

## Proposals and activities supporting digital bibliodiversity

### Recommendations

#### Addressed to independent publishers

- **Invest in the digital field.** It is important that all independent publishers know how to develop simple valid ePUB files. Without this basic knowledge, service providers (conversion, enhancement, etc.) could occupy an over-determining position in the book chain.
- **Develop digital reading practices (on tablets, Smartphones, etc.).** The content of e-books should not be developed by digital experts for frequent digital users. E-books must be designed by publishers themselves. The development of digital reading habits could enable the improvement of the general quality of e-books and would make publishers aware of issues related to the e-book market.
- **Curb piracy by establishing a pact built on trust with readers rather than through DRM.** If publishers propose more e-books on their list (good quality and well priced e-books), readers would have fewer reasons for pirating books. Anti-piracy techniques such as DRM penalise publishers because they complicate the purchase. There are other instruments that are better adapted and less binding for readers, such as watermarking solutions used by, among others, [Verso Books](#).
- **Establish synergies with other cultural industries** (including music and cinema) that experience similar impacts, including through their relationships with major distribution platforms.
- **Develop the usage of existing open software and tools**, for example for the creation of web templates or for the production of ePUB format books.
- **Support traditional independent bookshops in the development of online sales platforms** to support the emergence of local digital ecosystems, decreasing the dependence of publishers on major digital platforms such as Amazon.
- **Generalise the facilitation of digital publishing meetings** in partnership with major international book fairs, which provide an opportunity to connect traditional publishers and digital actors. Host, in the context of these meetings, technical training sessions for independent publishing houses staff.

#### To the attention of standardisation organisations

- **Define e-books standards in collaboration with publishers (contents creators) and not uniquely with dealers.** Because of costs and time, it is sometimes difficult for independent publishers to produce e-books in various formats. It is therefore necessary to consider the publishers' limitations when developing standards, which would facilitate ownership.
- **Consider problems and issues linked to e-books formats and metadata in non-Western languages** (Arabic, Farsi, etc.). For example, currently, it is not possible to reference e-books

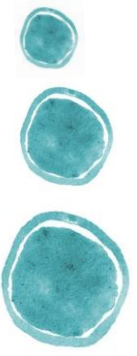
in Farsi (or printing-on-demand) based on author, publisher, etc. The lack of metadata means that books are not easily found via Google. Given that Farsi is different from Arabic for only 4 letters, tools used for Arabic could also take Farsi into account.

### To the attention of libraries and digital libraries

- **Purchase, in libraries of the North, digital contents published by publishers of the South.** The availability of e-books produced in the South in libraries of the North is an opportunity for these books to circulate, and for readers to access outputs from the South, strengthening backlists and ensuring an increased representation of publishing diversity.
- **Carry out surveys on the number of titles in local languages available in digital format in each country's libraries,** including in the Arab world, in order to evaluate the degree of in-library digital bibliodiversity - or remediate if necessary.

### To the attention of public authorities and international institutions

- Include and consider all problematics and issues related to digitalization in the **UNESCO “Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions”**.
- **Develop a fixed e-book price** to prevent major digital platforms from abusing their dominant position to bring down the price of books, depriving publishers of business competition.
- **Ensure that major digital platforms pay the same taxes as local bookshops in the countries where they operate.** If Amazon can propose preferential trading conditions to consumers, it is because they pay lower tax than local businesses (bookshops, online bookshops, digital publishers, etc.). In France, for example, the quasi-totality of trade made by the American giant company is declared in Luxembourg. This practice, apparent to tax evasion, enables Amazon to avoid tax and therefore suppresses competition. To support the emergence of actors alternative to Amazon, and the development of online sales via bookshops, it is therefore essential that tax regulations be the same for all and that a similar level of competition be guaranteed.
- **Establish support funds for digitalisation of backlists,** including for developing countries publishers that can hardly address this issue (for financial, technical, and human resources related reasons).
- **Engage with public authorities and banking institutions regarding the necessity of enabling secure local online payments,** essential to the development of e-book trade.
- **Lift financial sanctions against banks in Iran when transactions are related to Iranian cultural actors and publishers.** Because of these sanctions, Iranian publishers cannot sell their e-books abroad. In order to do this, they have to register a business abroad, which involves additional costs. Sanctions against Iranian banks prevent local publishers from transferring copyrights and purchase software.



### To the attention of software designers

- **Establish preferential rates for independent publishers, for the purchase of software necessary to develop e-books.** Digital publishing involves important external costs (software purchases, licences, etc.) that add to the production costs (copyrights, layout, distribution, promotion, etc.). These costs are difficult to absorb for independent publishers, contrary to major publishing groups.
- **Develop tools enabling the creation of e-books in Farsi.** The creation of Farsi e-books with Indesign is extremely complex at present, and is only made possible through haphazard solutions. It is imperative to create tools that would enable the creation of good quality Farsi ePUB.

### Toolboxes (non exhaustive)

#### Existing tools of the Alliance's Digital Lab ([www.alliance-lab.org](http://www.alliance-lab.org))

- **Study on digital publishing in developing countries** (<http://alliance-lab.org/etude/?lang=fr>), by Octavio KULESZ (Argentinian digital publisher)
- **Practical files:** book promotion in times of digital publishing; usage of XML/HTML/CSS... <http://alliance-lab.org/archives/category/ressources?lang=fr>
- **Video tutorials** on “Create an ePUB with Sigil” and “Create an ePUB with Calibre” themes: <http://alliance-lab.org/archives/category/ressources/videos-ressources?lang=fr>
- **Manual** supporting the development of a commercial website using Prestashop: <http://alliance-lab.org/?s=prestashop&lang=fr>
- **The Amazon system, what threat for bibliodiversity?”**, considerations proposed by the International Alliance of independent publishers (October 2014): <http://alliance-lab.org/archives/2320?lang=fr#.VG36a2evjcs>

#### Other references/ online resources (list to be completed)

- **Social media** for usage by publishers, guide developed by the Centre régional des Lettres de Basse Normandie (Lower Normandy Regional Centre for Letters): [http://www.fill.fr//images/documents/vad\\_m\\_cum\\_r\\_seaux\\_sociaux\\_lusage\\_des\\_diteurs.pdf](http://www.fill.fr//images/documents/vad_m_cum_r_seaux_sociaux_lusage_des_diteurs.pdf)
- **Publishing Perspectives:** [www.publishingperspectives.com](http://www.publishingperspectives.com)
- **Le Motif:** [www.lemotif.fr](http://www.lemotif.fr)
- **Labo de l'édition:** [www.labodeledition.com](http://www.labodeledition.com)
- **CERLALC:** [www.cerlalc.org](http://www.cerlalc.org)

### Upcoming tools (2015-2016 perspectives)

- **Wordpress templates** (openly accessible through download) for publishers
- **Survey on digital procurement policies** of libraries in the Arab world (What titles? Percentage of e-books in Arabic available? Representation of independent publishers?)
- **Varied tutoring techniques** (ePUB creation, correction of recurring problems, file validation, etc.)
- **Practical guidelines** to help publishers create and manage their metadata
- **Video tutorials** on the creation of e-books in Arabic language
- **Directory** listing digital actors in the Arabic world
- **Distribution contract template** that independent publishers could compare with proposed contracts by distribution platforms and aggregators.