



THE

BOOKLET

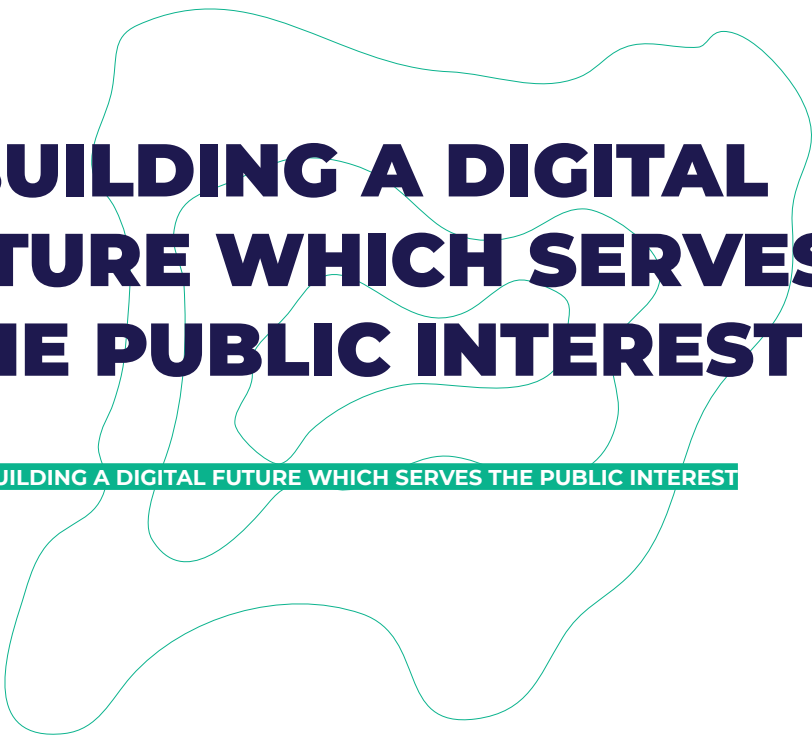
**Building a digital future which
serves the public interest**

**LOOKING BACK AT
NUMÉRIQUE EN COMMUN[S] 2021**

March 2022

www.numerique-en-communs.fr

NEC

The background features several overlapping, hand-drawn style teal lines that form an abstract, organic shape. The lines are thin and vary in opacity, creating a layered effect.

BUILDING A DIGITAL FUTURE WHICH SERVES THE PUBLIC INTEREST

BUILDING A DIGITAL FUTURE WHICH SERVES THE PUBLIC INTEREST



Bienvenue à
**NUMÉRIQUE
EN COM**



EDITORIAL

As digital technologies assume an ever more prominent place in our daily lives, there is an increasingly urgent need to profoundly rethink the way we design and develop digital tools.

Barely a day goes by without reports in the press or on social media about the difficulties encountered by vulnerable citizens in the face of sweeping digitalisation, without further criticism of the environmental cost of the exponential growth of digital interfaces and infrastructure, nor without expressions of concern about the fragility of our systems and the challenges of digital sovereignty.

In this sometimes fraught context, Numérique en Commun[s] offers an alternative voice. A voice imbued with optimism, with calm, and with determination.

A champion of public-interest digital development, committed to :

- defending inclusion for all;
- examining the workings of digital transformations;
- studying the emergence and structuring of sustainable, ethical digital solutions;
- articulating, supporting and developing digital commons.

As a community, Numérique en Commun[s] is firmly convinced that only a complex, systemic and collective approach will enable us to imagine a different digital future.



Château de la Mercerie,
Magnac-Villars
(Charente).

The two days we spent together in Magnac-Lavalette-Villars (Charente) in October 2021 provided an opportunity to work collectively towards a digital sphere which serves the public interest.

This publication contains details of the tools, methods and resources which emerged from these highly productive sessions, led by the Digital Society (Société Numérique) programme, piloted by France's National Agency for the Cohesion of Territories (Agence Nationale de la Cohésion des Territoires, or ANCT), with the support of the MedNum cooperative.

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**DIGITAL
INCLUSION AT
TERRITORIAL
LEVEL**

- EDITORIALISATION
DOCUMENTATION
ACCOMPAGNEMENT

PÉRÉQUATION
=

LISIBILITÉ ?

