• The France-Poland digital library was first presented last year during the CDNL session at IFLA in Wroclaw in August 2017 and officially launched earlier this year with media coverage in Nancy in February.

• This presentation aims at introducing the methodology of such a digital project and what we have learned in order to improve, strengthen our methodology.

• I will first explain the context within which it is taking place.
I would like to give a brief overview of our international cooperation policy as our international digital partnerships take place in this context.

With an involvement in over 60 organisations and network, an European commitment through Europeana and CENL and a strong commitment to Francophonie

At stake is:

- the global influence of the library based on:
  - Global collections as well as Francophonie are the legacy of a global past but ensure a global cultural influence and political influence today.
  - an expertise in terms of digital technology and cultural engineering and know how

- The « big picture »: as part of a larger cultural and political agenda, of the global influence of France (Foreign affairs + culture) and the cooperation with Unesco within the framework of the safeguarding of the Timbuktu manuscripts and in the wake of the Abu Dhabi Conference on Endangered Heritage and the resulting declaration, in Dec. 2016, the BnF is part of the international network of safe places. Global collections is synonymous of global responsibility in terms of preservation, signaling, promotion and sharing.

- The axes of this cooperation policy are:
  - Digital unification & endangered heritage
  - Expertise
  - Data
  - The idea of solidarity
What do we mean by digital unification?

Digital unification is the act of bringing together related documentary heritage in one virtual place thanks to digitisation in order to increase access to a global heritage.

It is as well a way to promote cooperation between libraries.

Digitisation does not stop at the creation and hosting of images. Providing access in a meaningful way to different audiences now and in the future implies to imagine digital services through which content is not only made available but put in context by scholars.

Digital unification is not necessarily driven by the question of restitution and this is obviously not the case for “France-Poland”.

Digital reconstruction after human or natural disasters: In 2012, after an act of arson against the Egyptian Scientific Institute, the BnF supplied digital files of collections related, in particular to the French Campaign in Egypt and Syria (1798-1801) and the famous Scientific Expedition to Egypt associated to it.

Constructing new corpuses: Manuscripts from the British Library and the BnF, 700-1200 and the International Collection of Digitized Hebrew Manuscripts program, held by the National library of Israel and the database KTIV.

Digitisation for cultural outreach: Through a scientific cooperation project with the publisher Shanghai Far East Publishing, it has been possible to produce a facsimile of “Forty scenes of the Yuanmingyuan, Old Summer Palace in Beijing”, a unique document preserved at the BnF.

Reconstructing scattered bodies of documents

a) European Regia: This project played an important role in the BnF digital unification strategy regarding French heritage. More than 1000 rare and precious manuscripts from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were digitized. All of them were once part of three major royal collections: The Bibliotheca Carolina (8th and 9th centuries); The Library of Charles V and Family (14th century) and The Library of the Aragonese Kings of Naples (15th and 16th centuries). The Library of Charles V is of particular interest as it is considered as the very origin of the royal collection. The collection was sent to London where it was broken up in 1435 after the death of its current owner, the Duke of Bedford.

b) The Dunhuang manuscripts

The BnF holds a rich Chinese collection among others 8 000 of the Dunhuang manuscripts. In 2015, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Dunhuang Academy and the BnF regarding scientific cooperation within the framework of the International Dunhuang Project (IDP). The donation of all files related to the IDP held by the BnF is at the heart of this agreement aiming at nurturing scholarly work. A set of files was also given to the National Library of China for long term preservation purposes.
France has had a global past and share ties with most countries, it is especially true for the ones which today have French as an official language and this the reason why we launched BFN, the French digital library last year.

**BFN** plays this role on a more global scale and put forth a shared destiny. It plays also a major role in terms of preserving and disseminating online content for partners which are not able yet to operate a digital library of their own not to maintain a repository. It has an incentive character to promote digitization knowing that a stable technical infrastructure exists.

It is not part of our collection “Shared heritage” because we develop it on behalf of a RFN, a consortium which gather French speaking institutions around the world.

It is an answer to a specific need.
It is the ambition of the collection "Shared heritage" to collect outstanding documents related to the relations between France and the world, in order to make them accessible everywhere and to all and to put them in context thanks to the latest researches findings as well.

