

Gallica

Digital library of the National Library of France: "2 million of documents at hand"

Published On: 17 June 2014

Organisation: Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) (National Library of France)

Country: France

Level of government: Central government

Sector: Education, Recreation, culture and religion

Type: Digital, Public Service

Launched in: 1997

Overall development time: 15 years

Link to the innovation's website

Like this innovation

0 persons like this innovation

Description

Gallica, the digital library of the BnF and its partners, has been available online since 1997. It has been growing in pace with technological innovations over the last 15 years and offers a free-of-charge access to 2 million documents (books, press and magazines, manuscripts, medals, maps, prints, photographs, posters, scores and sound recordings). The BnF is a library and a museum as well, and its collections range from Antiquity to the present. As such, Gallica is one of the main French-speaking heritage portals. Through mass digitisation programmes, Gallica has considerably expanded from 2007 on. Every week, hundreds of newly digitised documents provided through the mass-digitisation programme enrich Gallica's offering.

Why the innovation was developed

One of the most important missions of the BnF is to give access to its heritage collections to as many people as possible. The growth and democratisation of the Internet induced the BnF to create a digital library which would provide online users with a freely accessible and free-of-charge access to its holdings. Additionally, digitisation is the only way to preserve some media (audio, video, press) and to keep them available for the public.

Objectives

Improve access, Improve efficiency, Improve user satisfaction, Increase citizen engagement

- Creation of "digital heritage" as a priority.
 - Gallica's website is for the BnF a major way to develop new services intended to help the users with their work, e. g. researchers who are among the primary users within the BnF online public e.g.:
 - Increase the research capacities.
 - More efficient searches and more accurate results through advanced functionalities such as autocompleting, semantic search engine returning the results in the most neutral way possible.
 - Availability of mobile services ("Gallica mobile" apps for smartphone, Apple and Android pads).
 - Gallica is a step on the way to future in-house digital services, where digital documents will be delivered within the BnF precincts: "Gallica intra muros", as it is called, will use the same software as Gallica. It will display public domain documents as well as copyrighted documents.
-

Main beneficiaries

Academia, Civil Society, Elderly people, General population, Government staff, Students, Young people

- Gallica's users are mainly French (67%). An international public is reached through the English, Spanish, German and Portuguese versions of the interface.
 - The so called "Gallicanauts" are mainly students, civil service managers, PhD students, researchers and pensioners.
-

Existing similar practices

Gallica intra muros

In my own organisation

BnF (National Library of France)

Gallica intra muros is an adaptation of Gallica intended for onsite use only.

Gallica marque blanche (Gallica white label)

In public administration of my country

Libraries

"Gallica marque blanche" is a service derived from Gallica intended for libraries that wish to configure the interface and the appearance of their digital library content.

Europeana

In other countries' public administrations

Europeana is a portal for digitised European cultural collections. Europeana links to 23 million of documents sourced from 2 200 cultural organisations from 33 countries. Documents which Europeana links to, cannot be viewed through the Europeana interface, whereas most of the documents offered by Gallica can also be viewed through Gallica.

<http://www.europeana.eu/>

Results

Efficiency

Economies of scale are achieved at a national level through tenders for mass digitisation, through co-operation on data storage systems (> 1 Petabyte) and through the distribution of the digitised heritage.

Service quality

Accessibility:

- The BnF makes efforts to provide disabled online users with a Gallica interface compatible with text-to-speech synthesizers, Braille converters, etc. The BnF website and intranet as well as Gallica are in accordance with the Accessiweb silver level label.
- Mobile apps have been implemented in order to meet the expectations of users who get to Gallica through mobile devices.
- Daily visitors to Gallica exceed 25 000 and their number has grown rapidly.
- Visits increased by 85% from 2009 to 2010, with 7.4 million visits, and by 25% from 2010 to 2011, with 9.5 million visits.
- 134 million pages were viewed in 2010; 150 million in 2011.
- Gallica reaches a public wider than those who usually come in person to the library, since only 20% of Gallicanauts also come to the BnF.

Responsiveness:

Gallica is modified very quickly in accordance with the remarks or reactions of online users expressed via email (gallica@bnf.fr) or social media.

Reliability:

More accurate search results due to a semantic search engine.

Other:

- Gallica's offer is one of the world leaders – whether public or private – particularly in the French-speaking part. Thanks to the history of the BnF, Gallica offers encyclopaedic collections, either documentary or patrimonial.
 - In order to meet the public's expectations through this offer, the BnF:
 - Conducts surveys of use and satisfaction.
 - Measures the quality of service with IP label (web performance monitoring) which simulates use every quarter of an hour.
 - Surveys the audience with XiTi (measuring website traffic).
 - Analyses the reactions of online users and modifies Gallica accordingly.
-

User satisfaction

- A use and satisfaction survey in 2011 demonstrated that 95% users are satisfied with Gallica. That being said, they have great expectations about search through digitised collections, information about the BnF digitisation policy, or downloads and viewing of documents.
 - Gallica content that is reused on websites, blogs, forums and social media is an important customer satisfaction indicator.
-

Other improvements

- Creation of “digital heritage” which is a priority. The BnF as a public operator generates high-quality metadata and offers guarantees with respect to long-term availability with its Distributed System for Preservation and Archiving («Système de préservation et d'archivage réparti » / SPAR).
 - Improved employee satisfaction:
 - Pride about the international BnF brand.
 - Many employees support Gallica in social media.
-

Evaluation

- In 2011, the audit firm « GMV Conseil » was entrusted with a survey in order to rate Gallica's users' satisfaction and anticipate their needs. Nearly 4 000 Gallica's users answered an online survey, which revealed a 95% satisfaction rate.
- During a qualitative study phase, further developments have been explored regarding the documents offered, the website usability and functionalities; target audiences have been more specifically surveyed about the reasons for their visit and their expectations.
- A permanent online survey conducted in the course of the BnF's permanent public observatory will soon gather datasets on Gallica's users' profiles, their satisfaction, their uses and technological devices, and their knowledge about the library. Using quantitative data, an observatory of the online uses of libraries' heritage will enable a more thorough analysis of search strategies through Gallica and of the types of content re-appropriation.