ANCE

COMMENT
FAIRE
NUMÉRIQUE
EN ETAB

Faut-il un
environnement
minimal ?
DS ?

C'EST
QUOI
L'ÉCHELLE ?
DE TERRITOIRE

ternative
mpagnement



**EXAMPLES OF NEW REMITS, PARTNERSHIPS
AND TERRITORIES FOR ACTION :**

‘Rerouting’ public policy on digital inclusion

Usually envisaged as a means of counteracting the social exclusion exacerbated by the digital transformation of our territories, as well as our professional and personal lives, public policies on public-interest digital development are at once multi-faceted and singular. Above and beyond actions to combat different forms of digital exclusion, and plans designed to coordinate partners from different categories operating at different levels, we can identify three specific forms of original public action which are already being deployed to “reset digital” and make it a force for empowerment.

DEFINITION

EMPOWERMENT

Process whereby an individual or group acquires the means to reinforce their capacity for action, gaining more individual and collective power. This notion combines two dimensions: power, the lexical root of the idea, and the process of learning which allows us to attain this power. In the current climate, it is perhaps more pertinent to replace the term “empowerment” with “enabling,” as philosopher Isabelle Stengers suggests, in order to emphasise the fact that this is not simply a matter of “acquisition,” but is in fact a form of metamorphosis which Donna Haraway has defined as “responsibility.”



Efficiency,
Louvroil (Nord)



1. ANALYSING THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY DIFFERENT GROUPS

Since 2020, **Bordeaux Métropole** has been running a digital inclusion observatory in order to ensure that its situation analyses are closely attuned to realities on the ground, but also to steer public sector action and boost its efficacy. This multi-partner initiative (local authorities, national government, universities, social services, associations etc.) aims to achieve upstream pooling of requirements in terms of measurement and the identification of groups at risk of digital vulnerability, and to maximise sharing of the resulting data.

READ MORE :

<https://aginum.bordeaux-metropole.fr/programme/60def3584b0b852f869b458c>



3. SEEKING OUT 'NON-PUBLICS': THE ROLE OF THIRD PLACES

The Hauts-de-France region is home to a very dense network of third places which, by virtue of their sheer diversity, are ideal breeding grounds for new forms of targeted, highly original digital inclusion actions capable of connecting with "invisible" groups or so-called "non-publics." These initiatives, many of which are funded by the ANCT's 'New Spaces, New Connections' programme, include everything from a third-place boutique-Fablab located within a shopping centre (**Auchan Hypermarché Louvroil**) to a local café offering personalised support so that digital technologies become a source of solutions rather than problems (**Pop Café in Wazemmes**), not to mention an "infinite place" focusing on rural and citizen-led innovation (**L'Hermitage in Autrêches**).

READ MORE :

<https://hyperliens.societenumerique.gouv.fr>



2. FORMING NEW 'ALLIANCES': GETTING NEW STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT OF OUR TERRITORIES

Since 2021, five metropolises and intermunicipalities (**Lyon, Strasbourg, Lille, La Rochelle and the SICOVAL intermunicipality**) have been working with the NGO Les Interconnectés and the French Standardization Organization (AFNOR), with support from the National Agency for the Cohesion of Territories (ANCT), with a view to defining shared indicators and financing models for digital inclusion programmes (an initiative entitled Territorial Coordination for Digital Inclusion – French CTIN). In the process, they are contributing to the mobilisation of original financing solutions and compiling a governance framework for territorial strategies, while also establishing a diagnosis of the real needs of the people targeted by such programmes.

READ MORE :

<https://societenumerique.gouv.fr/fr/dispositif/ctin>

DEFINITION

THE NOTION OF 'NON-PUBLIC'

In the sociology of culture, the notion of 'non-public' (coined by Francis Jeanson in 1973) is a means of highlighting the failures of cultural democratisation, as well as accounting for the very large number of people who have no access to, and no chance of accessing, cultural phenomena in their most common forms. Initiatives designed to reach the 'non-public' are therefore not limited to exploring means of better or more widespread involvement; they seek to establish the notion of sharing as a headline priority, making such efforts a particular source of inspiration for digital outreach and public-interest digital development. Digital inclusion, and its 'non-publics' (synonymous with digital exclusion) can thus be regarded as a challenge to be tackled, a means of building a digital future defined by choice and not imposed upon us, a future that is more humane, more collective and more ethical.

