

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

ANNUAL REPORT, JULY 1999 - JUNE 2000

1. Library management

The BnF began to modernise its management methods on the basis reports completed in January 1999 by the 9 working groups set up after the trade unions action of October 1998. Three main policy lines were defined.

- Modernisation of staff organisation and relationships : improved, more transparent and more dynamic methods of supervision; consistency in and publicising of employment and staff advancement rules ; greater emphasis on training, including the creation of a specific committee and completion of a report concerning the establishment of a staff documentation and training centre ; sharing of information, with the adoption of a charter recognising rights of access to information and freedom of expression for all staff together with greater staff participation in internal communication channels (the *Trajectoire* newsletter and the *Biblionautes* news distributed through the BnF's Intranet site).
- Improved staff working conditions and public reception facilities : creation of an Operations Committee with responsibility for routine matters and work required within the library building ; development of shared working practices between computer staff and system users.
- Development and launch - in late November 1999 - of a corporate project in which objectives and priorities were defined for 2001-2003, aiming to achieve more progress in various fundamental areas relating to the nature and performance of the specific missions of a national library (legal deposit, conservation, remote document supply, etc.) and to integrate advances in digital technology. This corporate project also sets out quantitative and qualitative objectives to help monitor progress towards these goals. A Project Board consisting of heads of other cultural institutions and experts external to the BnF monitored the approach throughout. All staff took part and contributions were also requested from library users. The project will ultimately lead to an agreement on objectives, to be signed with the library's supervisory ministries.

2. Handling of electronic documents

French legislation only provides for legal deposit of electronic publications on physical carriers, and there are no incentives to encourage voluntary deposits. However, the French ISSN centre, which is run by the BnF, attributes numbers to any on-line serial publications brought to its knowledge (95 ISSN numbers were attributed in 1995).

Liaising with its corporate project, the BnF has undertaken discussions and pilot activities relating to the legal deposit system and electronic documentation.

In the autumn of 1999, the BnF set up an experimental system for capturing and downloading a sample of 23 French Web sites. In the spring of 2000, this led to a feasibility study on identifying French serial publications distributed over the Internet to build up a database of references.

The BnF also undertook experiments in on-line communication of electronic publications, and devoted considerable efforts to the conservation of electronic documents.

A study began on this topic in the autumn of 1999, aiming to provide integrated access, by the end of 2000, to all electronic BnF resources - including the institution's own electronic on-line and off-line material and external selected on-line resources (databases and periodicals) – through a public Intranet system.

The BnF is taking part in international activities to standardise long-term archiving of digital documents for preservation purposes, in particular through the European NEDLIB project and RLG research programmes. In addition, the BnF has recently undertaken studies to define a strategy for implementing its first management system for electronic archives. Besides the technical aspects involved, discussions will deal with the content of legal deposit from the Internet with a view to broadening existing legislation on legal deposit obligations.

3. Funding

The BnF's primitive budget for the year 2000 showed expenditures amounting to 754 MF (excluding payroll expenditures that are charged to the State's budget). The institution's funds were mainly made up of the 623.98 MF State grant, with its own funds amounting to 66 MF.

Particular budget features were as follows :

- a drop in credits linked to the completion of the new library project ;
- a growth in operational expenses linked to the use of the Tolbiac François-Mitterrand building and the information system;
- a rapid growth in work within buildings ;
- an 8.4% growth in acquisitions credits to 57.6 MF, representing the first efforts to improve the situation in this area.

2. Legislation

Unchanged.

3. Buildings

- François-Mitterrand building : numerous improvements prepared by specific working groups focused on providing better working conditions for readers (e.g. better indications) and staff alike. March 2000 saw the opening of a bookshop in the East Hall, licensed to the publisher Flammarion and offering a selection of 5000 titles.
- Richelieu building : over the last 12 months, part of the newly available space was used to house collections and staff from specialised departments on a temporary basis to improve document preservation conditions as well as the running of the various services. The Public Institution acting as prime contractor also launched technical studies and drew up an overall works schedule for the building in March 2000.
- Arsenal Library : two audits were carried out, one on overall safety in the building and one on renovation work.

2. Staff

Actual staffing levels at the BnF dropped significantly (by 2.5%) in the last months of 1999, from 2 244 permanent staff on 31st December 1998 to 2 187 on 31st December 1999. The drop was mainly due to

the gap between the large number (120) of government employees leaving to take up posts in other institutions and the inadequate number of new arrivals (80).