Development

Testing

- The first digitisation campaign took place in 1992.
 - The first digital library was created in 1997, with the aim of displaying treasures (showcase). A documentary approach with a large corpus digitised through the mass-digitisation programme followed this “museum” approach. Content has kept growing since (from 5 000 documents in 1997 to 2 million today, with a strong ramp-up from 2007 on), and the interface has been developing ever since.
 - 2007: European digital library prototype launches (Europeana.eu).
 - 2008: Gallica 2 project launches, displaying publishers’ e-books through the same Gallica interface.
 - 2009: Gallica and Gallica 2 merge; documents from partner libraries are integrated.
 - 2010: Exportable viewer for blogs, websites, etc. launches. Gallica’s exportable viewer makes it the ‘Daily motion’ of heritage books.
 - 2011: Introduction of 2.0 functionalities, e.g. the exportable viewer becomes Facebook-compatible so that Gallica’s resources can be viewed from Facebook walls.
 - “Gallica intra muros” launches.
 - 2012: Launch of Gallica and website mobile apps.
-

Implementation

Tools used:

- 2009: Newsletter.
 - 2010:
 - « Adoptez un livre » [Adopt a book] campaign launches. Anyone may choose a book and have it digitised and displayed in Gallica as long as the book is in the public domain.
 - Gallica opens a Facebook page.
 - 2011: Gallica opens a Twitter account.
 - 2012: Gallica opens a Pinterest account.
 - Digitisation campaigns (from 2005 on: press; from 2007 on: printed books, mass-digitisation; from 2009 on: special collections – manuscripts, maps, images, medals, scores, etc.) have played a part in a profound change of the digital library. Its interface has been adapted to this new content (an implementation of viewing and sharing functionalities followed a new version released in 2009).
 - Technical operations have been separated from marketing operations within the organisation.
 - The team in charge with developing Gallica interface has been using the Scrum method for the last two years. A new version is put into production every 2 or 3 months: thus, the digital library is sure to keep developing without interruption.
 - Users’ needs and satisfaction have been carefully taken into account.
-

Diffusion

- Europeana’s 2007 prototype built upon Gallica’s model. Europeana is a portal for digitised European cultural collections (compare under novelty).
 - Within the BnF, Gallica has been replicated into “Gallica intra muros” that showcases all the copyrighted library documents in the reading rooms (see under novelty).
 - No week goes by without foreign delegates visiting the BnF for a demonstration or explanation on the digital library.
 - The portal of the University of Strasbourg library (« Bibliothèque universitaire de Strasbourg » – BNUS) that will be launched soon under “Gallica white label” (see under novelty) demonstrates that other actors can be interested in a service identically derived from Gallica.
-

Challenges and solutions

- Gallica is a matter of 2 billion files. From a technical point of view, the number and size of these documents and files required important soft and hardware implementation (secure storage, etc.).
 - With respect to digitisation, the challenge Gallica is facing consists of combining industrial productivity with the preservation of heritage items.
-

Partnerships

Ministry, agency and libraries

Other Public Sector

We collaborated with the Ministry of Culture, department of books and reading, the National Agency for Books for the funding and with our partner libraries.

Unions and private companies

Private sector

- Our partners are the French Publishers Union (« Syndicat national de l'édition » / SNE), the French Booksellers Union (« Syndicat de la librairie française » / SLF) and Internet retailers.
 - A certain number of activities related to Gallica, such as digitisation operations, software implementations (as for the implementation of a mobile app or an advanced search engine integration) are conducted with private companies selected through calls for tender.
 - As for print-on-demand services, the BnF has struck partnerships with Hachette Books (« Hachette Livre»), TheBookEdition, Edilivre, Amazon, Les Editions du Net, YouScribe, i-Kiosque, etc.
-

Foundations

Civil Society

Our partners are:

- Wikimedia Foundation, with Wikisource project (collaborative correction of ca. 1 400 OCR-ed books - optical character recognition edited books).
 - The BnF Friends Association, with « Adoptez un livre » (the 'Adopt a book' campaign invites online users to fund the digitisation of books for them to be displayed through Gallica).
-

Service users

Other

Focus groups have been set up along with the surveys that the BnF conducted in the past years on Gallica uses and satisfaction rates.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- The marketing sector has been set apart from the technical sector, which was an efficient decision.
 - The project leadership – which is to say the marketing sector – has been entrusted to a curator, which was an efficient decision as well.
-

Other information

- Thanks to Gallica, the BnF is building up a new relationship with online users, providing them with tools to appropriate digital collections and to interact with the digitisation policy.
 - Thanks to Gallica, the BnF is building a new collaborative way of working. Through its presence in social media, the BnF manages a new community called “Gallicanauts”.
 - Thanks to Gallica, the BnF expands and diversifies its cooperation with partner libraries.
 - Gallica users are left free to read: individual-related data are not collected while they are reading.
 - Online tools related to Gallica:
 - Blog: <http://blog.bnf.fr/gallica>
 - Newsletter: http://www.bnf.fr/lettre_gallica
 - Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/GallicaBnF>
 - Twitter account: <http://twitter.com/GallicaBnF>
 - Pinterest account: <http://pinterest.com/gallicabnf>
-

Copyright OECD. All rights reserved.