**FOCUS ON A FEW EXAMPLES
OF TOOLS AND SERVICES
PROMOTING DIGITAL INCLUSION**

6 examples of initiatives taken by local authorities

Structuring the local ecosystem



1

CREATION OF AN OPEN ONLINE RESOURCE HUB

gathering together all resources available within a département, allowing all stakeholders to meet, exchange and promote their initiatives : maps, outreach agendas, mandates, information on the Digital Pass, fundamental resources etc.

HOLDING MOBILISATION DAYS

for support providers, organising mail shots and social media advertising to promote digital inclusion initiatives, rallying stakeholders from across the ecosystem. This may take the form of a local NEC. (see “What impact is the NEC movement having on our territories?” pp. 20-25).

2



Equipping vulnerable groups

3

PROVISION OF UPCYCLED IT PACKS

for vulnerable groups, free of charge or almost.

4

STRUCTURING AN UPCYCLING SECTOR

for IT equipment in collaboration with the help to work sector (SIAE) and vocational rehabilitation centres (ESAT).

Reach out to « non-publics »

5

DOOR-TO-DOOR SURVEY TO IDENTIFY "NON-PUBLICS"

in partnership with postal workers, seeking to estimate the percentage of the population not yet reached by digital inclusion policies (for example: over-65s with a monthly income below the minimum wage).

6

CREATION OF AN ESCAPE GAME ON THE SUBJECT OF DIGITAL INCLUSION,

a fun way of presenting digital issues, using arcade games to reach "non-publics" with the help of local councils.

1

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MASTERCLASS
LED BY PIERRE MAZET
RESEARCHER IN SOCIAL SCIENCES,
SPECIALIST IN DIGITAL PRACTICES

What form(s) should digital outreach take, and what do we mean by inclusion?

“

When people are not coming to us to learn about digital technologies, but simply to sort out an administrative emergency, it is not easy to set them on the path to developing their digital skills.”

— Pierre Mazet

“Digital outreach” means giving people the capacity to understand and utilise digital technologies, their potential and their practical benefits, i.e. developing digital culture for all and empowering people to thrive in a digital society. Above and beyond mastering IT tools, software and practices, it is also about developing our understanding of the social, cultural, political, environmental and economic implications of the digital transition.

When confronted with the administrative emergencies suffered by those citizens who are the most detached from all things digital, we often end up sorting out the problem on their behalf, rather than resolving the issue with them. This is particularly true when dealing with individual citizens in an open setting, since a growing queue of service users waiting their turn can pressure agents into aiming to get the job done as quickly as possible. Moreover, those citizens most likely to encounter administrative difficulties, even if they do have some grasp of digital technologies, often require social and administrative support, rather than help with the digital side of things. In this context, social workers are on the front line and are often required to deal with digital matters as part of their support services. This new professional reality requires specialist training and a clarification of the approach to be adopted.

ENSURING THAT DIGITAL OUTREACH SATISFIES THE NEEDS OF ITS TARGET AUDIENCES

Steering users towards the most appropriate solution (and encouraging them to acquire and develop digital skills)

- Getting closer to target audiences.
- Raising awareness and providing training for social workers and teachers. Intéresser l'utilisateur et l'utilisatrice (transformer finalement l'obligation en mobilisation)

Getting users involved (transforming obligation into mobilisation)

- Creating more down-to-earth workshops which correspond to the actual needs of the public, considering the context and even the time of year: is there a smarter way to buy online during the sales? How to use the internet to compare energy prices etc.
- Getting out and meeting people: surgeries with partner organisations, a digital bus...
- Getting users involved when constructing the portfolio of services on offer, with more fun options.

Making sure that people are (really) aware of these services.

- Drawing on partnerships to bring in new groups.
- Clarifying and publicising the services on offer in pertinent spaces across the territory.
- Mobilising referring organisations, keeping them up-to-date on the support available so they can pass that information on effectively.
- Going door-to-door, if necessary.

INITIATIVE



AIDANTS CONNECT

Making it easier and safer to do things "on behalf of" others, for professionals regularly working with people who have trouble completing online formalities. Aidants Connect has been developed by the ANCT and is aimed at a variety of professional support providers: social workers, public-facing agents of government organisations, digital outreach officers etc. and requires accreditation.