Special attention is still continuing to be given, in liaison with Ministry of Culture departments, to staff paid from credits for temporary contracts (624 at the end of 1999, filling the equivalent of 419 full-time posts), with a view to consolidating employment.

The BnF is maintaining training activities at a high level, with 14 000 days of courses accounting for 7.2 MF in 1999, and 14985 days (6.18 MF) planned in 2000. Priorities are training in new information technology (especially developing the use of the Intranet, bibliographic CD-Roms and the Internet), in reception services for the public, and in managing and running projects.

3. Information technology

Having severed its relationships with the service provider in charge of setting up its information system in July 1999, the BnF took on responsibility for completing Version 1 of the system, to be linked to the document communication system, and for preparing a new contract for Versions 2 and 3, to be linked to the systems for document reception and cataloguing, conservation, reproduction and warehousing. A call for tenders based on performance has been issued and the selection procedure is now under way.

During the second half of 1999, the BnF launched a concerted effort to implement appropriate solutions to the year 2000 problem.

On the 18th January 2000, a new version of the BN-OPALE PLUS catalogue of books and periodicals was brought into service on the BnF's Web site. The catalogue now contains 7 070 000 bibliographic entries and 3 525 000 authority entries, including 4 999 310 from the retrospective conversion programme launched 8 years ago and completed in July 1999. This was followed in May 2000 by the catalogue of audio-visual and multimedia material, containing 730 000 entries.

Finally, retroconversion of the catalogues of Maps and Plans, Prints and Photographs and the Arsenal's library's collection of Early Books continues, with several downloading operations already completed.

4. The digital library

The major event in the last few months occurred when the most recent version of the BnF's digital library, GALLICA 2000, was downloaded to the Internet (<http://gallica.bnf.fr>). Since early July, the digital library has been providing access, free of charge, to 40 900 copyright-free volumes, including 250 periodical titles and 35 000 fixed digitised images in image mode, 1 240 titles digitised in text mode and one hour of sound archives. The contents pages of books digitised in image mode and all legends of fixed images are available in text mode.

The core of the digital library is an encyclopaedic collection, spanning the period from the Middle Ages to the dawn of the 20th century, around which are organised a series of thematic collections (such as Utopia or Marcel Proust, *Le temps retrouvé*). Further digitisation efforts have been launched, including thematic projects (Travels in France, Travels in Africa), projects relating to a particular collection (ektachrome images produced by the Reprography Department) and joint heritage projects (publications from scholarly societies in the Lorraine and Aquitaine regions).

With the launch of GALLICA 2000 came a surge in the number of connections to the BnF web site. In the first five months of the year, the average daily number of connections to the site reached 409 291, including 290 439 to the editorial sections, 73 452 to GALLICA and 45 407 to BN-OPALE PLUS.

The BnF is pursuing negotiations with publishers to obtain their permission for internal distribution, within the library's premises, of digitised documents (86 000 works in image mode, 3 000 in text mode and 240 000 images) and, as far as possible, permission for their distribution over the Internet.

In parallel, the BnF is continuing to develop a Web-based presentation of its activities, as well as on-line professional information, educational material and virtual exhibitions ; moreover it enriches the catalogues of its own holdings and develops the *Signets* ("bookmarks") application designed to provide references to selected Web sites offering bibliographies of document resources that are available through the Internet.

5. Legal deposit

Legal deposits of books continued to increase in 1999 (+1.33% with 55 392 items), while those of periodicals remained at a similar level to 1998 (62 600 titles).

Concerning specialised documents, there was a significant increase in legal deposits of maps and plans (+34%, with 3 281 items) and a decline in printed music (-2.39%) and sound recordings (-6%). However, deposits of new media such as video (+10.3%) and multimedia (+19%) rose steeply, and electronic publishing alone rose +36.74%, with 2 780 documents.

Policy discussions have continued on the future principles of legal deposit with the BnF, forming the basis for a report, issued in March 2000, on all documents covered by legal deposit obligations and on-line electronic documents not currently covered by legislation. The objectives are to improve and rationalise their management and to evaluate the consequences of the digital revolution.

6. Acquisitions

The 1999 reduction in acquisitions credits (from 72 MF in 1998 to 53.13 MF) resulted in a 12.5% drop in orders for monographs. However, the public now has access to the electronic versions of 110 periodical titles, mostly in scientific and technical fields, that are held by the BnF in printed form.

