Gallica: Digital Library of the Bibliothèque nationale de France
http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN Accessed 21 May 2013.
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This review goes beyond U.S. borders and focuses on Gallica, the digital library for the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, France, which debuted on-line in 1997. The digital library's mission is to preserve French heritage and to serve as a national encyclopedia of France. At the time of this review there were around 2,481,913 documents in the digital library. Conveniently, all of these can be searched using the simple search bar located at the top of each page (similar to Google). The user may restrict the search to a specific format by selecting one of the seven tabs corresponding to the different formats of digitized materials. These seven formats are again presented under the "Discover" arrowed section. Selecting a format allows the user to browse materials limited to that format. Users can also browse by characters, works, themes, places, or events under the "A selection" arrow. To provide a wide-range of access in addition to the native French, the main page and search navigation can be translated into English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German.

Gallica does an excellent job of bridging the content of traditional libraries with archives and museums, and the digitized content reflects Voss' "archivist as DJ" model. There rare books, manuscripts, maps, images, periodicals, sound recordings and music scores all mashed-up into a single searchable database. Several featured digital collections blend objects, visual materials, and manuscripts into one experience that allows the user to jump from one link to the next, connecting the documents within the vast digital library. In fact, each digital record has its own unique link, which provides a wide range of connectivity through embeddable widgets, thumbnails, Facebook, Twitter, or email. Gallica makes sharing any particular document in the library a simple task, opening various avenues for discoverability and access for researchers, as well as curious patrons.

Looking at the main page of the digital library, it is apparent that Gallica has a strong social media presence and makes use of Web 2.0 technologies. Under the "What's New" arrowed section are links to Gallica's Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Netvibes, and Blog. The latest blog posts are also featured near the bottom of the page near a newsletter sign-up box. Additionally, users can subscribe to RSS feeds that provide updates on newly available documents under the "Information and services" arrowed section. Also included in this section is the "Gallica applications" tab which offers an app for browsing the digital library with Apple[1] or Android products. Finally, the "ePub" tab specifically highlights all of the content that is available to download in an E-book format. These

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[1] A video can be found here: http://youtu.be/ozBH7pU32KE

efforts by Gallica show a commitment to enhanced exposure and promotion of its digital library through up-to-date social media and online technologies.

As for Gallica's collaborative efforts, there are approximately 41 partners, ranging from libraries, archives, and museums in France to international partners like the Library of Congress in the United States. In addition there are 15 e-distributor partners that work with Gallica. Gallica's about page explains itself as "*Une bibliothèque collective*" (a collective library), and it achieves exactly that. With its enormous amount of unique linkable content, strong commitment to social media, Web 2.0 technologies, and collaborative efforts across France and internationally, Gallica digital library fosters a unique archival content community.

The overall usability of the Gallica digital library is high for anyone performing serious research or even just taking a cursory look at some interesting documents. There are options to zoom on documents, full screen views, and most allow full text searching or a downloadable copy. Much of the content can be browsed page by page. This offers a view with striking clarity that allows users to get a personal experience that can only be rivaled by physically handling the materials at the Bibliothèque nationale.[2] Users can order a reproduction if it is needed or report an anomaly within the document. The digital library can definitely save researchers a trip to France because the library offers a wide variety of rich content such as full runs of historic newspapers, images, complete books, and illuminated manuscripts. There are some minor drawbacks, especially if one is unable to read French, as several areas of the website and the metadata is entirely in French; this also effects and potentially inhibits searching. Finally, not all of the documents are available for download or complete viewing because there are some parts of the collection that require a subscription service.

Other than these minor issues, Gallica is a wonderful example of a collaborative digital library that goes beyond simply putting digital content online. Gallica undoubtedly succeeds with its mission of preserving the cultural heritage of France, as well as providing a national encyclopedia. For users at all interested in France or its history, Gallica is a great digital resource that aids in the quest for knowledge.

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[2] An example of an illuminated manuscript can be found here
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000083z/f19.image