



Découvrez le patrimoine documentaire numérique de la Francophonie

# A digital library for 274 million French speakers

<http://rfnum-bibliotheque.org>



## The network of the world's greatest documentary institutions

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The Réseau Francophone Numérique (RFN – Francophone Digital Network) is an association that brings together the French-speaking world's greatest documentary institutions.

The RFN came into being in 2006, born of the shared determination of the Presidents of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF – National Library of France) and the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ – National Library and Archives of Quebec); it was soon joined by the national libraries of Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg and Switzerland, and then by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (Egypt) and the Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc (BNRM – National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco).

This network, which gains new members each year, provides evidence - through unique but currently little known heritage collections, which are sometimes in danger of deterioration - of the intense cultural exchanges that have been made possible through shared use of the French language.

On the occasion of its General Assembly held in Brussels on 26 April 2016, the RFN was established as an international non-profit association under Belgian law, and opened its digital library to the public.

L'organisation internationale de la Francophonie has supported the RFN since its beginnings and has contributed to the creation of the French Language Digital Library.



*Morocco 1932-1933: travel journey illustrated with 30 original engravings in black / Henri Le Riche, 1933 (doc. Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc (National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco))*

## 26 members over 5 continents

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### The French-speaking world brought together...

1. Bibliothèque royale de Belgique (Royal Library of Belgium)
2. Bibliothèque nationale du Bénin (National Library of Benin)
3. Archives nationales du Bénin (National Archives of Benin)
4. Bibliothèque nationale du Burkina Faso (National Library of Burkina Faso)
5. Bibliothèque nationale du Cambodge (National Library of Cambodia)
6. Bibliothèque et Archives Canada (Canada Library and Archives)
7. Archives nationales du Congo (National Archives of Congo)
8. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (National Library and Archives of Quebec)
9. Bibliothèque nationale de Côte d'Ivoire (National Library of Ivory Coast)
10. Archives nationales de Côte d'Ivoire (National Archives of Ivory Coast)
11. Bibliotheca Alexandrina
12. Bibliothèque nationale de France (National Library of France)
13. Bibliothèque francophone multimédia de Limoges (Multimedia French Language Library of Limoges)
14. Bibliothèque nationale d'Haïti (National Library of Haiti)
15. Bibliothèque haïtienne des Pères du Saint-Esprit (Pères du Saint-Esprit Haitian Library)
16. Bibliothèque nationale de Luxembourg (National Library of Luxembourg)
17. Bibliothèque et Archives Universitaires d'Antananarivo (University Library and Archives of Antananarivo)
18. Bibliothèque nationale du Mali (National Library of Mali)
19. Bibliothèque nationale du Royaume du Maroc (National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco)
20. Archives nationales du Royaume du Maroc (National Archives of the Kingdom of Morocco)
21. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Sénégal (National Library and Archives of Senegal)
22. Bibliothèque centrale de l'Université Cheikh Anta Diop (Central Library of Cheikh Anta Diop University)
23. Institut fondamental d'Afrique noire (Fundamental Institute of Black Africa)
24. Bibliothèque nationale suisse (National Library of Switzerland)
25. Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie (National Library of Tunisia)
26. Bibliothèque nationale du Vietnam (National Library of Vietnam)

### ... in all its diversity

The members of the RFN are:

**< national libraries:**

Cambodia, Belgium, France, Haiti, Quebec, Switzerland, etc.

**< special libraries:**

Bibliotheca Alexandrina, University Library of Cheikh Anta Diop *University*, Pères du Saint-Esprit Haitian Library, Fundamental Institute of Black Africa (FIBA), etc.

**< national archives:** Benin, Ivory Coast, Senegal, etc.



Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc (National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco)



Bibliothèque nationale du Vietnam (National Library of Vietnam)



Bibliothèque nationale du Mali (National Library of Mali)



Bibliothèque royale de Belgique (Royal Library of Belgium)

## The presence of French-speaking cultures online

There are now 26 member institutions that actively contribute to the preservation and dissemination of French language content online.

Already involved in digitisation programmes, or anxious to develop projects in this area, they pool their efforts to improve access to written French language heritage.

Their action to promote a unique cultural and historical heritage is based on three objectives and five principles.

### Three objectives:

- To reflect the diversity of Northern and Southern countries' Francophone sources in cyberspace, over time and in the current context;
- To help member countries preserve and reconstitute the documentary heritage in their custody;
- To bring about conditions favouring the emergence of coherent shared digitisation programmes.

### Five principles

#### < Pluralism

No exclusivity given to any particular search engine as regards access to digital collections;

#### < Free of charge

Guaranteed free access to out-of-copyright documents;

#### < Public domain

Maintenance of digital files in the public domain and compliance with member countries' national legislation;

#### < Durability

Guaranteed long-term preservation;

#### < Promotion of the French language

Promotion of all forms of expression in French.