Acquisitions of heritage material (purchases, donations, gifts and deposits) have proceeded at a steady rate, with a number of major collections helping to enrich the departments' holdings : in the Manuscripts department, for example, manuscripts and letters of contemporary literary authors such as Pierre and Mila Lecuire, François Nourissier and Hélène Cixous ; in the Music department the archives of the organ builder Aristide Cavallé-Coll (1811-1899), in the Prints department a collection of some 500 contemporary prints by Henri Goetz and Christine Boumeester, as well as a collection of photographs (negatives and positives) by Louis Vignes (1859-1862). A number of exceptional items have also entered the BnF's collections, such as, in particular, two unpublished cantatas by Maurice Ravel, *Callirhoé* (1900) and *Sémiramis* (1902) acquired by the Music department and, enhancing the Rare Books department, Tobia ALDINI's, *Exactissima descriptio rarorum quorundam plantarum quae continentur Romae in horto farnesiano* (Rome, 1625), with 11 original drawings (copy owned by Claude Fabri de Peiresc).

Work on the library's document policy has continued with a report making proposals for the future of the Upper Library (*Propositions pour une évolution de la bibliothèque du Haut-de-jardin*), completed in May 2000.

7. Preservation and conservation

Conservation activities at the BnF are shared between its different sites. Three of these (at Marne-la-Vallée, Sablé and Provins) work exclusively in this area. In 1999, the conservation budget amounted to about 40 MF.

During 1999, the BnF made efforts to redefine its conservation policy, through discussions which led to a draft report.

Concerning prevention, a plan to safeguard the collections in the event of an emergency was drawn up, with a report completed in June 2000 setting out plans to implement the first measures. In parallel, the

growth of mechanised and manual processes to equip free access volumes in the François-Mitterrand library with lightweight bindings has continued, aiming for 5 000 volumes in 2000.

Backup microreprography has also continued, reaching a total of 4 million images in 1999, including 3.300.000 matrix images produced by the BnF's workshops (an increase of 2.15% over the previous year), and the remainder by sub-contractors.

Two sound studios using advanced techniques were opened at the Marne-la-Vallée site to transfer and restore sound recordings.

Finally, the physical and chemical section of the Marne-la-Vallée laboratory began operations in the summer of 1999, and the results of a comparative analysis of research on deacidification should be available by the summer of 2000.

8. Services to the public

Particular attention was given throughout 1999 to improvements in the BnF's services to the public.

At the François-Mitterrand site and in the Research library, direct document communication was re-established in stages from the 22nd June 1999, so that by June 2000, 10 printed documents could be ordered the same day from Tuesdays to Fridays, 5 printed documents on Saturdays, and 8 microforms from Tuesdays to Saturdays, along with documents ordered in advance, so that readers can obtain up to 25 documents on each day. Turnaround times for direct communication have been speeded up and by May 2000, 74% of documents were communicated in less than 45 minutes. Distance reservation of seats in the readings rooms through the BnF's Web site has been provided for since the 29th March 2000. These improvements were brought in together with a change in library admission prices to provide better services (e.g. admission cards combining access to reading rooms and exhibitions) and better responses to readers' document search needs.

The first half of 2000 saw a continuing increase in the number of people using the Tolbiac research library, with an average of 1 014 readers and 3 261 documents communicated each day (+12% and +29% respectively compared to 1999), a slight drop in the use of the Tolbiac reference library due to the opening of the new reading rooms at the Public Information Library (2 409 readers per day on average, or -0.7%) and a stable readership at the Richelieu library, with 324 readers per day on average and 26 484 documents communicated each month.

To find out more about the public using the Tolbiac library, whether in the reading rooms (who uses them, how, and levels of satisfaction) or exhibitions, the BnF began a new user survey in the spring of 2000. The results show that the structure of the library's readership is relatively stable and in line with the content of the collections, that the free access collections are being more frequently used and that levels of satisfaction are increasing.

9. Cultural events, exhibitions and publications

- In 1999, almost 15 000 people attended events in the BnF's auditoriums. The library's programme of cultural events is organised around major, generally thematic, series of conferences ("*Etat du monde*", "*L'homme et l'arbre de vie*", "*XX^e siècle : un siècle littéraire en mouvement*") or around key international figures ("*Les grandes conférences BnF - Del Duca*"). These events are organised with the help of external scientific collaboration and sponsorships. A musical programme dedicated to French melodies has also been pursued since 1998.
- Fourteen exhibitions were organised in 1999 at the François-Mitterrand and Richelieu sites and the Paris Opera House Museum and Library. Several of these, including the following, were co-produced with other major institutions :

- *Henri Michaux, peindre, composer, écrire* : 15.087 entries ;
- *Victor Segalen, voyageur et visionnaire* : 10.657 entries ;
- *L'aventure des écritures, la page* : 14.161 entries ;
- *Marcel Proust, l'écriture et les arts* : 34.194 entries ;
- *Magnum, essai sur le monde* : 46.419 entries.

