access to our cultural heritage thanks to an emulation access platform (KEEP);
- promote access to biodiversity knowledge (BHL-Europe).

We have also focused on the development of bilateral relationships and taken a more active role in several international bodies such as the CENL and IIPC. Such involvements are always good opportunities for international brainstorming sessions and idea exchange.

The "Profession culture" residency programme has enabled us to host 8 interns whose research theme relates to the BnF's collections and services. We have also offered other training opportunities such as the international workshop on digital resources and a training session entitled "Implementing a digital library". In 2009, a new training session will be dedicated to audiovisual resources in libraries.

Cultural and educational activities to promote our collections

We proposed a rich programme of cultural events to the BnF public: lectures, stage readings, meetings with authors, concerts and symposiums. We wished to highlight encyclopaedic knowledge and kicked off the cultural season with a new series devoted to previously unperformed musical works (Inédits musicaux de la BnF) and another devoted to great debates (Grands débats), focusing on history and current affairs. These events were enthusiastically received by a very large audience. Specialised librarians also held sessions presenting manuscripts or the history of prints or records which were also well received.

The BnF has also been deeply involved in organising and coordinating on-site and off-site exhibitions (in French provincial towns and major cities worldwide). 16 exhibitions were

organised at the BnF while another 176 presented over 5,000 documents in France and worldwide. Two exhibitions proved particularly popular: “L’enfer de la Bibliothèque, Eros au secret” at the François-Mitterrand site and “Prenez soin de vous”, a contemporary art installation by Sophie Calle (Richelieu site) which was originally shown at the 2007 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 were proposed to teachers and schoolchildren.

Key figures for 2008

- 69,958 books, 321,991 periodicals and 74,004 other printed and audiovisual documents were collected through legal deposit.
- 28 terabytes of data were collected through legal deposit of internet digital material, i.e. 136 terabytes of digital content were available to researchers (at the end of the year).
- 10.8 million bibliographic records and over 5 million authority records (256,000 new records) available via the BnF Catalogue général (formerly called BN Opale +).
- 450,000 documents were made available online via Gallica digital library, i.e. 87,000 monographs, 2,200 journal and newspaper titles, representing 340,000 issues in all, 230,000 iconographic documents and nearly 5,000 maps and plans and over 500 sound documents from the BnF’s digitised collections, plus 4,500 documents belonging to partner libraries and nearly 5,000 recently published books available as part of an experiment led in partnership with publishers.
- over 3 million people visited the library (40% up on 2007).
- 950,381 readers used the reading rooms (all sites included). 1 339 641 items were circulated.
- 15 million people visited the BnF’s website, i.e. 41,000 per day.
- 353,917 visitors attended cultural events presented in public spaces, 255,066 of whom visited the temporary exhibitions.
- 18,483 people attended over 130 events organised in the auditoriums.
- 2,673 staff (i.e. 2440.7 full-time equivalent staff) at the end of 2008, 67% of whom benefited from training sessions during the year.
- Increased annual budget (280.6 M€) compared to 2007 (238.8 M€) due to the integration of the Centre national de la littérature pour la jeunesse – La Joie par les livres [French National Centre for Children’s Literature - Joy through reading] and the settlement of an administrative dispute concerning the building.

An extended version (in French) of this annual report is available on the BnF’s website: <http://www.bnf.fr/rapport/html/accueil.htm>