Diplomatic, commercial, scientific and cultural exchanges compose the very fabric of the relations between France and many countries around the world, a shared history ripe with convergences and tensions. Thousands of manuscript or printed pages, photographs, prints, posters and maps, scattered among many institutions, bear witness to the wealth of these exchanges.

The BnF and its partners in France and abroad take these unique documents from their collections and digitize them to introduce them in a new collection of thematic websites. In order to better understand them, and foreign experts and scholars have been solicited to highlight these sources by their analyzes.

The main idea in terms of organisation is also to offer a reproducible framework that can be used for any project in terms of tools, internal and external procedures, phasing and calendar. It is a work in progress, the launching is only a beginning.

The collection in its current format is made of: France-Poland and Bibliothèques d'Orient. France-China and France-Vietnam are in the making and will be followed by France-India.
Those are first attempts as they were not meant as being part of a coherent collection and are disseminated on different sites, they are all different in terms of design and intention.

France in America: Conceived in partnership with France’s national library, the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the L.oC is on the L.oC’s website and on Gallica it is frozen. It is to be revamped as a digital library of the collection “Shared heritage” with more partners.

France-Brazil is hosted by the National Library of Brazil and is due to migrate to the collection later this year.

France-Japan which in fact is a digital exposition, a portal about our Japanese resources, The Diet Library having created a parallel exhibition on the same topic. This is a closed project, you cannot load more content and articles. This is exactly what we would like to avoid.
France and Poland share a particular rich history since the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. Paris was the exile capital of Poland during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and up to WW1 and an important part of Polish cultural life thrived in Paris which became in fact the capital of the Polish exile. The various waves of Polish immigration have helped nurturing strong bonds between the two nations. Given the extensive destruction of Polish heritage during WWII, the so-called “Polonica “ held by the BnF are of particular importance. Therefore, both the National Library of Poland ans the National Library of France have wished to bring together and enhance this past in a project which is a form of digital unification.

The digital library France-Poland covers Franco-Polish relations from the Renaissance to the Second World War. The documentary selection was carried out by a high-level scientific team bringing together the curators of the BnF, the National Library of Poland and the partner libraries.

Upon opening in 2017, the website gathers a corpus of about 3,000 documents in the public domain. The selection of documents is very diverse: official acts, scholarly works, testimonies on daily life, customs, science and culture, printed books, manuscripts, but also maps, prints, photographs, podcasts and videos enrich these selections and give life to centuries of history.

Access to documents takes place through four main sections (\textit{Kings and Queens}, \textit{Key moments}, \textit{Science and Arts}, \textit{Literature}); themselves subdivided into sub-themes, which can present single documents or sets of remarkable documents. Within these sections, digital items are editorialized and contextualized thanks to articles written by specialists, researchers and library curators. This website will be enriched gradually thanks to new contributions and partners.
What we learned is about being able

- To establish a methodology that is reproducible for any of the upcoming digital library within the framework of « Shared heritage »

- in order to be more efficient internally

- and in our relation to our partner(s).

- first you need strategy, to reach clarity and finally achieve success.
You are to plan a set of internal and external actions often to be led in parallel.

The need of a clear calendar:

- 24 months,
- split in two,

- **Year one**: is about procedures:
  - Internally: setting up procedures,
  - Externally: liaising with partners and establishing legal frameworks

- **Year two**: is about production:
  - Creation of the website,
  - Dispatching content according to the tree structure
  - Producing articles,
  - Digitization,
  - Launching
  - Evaluation
First year

**Legitimacy**: part of the library strategy and validated as such is key to the success of the project and to your capacity to respect the calendar, good will or intellectual legitimacy is not enough.

**Team building**: A project manager and a scientific expert designated for the entire duration of the project and in charge of setting up a project team, those two persons are key to set up the team and manage it.

This team which includes all persons involved at one point or another in the project. Among them are: a metadata specialist, the digitization department, the staff in charge of the national library network, and within the team, there is a smaller one: the scientific team, made of various curators. It is like a nucleus as this team meets on a regular basis: every two months or every three months depending on the amount of material to be search in the collections.