The main exhibitions were accompanied by catalogues, seminars and sometimes multimedia CD-Roms or dossiers distributed through the Internet.

- In 1999, thanks to its 8 MF budget, the BnF produced some thirty printed works (bibliographies and scientific publications and exhibition catalogues), the newsletter *Revue de la BnF* and 3 CD-Roms, some of which were co-produced in partnership with private or institutional publishers.

Scientific publications included :

- *Les premières gravures italiennes, quattrocento – début du cinquecento* (1999) ;
- *Catalogue des manuscrits musicaux antérieurs à 1800 conservés au département de la Musique, A and B* (1999) ;
- *Manuscrits, xylographes, estampages : les collections orientales du département des Manuscrits* (2000).

CD-Rom publications included :

- *Les globes de Louis XIV. La terre et le ciel par Vincenzo Coronelli* (1999), coll. BnF-Sources ;
- *Marcel Proust*, by Jean-Yves Tadié (1999), coll. Univers d'écrivains.

In addition, a number of virtual exhibitions and educational dossiers were distributed through the Internet.

2. Inter-library cooperation

Cooperation with other libraries is one of the missions that the BnF is currently developing and diversifying.

- At national level :
 - The BnF is the hub of a network of associated libraries which, in 2000, covered 39 institutions (university and municipal libraries, archives, major research organisations) cooperating under agreements for resource sharing and document supply services, and 25 legal deposit libraries receiving material from printers. These institutions are located throughout France and cover a wide range of fields and disciplines in the humanities, science and technology. Several seminars have been organised for the associated library network. The most recent, held on the 4th July 2000, focused on developments in library networking. One of the new policies for network development, focusing on digitisation, is being put into practice with the digitisation of publications from 19th century French scholarly societies. This operation was launched in collaboration with the departmental archives and municipal libraries of the Aquitaine and Lorraine regions.
 - The BnF has also been mandated by the Ministries of Culture and Education to produce and manage the French Union Catalogue. Since the 21st July 2000, this project, which was already providing Internet access to a national register of over 3 900 libraries and resource centres, has been distributing a total of 2.2 million references to early works (printed before 1811) held by 55 municipal and specialised libraries (www.ccf.fr/bnf.fr).
 - Since early 2000, the BnF has been responsible for all management aspects of the national RAMEAU system of indexing by subject headings (*Répertoire d'autorité matière encyclopédique unifié*), which it previously shared with Ministry of Education departments. A full-scale RAMEAU application is currently being developed for the BnF Web site.
 - Finally, the BnF is continuing to take part in building up a collection of specialised National Union Catalogues, the most recent of these being the catalogues of illustrated books and artists' books and of ethnographic sound archives.

- At international level :

The BnF has been particularly active in two areas of international cooperation :

- in Europe, with its CENL and COBRA partners, to pursue the BIBLINK, NEDLIB, RENARDUS and MACS projects, and with the CERL to build up a European database on early books, and – in a different sector – with national and university libraries in Central and Eastern Europe (Georgia, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Yugoslavia), for which the BnF has been organising training courses or technical visits ;

- in the Mediterranean countries, through expert missions (in Morocco and Tunisia) and training courses, and a jointly organised seminar at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt.

In addition, ties have been renewed with Sub-Saharan Africa, through an expert mission to Senegal.

Bilateral cooperation has been developing in North America, in particular through the organisation of a seminar in Paris, in October, entitled *Français et Québécois : le regard de l'autre*, which was the outcome of cooperative efforts between French and Quebec national libraries and research centres, the joint organisation, with the New York Public Library, of the 3rd symposium on digital libraries, held in June 2000 in Paris, and the BnF's membership of the Research Libraries Group.

Concerning its multilateral international activities, the BnF has continued to direct the *Bibliotheca Universalis* project and to take an active part in discussions and studies undertaken by professional bodies such as IFLA, ISO and ISSN, as well as contributing to UNESCO activities.