This quite unusual map was made possible through collective thinking about digital technologies and uses at the National Library of France. It follows two previous editions of the Institution’s Digital roadmap, which also aimed to visualise the strategic areas, the patterns, the distances, and the paths within the digital landscape of the Library and of its whole ecosystem.

This time, metaphor is used to bring humanity and poetry, to enable a common understanding of a complex subject and to promote the Library’s vision for the future. This document, drawing its inspiration from the Library’s collections of maps and plans which it will in its turn enrich, is a chance for you, Library staff, professionals from other organizations, partners, contractors, for all of you wherever you come from, to experience and truly explore its landscape.

The “digital world” which is thus unveiled in autumn 2020 is being released during an era – the global health crisis – that, in many respects, has upset the way we use and manage digital technologies. Adapting virtual content for different types of audience is more essential than ever, just like providing user-oriented and customised public services or remote working. Moreover, the digital divide has never been so relevant. The Digital roadmap takes into account these challenges within a renewed perspective, but it also suggests how valuable it can be for an institution to maintain a permanent, transversal and long-lasting critical reflection, enabling it to enrich its strategy and vision, and, above all, to face the most uncommon and unexpected situations. In this way, the digital working environment – of the staff as well as of the users – was identified long before March 2020 as a key field for changes to be initiated. This map is grounded on a strong base – including regions and geographic features, that echo the Library’s missions. Since the Library’s collective thinking about digital technologies and uses is bound to go on and because what we have learned from the health crisis will become clearer, it has also been designed to evolve over future editions. If you look closely, you will see the cartographers at work.