RESOURCE



THE INTERGALACTIC DIGITAL HANDBOOK

A guide created by Fabien Devilliers, digital outreach officer with Fibre 64, based on feedback from participants in digital workshops.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “SUPPORT”?

“Nobody can claim to definitively establish what support ‘really’ means. The question is rather: what am I actually doing when I say that I am supporting somebody? Support is thus a sensitive issue, since it implies critical self-analysis of actions which are in fact the fruit of collective construction, which is to say that they are defined by institutional contexts.”

Maela Paul (2012), ‘The Support approach as a specific professional position: Example of the patient’s therapeutic education,’ Recherche en soins infirmiers, n° 110.

Support can be something of a vague concept, and its definition may vary from one sector to the next. Indeed, this is symptomatic of the fact that, by adjusting to the demands of individual situations, support is (almost) reinvented with each new case. As such, is it even possible to agree upon the fundamental characteristics which define “digital support” or “digital outreach/inclusion?”

Maela Paul, a specialist in the training of support professionals, invites us to consider the defining properties of a “supporting” attitude (including in the digital context).

Numérique En Commun[s] aims to provide both an ecosystem and an annual event, an opportunity to discuss the current state of affairs. This includes a diverse array of meetings and discussions providing information, points of reference and feedback from the field which can be invaluable to those on the front line of digital outreach efforts.

But as well as providing an opportunity to discover and adopt new tools and resources, facilitating the task of professionals working with people that struggle with digital technologies, we feel that it is important to reiterate our conviction that support for achieving digital autonomy cannot be regarded as an immobile phenomenon; it is a process of continuous learning which is constantly evolving. That sense of evolution is at the heart of public-interest digital development !



RESOURCE

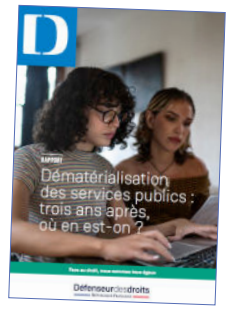


OBSERVATORY FOR THE QUALITY OF ONLINE PROCEDURES

A website providing quarterly monitoring data on the progress of efforts to digitalise the 250 most common administrative formalities. The site uses a variety of indicators: user satisfaction, mobile compatibility, accessibility of support services etc.

READ MORE
<https://observatoire.numerique.gouv.fr/observatoire>

RESOURCE



DIGITALISATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES: THREE YEARS ON, WHERE ARE WE NOW? (2022)

Report by the Défenseur des droits focusing on unequal access to basic rights as a result of the digitalisation of administrative procedures.

READ MORE
https://defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ddd_rapport-dematerialisation-2022_20220207.pdf

“

For us, the primary objective was to establish our shared vision and co-construct our strategy for digital outreach at the regional level. One year on, we want to take things further: we want to understand where digital outreach happens, how and who is involved."

— Églantine Dewitte,
Director of digital inclusion hub
Les Assembleurs (Hauts-de-France)

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MASTERCLASS LED
BY FRANÇOIS HUGUET
RAPPORTEUR FOR LOCAL NEC EVENTS

What impact is the NEC movement having on our territories?

Bringing together all stakeholders in digital inclusion, events bearing the Numérique en Commun[s] (NEC) label are furthering territorial engagement at every level: neighbourhoods, towns, intermunicipalities, départements, regions etc. NEC is an open format which all users can appropriate and utilise to promote initiatives in their territory, to share and build coordination and outreach tools, and to work on the collective creation of territorial strategies based on needs observed in the field.

The Numérique en Commun[s] movement was launched in 2018, reflecting the government's commitment to constructing and implementing a national digital inclusion strategy in coordination with the sector as a whole. Public service agents, local authorities, associations, businesses, third places, researchers, digital outreach workers, support providers... a broad array of stakeholders contributed to the recommendations included in the final report.

The Numérique en Commun[s] brand was created to embed this collective dynamic for the long term, ensuring collective governance of the recently adopted national strategy. Buoyed by the success of the first national congress held in Nantes in 2019, the format was immediately adapted to make it more accessible to communities keen to apply it at the local level.



NEC Local
Châteauneuf
de Gadagne (Vaucluse),
October 6, 2020.

