

Communication of documents: we answer to your questions

HOW TO ORDER DOCUMENTS

How do I order in advance?

I identify the documents via the General Catalogue or the other digital catalogues. I can ask a librarian a question using the SINDBAD service or make a dedicated onsite or remote appointment with a librarian in order to refine my bibliography. I order my documents in advance via my personal account, which is accessible upon confirmation of my registration. Order is possible up to 30 days before my arrival and up to 8 p.m. on the eve of my arrival (5 p.m. on Fridays). In the event of a problem, I am informed via a message in my personal account. When I arrive in the reading room, the documents I've ordered are available at the room desk. They're linked with my seat number.

Until what time can I order my documents for the following morning?

The deadline for document order is 8 p.m. (5 p.m. on Fridays).

Why is the deadline for order of documents for the next day set at 8 p.m. and not later in the evening?

The deadline for order of documents was originally set at 5 p.m. In order to respond to requests by readers' elected representatives, it was extended to 8 p.m. as from 2 May. So you can order in advance for the next day up until 8 p.m. (5 p.m. on Fridays).

Why can I only order up until 5 p.m. on Friday for Saturday and not 8 p.m.?

For reasons of internal organisation, there is fewer staff on Saturdays than on weekdays, so they are unable to spend time collecting documents from storage in the morning. However, the deadline for making orders for the same day has been extended to 5 p.m. instead of 4 p.m., as was the case before the health crisis.

Why can I no longer make an order in the morning for the afternoon as was possible before the health crisis? Is this a temporary measure?

The impossibility of validating all communication requests made in the morning for the same afternoon results from organisational and IT constraints alike.

We are aware of the inconvenience that this causes, and the IT developments required to rectify the situation will be finalised as from this September.

HOW DIRECT COMMUNICATION OF DOCUMENTS WORKS

How can I request direct communication of documents?

I can send my requests between 1:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. It takes an average of 30 minutes for documents to arrive after I have made my request. I can put references to one side in my personal account and order works via the link to the notes in the General Catalogue.

So I only have 3 hours to retrieve documents I've requested in direct communication?

No. The 1:30-5 p.m. timeslot is the period during which you can request documents in direct communication in addition to those you have ordered in advance. You can retrieve these documents at the room desk or ask them to be set aside for you until 8 p.m.

How can I avoid having to re-enter the resulting bibliographic references I've identified outside the direct communication timeslots?

You can memorise and classify all document references by using the "My Reference" service in your personal account, and send all your direct communication requests once it opens at 1:30 p.m. In September, this will be possible in the morning and will be taken into account automatically as from 1:30 p.m.

RESERVABLE DOCUMENT QUOTAS

How many documents can I order in advance every day? How many documents can I request onsite every day?

You can order up to 25 documents a day in advance, including 15 items of printed matter.

As from 1:30 p.m., you can place direct orders for 10 additional documents (on whatever medium).

Please note: you can add documents you put aside onsite the day before to these quotas (10 documents a day, whatever the medium).

How many documents can I put aside every day?

A maximum of 10 works per day per reader can be put aside and are added to the quotas of documents you can order in advance and documents you have ordered onsite.

How many open-access documents can I consult?

You can use as many open-access documents as you wish. The François-Mitterrand site's Research Library contains around 337,000 volumes in open access. Check that the works that interest you are not already in open access before requesting them in direct communication, as you can access them more quickly. You can consult works in open access that are housed in another room in the Research Library. Go to the reception desk in the room containing the work.

WHY THIS CHANGE IN CONSULTATION METHODS?

Why hasn't direct communication been reintroduced all day long?

In a context of stable staffing levels, the BnF must be able to carry out all its missions and meet changing needs.

It therefore adapts its organisation so as to make more time available in its staff's schedules, above all for conservation work on collections (press in particular) in order to ensure their future, such as preparing crawls and referencing of digital legal deposit so as not to deprive research of these resources.

Furthermore, the BnF does its utmost to meet its readers' expectations by providing such new services as remote access to new electronic resources (and, of course, continued access to the Gallica Digital Library's constantly enriched collections), elimination of the annual 10-day closure, creation of the BnF Data Lab to assist research in digital humanities, and full reopening of the Richelieu site with new services for its reading rooms.

Is the BnF the only national library to have developed direct communication methods and encouraged order in advance?

The evolution of communication methods at the BnF is by no means unique among national and international libraries, in which direct communication is usually subject to limitations connected with times (depending on certain timeslots or with communication at fixed times only), days of the week (with Saturdays excluded) or location of collections requested (which may have major proportions conserved on other sites).

Use of online tools continues to develop in libraries across the world, in particular through online order: Germany's National Library (DNB), Belgium's National Library (KBR), the British Library, the Library of Congress and the National Library of Australia all either recommend or require it.

Encouragement of this practice also solves any problems arising from externalisation of certain collections. For example, 70% of the British Library collection is conserved on external sites.

Is the system set in stone? Might it evolve? How exactly?

