

FRANCE'S UPDATE NAPLE ASSEMBLY 2013. Gérard Cohen

In 2012-2013, France initiated many measures encouraging the introduction of e-books in libraries. I will mention three of them that summarize our working method of gathering information, holding consultations, and then taking action. We operate on a contractual basis and take into account technical and training issues.

- We have commissioned IDATE Consulting (<http://www.idate.org/en/Home/>) to examine the status of the e-book in French public libraries as compared to 5 other European countries (Germany, Spain, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Sweden) and North American countries (USA, Canada).

Two groups emerge: the Anglo-Saxon countries (including Québec!), where the e-book is present in 75 to 100% of their libraries, and those where there are less than 15%. In France, with less than 10,000 e-books available in 4,000 public libraries, it represents 1.5%. We hope to change this situation in the near future, taking into consideration the evolution of the e-book market in France and Europe.

In 2011, Government aid to public libraries (€ 80 million per year as compared to a global expense of about €1 billion) was reoriented in order to promote digital technology. These incentives include developing the necessary IT infrastructure for the implementation of digital services and, under certain conditions, buying digital collections.

- An interprofessional working group on the subject of e-books in libraries is bringing together authors, publishers, book distributors, political entities, and librarians' associations. The group's purpose is to draft a document that provides a set of rules for ameliorating fair access to e-books in libraries.
- The "ReLire" ("Re-Reading") project unites authors, publishers and the French Government in the establishment of a paid database of 20th century French books that are unavailable elsewhere in printed form.

The catalogue of these French books is available on the Bibliothèque nationale de France website (<http://relire.bnf.fr>). A project group, involving French publishers and the French government, will organize the digitalization of the books and a collective management company will grant the operating licenses to economic players. A special offer for libraries is planned.