Collaborative uses in a digital library: the case of Gallica developed by the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF).

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Hearing voices: connecting with users, enhancing services
Boston, June 3, 2009
Context and issues

Methodology

Key findings
- The public and its needs
- The public and the library

Decisions, new issues, collaboration in finding answers
Issues

Survey on social and collaborative uses for digital resources
("Étude sur les usages communautaires et collaboratifs autour de ressources numérisées")

Context

- Public
  - Everyone or no one?

- Strategy
  - Low barrier approach (services & collections)
  - BnF’s involvement in user studies (national and European level)
  - Research programs on online communities

- Collections
  - Large scale digitization programs
  - Integration of copyrighted resources (work with publishers)
  - Remote access to licensed resources planned

- Services
  - European(a) dreams
  - New “beta” version of the digital library (very incomplete at the beginning of the survey), parallel to the “old” version (2000).
The future, seen from the past

Collaborative tagging & social indexing & groups

http://maquette.bnf.fr/labs/old/scenario/Europeana.html
The future, seen from the past
The future, seen from the past
The future, seen from the past
The “new” digital library, back then

Google-like simple search

Low barrier approach

My account
The “new” digital library, back then
Context and coverage

» Initial coverage of the survey
  ▪ NL digital collections
    • Digital library Gallica
    • Digitized images (Mandragore, Daguerre)
  ▪ Online exhibitions and education resources
  ▪ Web Archive
  ▪ Virtual reference library
  ▪ Online journals and licensed databases

» .... focused on the core digital library
Methodology

» Social functionalities
  ▪ For whom?
  ▪ Special collections and special needs
  ▪ “Invisible communities” the library can help to realize?

» Methodology
  ▪ Externalisation
  ▪ Staff interviews
  ▪ Online questionnaire (15 questions)
    • On both websites Gallica and Gallica2 (Dec. 12, 2007 until January 7, 2008)
    • 1269 filled forms
    • 611 volunteering for interviews and focus groups
  ▪ 40 semi-structured interviews (France / abroad)
  ▪ Focus groups (passionate people / web marketing / cognitive approach)
Key findings (the public and its needs)

» Gender: **73% male (average: 51yo)** / 23 % female (average: 41yo)

» Age: 14-94 yo. Average: 48
  - 20% also patrons at the BnF (from all over the world)

» Geography: 22% Paris and region; 45% rest of France; 25% abroad
  - Matches the statistical information for overall users
Key findings (the public and its needs)

» Professional situation
  - **Students**: 13% (French population: 4%)
  - **Retired**: 22% (increasing, French population: 20%)
  - Economically active: 52%, (French population: 75%), among them Faculty members

» Newcomers / Visitors / Frequent users
  - 3 thirds
    - Frequent users: 19 % several times / week and 15% once a week
    - Methodological difficulties

» “I am looking for…”
  - Documentary need vs. Curiosity
    - 41% with specified documentary need (I am looking for one particular resource and wondering if it is available on Gallica)
    - 10% consult a resource they have already seen
    - 35% searching for resources on a theme
    - 14% just curious
Key findings (the public and its needs)

» Online behavior:
  - 74% “passive” users
  - 10% “reacting” users (comment)
  - 15% “active” users (comment and/or publish)
    • 27% very active users (several times a day)
    • 79% male
Key findings (the public and the library)

» Positive feeling and trust in the library/librarians
  - Reaction to other digital repositories: the librarian does it better!
  - Reaction to networking site and rating services: mixed feelings

» A one-to-one relationship with the library
  - (No) Need to share?
    • More than 1/3 is already sharing… elsewhere
    • 15% would like to know people with the same interests
  - Personalization: yes!
  - Social web and documents: “collaborate with the library!”

» Great expectations and great fears (quality, price, access)
  - Digitization consistency
  - Public / private sector
Understanding the findings (the public and the public libraries): some comparison

**USA:**
- 68% library card
- 76% visited local library in the past year

**Satisfaction:**
- 59% extremely or very satisfied
- 68% of users extremely or very satisfied
- 40% of non users

- 91% libraries have major role (92% “important education resource”; 72% “pillar of the community”; 71% “community center”)

**France**
- 18% library card
- 43% visited their local library in the past year

**Satisfaction**
- 74% of users extremely or very satisfied
- 44% of non-users

- 80% “useful to everyone”
- 63% “libraries are not appealing”

- Library = high culture
  ≠ leisure, especially among non-users


Conclusions

» What we learned from our study
  - Adequate coverage and time
    - Too many issues for one survey
    - In-between (copyrighted resources, personalization tools, text search, 2 websites)
    - Social web in France (at the beginning of Facebook and Twitter)
  - Use > Functionality
    - No sharing tool, only resource-oriented collaboration
    - Enhancement of curator’s choices / digitization policies
    - Semantic search engines / social indexing?
  - No-barrier approach
    - API instead of functionalities
    - Fluid navigation

» Some new questions
  - Is the public now satisfied with the new tools?
  - New issues
    - Copyrighted resources within the library: ergonomics and services
    - Wikipedia and Europeana became the biggest user-provider for Gallica / other digital libraries?
    - Mobile access
  - New digitization strategy
    - Sustainable growth
Collaboration

Opportunities for collaboration in finding answers!

- User surveys?
- Profiling?
- Defining what can be the target public of a research institution’s digital library
- Portals?
- Research collections & large public together? / what is a too “large scale” digital library for building online communities?
- Is the symbolical violence the only reason for the users’ paradox?

Any question?

http://i71.photobucket.com/albums/i144/donnahayes/question-mark3a.jpg