The system is not set in stone. The BnF has already made changes to its organisation by extending the deadline for order of documents for the following day to 8 p.m. (as against 5 p.m. as was the case originally) and creating an exceptional procedure for “1-day ticket” holders. It is currently working on further improvements.

In order to respond to the recommendations of the Scientific Council, the BnF immediately began to redesign its document reservation application to make it more ergonomic and to allow, on site, in the morning, the direct communication's request for the afternoon without waiting for the opening of the direct communication. This improvement will be implemented as of Fall 2022.

At the request of the Minister of Culture, the Director General of Media and Cultural Industries confirmed at the Board of Directors meeting on June 30th that the Ministry was granting additional posts to the BnF. This increase in staffing will make it possible, as of the beginning of the school year, to

- extend until midnight, instead of 8pm, the possibility of ordering documents for the following morning (within the limit of an increased quota of 25 documents) except on Fridays (5pm)
- ensure the start of direct communication of documents held in the shop from 12 noon instead of 1:30 pm.

The BnF teams are also working on other changes:

- Automatic lockers for more autonomy (July 2022);
- Updating of the documents available for free access in the research library, which will take greater account of your uses and suggestions (2023)
- Full reopening of the Richelieu site on 19 September with extended evening opening hours.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION ON CONSULTING DOCUMENTS

Is there an exceptional procedure for readers who are only at the Library for a single day?

Yes. Holders of a 1-Day Research Pass can go to reception or the registration area in the East Halland, exceptionally, obtain documents by direct communication in the morning.

Why are the cloakrooms now fully automated?

Automatic operation of cloakrooms enables smoother access to them.

Their automation has also done away with the tedious work involved, and all cloakroom staff have been offered new positions.

An information point will be maintained in the automatic cloakrooms.

Many of the Library's other services (reception areas in the halls and at the foot of the towers, bibliographical information, communication and return of documents, etc.) ensure maintenance of direct exchanges between the BnF's users and its staff.

How long will the annual closure last?

The annual technical closure has been reduced to half a day, as against 10 days previously (as from the beginning of September).

This year's closure is scheduled for the afternoon of Monday 20 June 2022.

The technical and scientific operations previously carried out during the closure period will henceforth take place without closing the site to the public.

Are the same changes to be made on the BnF's other sites?

No. Communication methods on the Richelieu and Arsenal sites and at Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra and Bibliothèque de la Maison Jean Vilar remain unchanged.

Why is the Research Library's café/club closed?

The café/club is managed by an external service provider whose activity and economic situation were greatly impacted by the health crisis. We hope that the service provider will be able to reopen it in the near future. However, the Café des Globes in the West Hall is still open for refreshments.

CHANGES IN BNF PASS PRICES

What is the reason for the Research Pass price increase?

At €55, the new full rate planned for September is lower than the rate prior to 2017, which was €60. The new rate is limited to a simple update to take account of inflation, while, at the same time, there has been an increase in the services on offer, with addition of access to the electronic resources that have been developed significantly over the last two years, access to the BnF's museum, which will be opening in September 2022, and access to the temporary exhibitions held on the Richelieu site.

At the suggestion of the President, Laurence Engel, the Board of Directors has decided to maintain the reduced rate for the unlimited annual Research Pass at €35 per year.

The BnF subscribes to paying electronic resources that it makes available to its users free of charge, onsite and remotely. All branches of knowledge are covered through a wide variety of

publishers and resources, including the press, databases in multiple disciplines, books, encyclopaedias and bibliographies (70,000 electronic journals, 160,000 electronic books and 200 databases).

How are the BnF's budgetary and human resources evolving? Is the Library implementing an austerity policy?

The BnF has no intention of implementing an austerity policy, which would mean reducing its resources. On the contrary, these are increasing. The institution's subsidies increased by €12 M (+6%) between 2017 and 2022 (apart from exceptional funding), staff appropriations increased by €10 M over the same period (+7%), and staffing levels are stable.

Like any other public institution, we have the responsibility of allocating our resources in such a way as to ensure that we fulfil our missions in the best possible fashion.

The BnF is currently in a position to meet its many responsibilities: smooth operation of the Richelieu site, which will be opening with an extended offer (renovation of research rooms and the Oval Room, and the new museum) thanks to State investment of €250 M; adaptation to the upcoming digital legal deposit, which saw major legal progress at end 2021; and the future of its collections, with creation of a new conservation centre with investment of almost €100 M, whose funding plan has been finalised and which will provide unprecedented long-term conservation and enrichment capacities throughout the century.

What proportion of the BnF's budget is allocated to supporting research and what proportion to its cultural offer?

Support to research accounts for over 80% of the BnF's appropriations and jobs. The cultural offer currently accounts for 5% of expenditures, a proportion that will rise to 6% following the opening of the renovated Richelieu site and introduction of the new offers it is set to provide.

What impacts have these changes had on the BnF staff's workload?

In a context of stable staffing levels, this new organisation enables storekeepers to rebalance their schedules between shift work (which will be reduced) ensuring communication of documents, and work on collections (which will be increased), in particular in order to enable them to participate in the projects necessary to the Library's future and its future readers.