## "Gallica Marque Blanche", a digital project

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### Share Gallica expertise

Gallica Marque Blanche" reflects the BnF's will to pool the developments undertaken in order to design and develop Gallica, the digital library of the BnF and its partners. It thus, shares with its partners its functional and technological expertise

Gallica Marque Blanche is first and foremost a **digital cooperation project** aimed at institutions which have digitized - or wish to do so - part of their collections, but which do not have a dissemination platform or do not wish to develop one.

This project has resulted in the creation of a digital library based on the Gallica infrastructure but configured and customised in the colours of the RFN. It has a specific url that is completely separate from the bnf.fr domain name. It has its own graphic identity with respect to the graphic identity of the rfn.org network portal.

At its General Assembly in May 2015, the RFN expressed the wish to benefit from this expertise.

### A digital library for the French-speaking world

The RFN digital library benefits from maximum search engine optimisation, and provides 274 million French speakers (IOF figures) with the Gallica digital library's search and consultation functionalities.

Given the richness of contents to be included over time, geographic corpuses and theme-based selections will be on offer, presented by top Francophone researchers. For example, **Alain Rey**, French lexicographer and editor-in-chief of Le Robert publications, will be presenting the sections devoted to the French language, while sections tracing the dissemination of human rights will be introduced by Professor **Samba Thiam**, Director of the Institute for Human Rights and Peace at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar (Senegal).



## The digital French language library, a collaborative project

The project was carried out by the members of the RFN.

The **Bibliothèque nationale de France** coordinated the project, in addition to managing the creation, promotion, maintenance and hosting of the website. It ensures the preservation of documents (excluding third-party archiving services). Lastly, the BnF expanded the future digital library with its digitised collections related to the cultures of the member countries of the RFN.



**Bibliothèques et Archives nationales du Québec**, as part of maintaining the refnum.org portal, have developed the current site in such a way as to manage the technical relationship with the new digital library solution and the inclusion of existing content.

In order to take into account the state of technological advancement of the members of the RFN, two participatory approaches have been proposed. The digital libraries of the members of the RFN, where these exist, have been subject to metadata harvesting by the BnF. For the others, their digital files have been integrated into the future library.

### Official launch

The library's initial collection comprises around a thousand documents selected for their interest in terms of heritage. The utmost care has been taken with regard to the representativeness of the various countries and the variety of documents available on the site (prints, maps, batches of images, press, etc.).

10 members of the Network have agreed to contribute to the collection:

- Bibliothèque royale de Belgique (Royal Library of Belgium),
- Bibliothèque et Archives du Canada, (Library and Archives of Canada)
- Bibliothèque nationale de France, (National Library of France),
- Bibliothèque Haïtienne du Saint-Esprit, (Saint-Esprit Haitian Library),
- Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg (National Library of Luxembourg),
- Bibliothèque et Archives Universitaires d'Antananarivo (University Library and Archives of Antananarivo)
- Bibliothèque nationale du Royaume du Maroc (National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco),
- Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (National Library and Archives of Quebec),
- Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire de l'Université Cheikh Anta Diop du Sénégal (Fundamental Institute of Black Africa of Cheikh Anta Diop University of Senegal),
- Bibliothèque nationale de Suisse (National Library of Switzerland).



*Map of the old city of Mananjary, doc. Bibliothèque et Archives Universitaires d'Antananarivo (University Library and Archives of Antananarivo)*

This selection will be expanded gradually by the other partners.

## The Bibliothèque nationale de France at international level

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A source of knowledge, the Bibliothèque nationale de France remains the guarantor of authenticity and sustainability of a unique heritage contained in all types of documents - manuscripts, printed books, engravings, periodicals, photographs, maps, coins, audiovisual documents, video games, websites, etc.

Spread over 7 sites, the Library is home to documents collected over the last five centuries. Responsible for passing on this heritage to future generations, the BnF also takes care of the preservation, restoration and development of the collections in its custody.

Forever attentive to cultural and research practices, the BnF is modernising access to its collections and the way in which it approaches its audiences. Similarly, in line with the challenges of the digital transition, both from the point of view of preservation and knowledge dissemination, the Bibliothèque is developing an ambitious digitization policy regarding visible heritage via Gallica, a reference digital library, which enables remote access to over 4 million documents.

The narrator of a universal story, the BnF contributes to the democratisation of knowledge and the cultural influence of the national community.

The BnF works with both public and private international cultural operators worldwide to protect written heritage and to promote international research. This approach is grounded in the values of sharing and universalism, which lead it to consider the Eastern Mediterranean and French-speaking areas as key regions to show solidarity.

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