**Missions & validations**: all designated agents across the library to be part of the team must have a clear mandate, an engagement letter listing what they are responsible for within the framework of the project. It is part of their daily tasks like any other task. Validated by the top management. Back to the legitimacy issue.

**Technical aspects**: Assessing what is already digitized is the easy part. What ought to be digitized will be part of a negotiation within the much larger framework of the digitization strategy and programmes already implemented and this means to fit into an already established digitization calendar. It is key for year 2: the production year but keep in mind that the project will keep on living after its launch, therefore it can be a good idea to establish priorities in your selections: has to be present at the launching, can be added the year after.
• **First year**

• **Liaising with potential partners nationwide and internationally**
  • The legal framework is to be agreed upon well in advance as it includes financial and technical aspects.
  
  • Regarding content, the use of ARK links or harvesting vs harvesting + ingestion of files is one of them. Harvesting + file ingestion can be a necessity if your partner does not have a digital library or repository of its own but generally speaking means a better user experience as the user stays in the same digital environment, OCR can be applied on all documents, maintenance work by partners on their website is not a concern anymore.
  
  • On the other hand, digital resources accessed in the source environment, the partner library, or integrated in your digital library can also be political as the issue of visibility is involved. For example the BDIC was against ingestion of files and wanted the consultation to take place on its website.
  
  • Establishing of who is in charge of running the site.
  
  • Split of cost: digitization and enhancement costs (articles + translations are paid by each partner).
  
  • At the national level, the BnF can cover part of the digitization cost (up to 50%).

• **Liaising with scholars:** Setting up a scientific committee made of experts and scholars is key to the project’s success and relevance, validating the topics and the tree structure.

• **Liaising with sponsors:** in order to support possible cataloguing, restoration, digitization or enhancement cost. It has not been the case so far for France-Poland the EKN grant issued by the CENL and split with the National Library of Poland set apart. For Bibliothèques d’Orient it has been instrumental to the project with monies comming from TOTAL and Plastic Omnium. **Sponsorship allows you to think big and to convince within the library that it can be a way to digitize more and through this external conversation you strengthen your internal position. People may not be crazy about your project as such but at least it brings money in. « Realpolitik » is always a good card to play and the word « funding » works wonders.**
Second year

Digitization (+/-) Needs have been assessed in advance, planned prior to digitization itself, if so demands are more likely to go through and to take place within the framework of your calendar. If major documents are not there, their absence will be noticed immediately.

The finish date and the structure: print, specialized documents, press, manuscripts of your digitization market matters.

Articles (work of the scientific committee in identifying scholars and specialists) + translations. Those are two actions that go hand in hand, be careful about the deadlines, beware of the fact that necessary skills and knowledge may lie way beyond what a regular translation company offers.

Launching and communication++++, very important, to communicate as much as you can in the professional field for example IFLA and LIBER but also through social media, tv and print press. It is part of your legitimacy and branding to catch new partners as it does not stop here.

Evaluation: what worked? what didn’t? Evaluation matters as lessons are of value for the next project. Remember that beyond the success of the project and its intellectual interest, improvement of the reproducibility process is at stake.

It is not just about improving procedures, it is also about acceptance of, and more important adhesion to, in this particular case, the « collection » as part of the library research and digital strategy. Digital humanities are a new task, it is time consuming, people need to adjust and to make the idea theirs. It is a process, it takes time and evaluation is the proof that their concerns or critics are taken into consideration and that they are, as individuals, valued beyond their mere contribution in the process.
Beyond the second year

The digital library must keep on living! We are not here talking about usage but providing:

- new content,
- new articles,
- new partners

How can it be done?

Through:

- adding more documents as your digitization programme at the library level goes on
- searching new partners in the field nationwide and internationally. In 2018, the National Museum of Warsaw as well as the Archives diplomatiques and the University of Lille III, commit to the project. Needless to say, that both national libraries intend to enrich the digital library as they pursue their digitization activities.
- Regarding the digital infrastructure, it is bound to evolve as potential improvements have been listed and are to be carried out.
- With regard to new partners, i will recommend a strong advocacy in favor of file ingestion with harvesting.
- engaging with users and scholars = feedback, new ideas, advices, corrections as it leads to new articles, more descriptions of single documents, improvement or replacement of existing articles if of a lower quality: ex. Norblin