EVENTS TO PROMOTE DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT AT TERRITORIAL LEVEL

Championing the territorialisation of strategies designed to promote public-interest digital development, Numérique en Commun[s] builds upon the capacitating, convivial approach to the digital world which has been promoted since the 2010s by a substantial community of digital outreach specialists.

The guest speaker in this masterclass – Éric Ferrari, director of digital development for the public authorities in Corsica – highlighted this tradition with reference to the first national digital outreach congress, held in Ajaccio in 2011.

Driven by the conviction that digital technologies can only be empowering if we move away from outdated determinist perspectives (see below) the ambition of the Ajaccio Congress was to develop a territorialised understanding of digital challenges. That means reintegrating the digital dimension at the territorial level in Corsica, developing a shared, collective vision of what territorial development and digital outreach can look like when they are properly tailored to specific local circumstances and needs.

DEFINITION

TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

A belief originating in the 19th century whereby technology and science are held to develop autonomously, immune to social influence, and that this development shapes the evolution of society ("you can't stand in the way of progress!").

Technological determinism is hotly disputed, not least on account of its vision as technologies springing fully-formed from the ether, disregarding the contexts in which they were fostered, produced and deployed.



Making digital a positive choice requires us to adopt a local, ethical approach to digital development.”

— Éric Ferrari, co-founder of the National Digital Outreach Conference.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP, NATIONAL SUPPORT

Where there are volunteers keen to coordinate efforts in favour of a territorial approach to digital development which is open, inclusive and ethical, the National Agency for the Cohesion of Territories' Digital Society (Société Numérique) programme can provide dedicated support.




This may involve :

- Help with programming, and support with the local-level application of the national initiatives spearheaded by the ANCT or its partners;
- Subsidies to cover the costs associated with organising events;
- Resource sharing spaces for local NEC organisers;
- Support with communication and the mobilisation of institutional and private-sector actors;
- Promotion and documentation of the event in the form of a local NEC handbook.

READ MORE

<https://numerique-en-communs.fr/nec-locaux/>

RECENT AND UPCOMING LOCAL NEC EVENTS:

-  2020
-  2021
-  2022



FOCUS: NEC PUBLICATIONS



The majority of Numérique en Commun[s] events are accompanied by the publication of a handbook, containing reports, interviews, in-depth articles etc. The goal is to document, champion and put into perspective the efforts being deployed at the local level in order to:

- represent existing dynamics;
- understand the conditions in which public-interest digital development is to be deployed;
- allow for more effective structuring of digital inclusion and outreach initiatives at the national level.

This work is handled by a team of seven researchers and independent journalists: Zoé Aegerter, Yaël Benayoun, François Huguet, Clément Mabi, Sébastien Magro, Claire Richard and Emmanuel Vergès.

READ MORE :

<https://numerique-en-communs.fr/les-carnets-de-nec-locaux>

RESOURCE



« NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION » (2018)

Report on the implementation of the national strategy for digital inclusion, the fruit of a collaborative, participatory project coordinated by Mission Société Numérique.

READ MORE

<https://rapport-inclusion.societe-numerique.gouv.fr>

RESOURCE



« CITIZENS IN A DIGITAL SOCIETY. ACCESS, LITERACY, POWER TO ACT: CALLING FOR A NEW POLICY OF INCLUSION » (2013)

Benchmark report on e-inclusion in France, coordinated by researcher Valérie Peugeot when she was vice president of CNNum.

READ MORE

<https://cnnumerique.fr/nos-travaux/inclusion-numerique>



“

This is our third NEC. Every year we come up with a format which reflects the ever-changing needs of the Bordeaux community. In 2019, the challenge was to bring together our community of social stakeholders. In 2020, we worked with digital outreach specialists to co-construct a hybrid format spread out across a whole week, working within the constraints imposed by the pandemic. In 2021, we held a summer school which was open to the general public, with a strong focus on raising awareness: “Inclusion is everybody’s business!”

— Sophie Woodville,
Director of Territorial Coordination and Open
Innovation Projects, Bordeaux Métropole

LOOKING BACK
AT THE CNFS EXPLORATION
AT NEC21

What are CnFS doing to accelerate and embed digital inclusion policies?

The recruitment and training of 4,000 France Services digital advisers (CnFS) as part of the 'France Relance' strategy is an unprecedented development in the field of digital inclusion, in terms of both its scope and the scale of the funding available (200 million Euros). The uptake has been similarly remarkable: more than 5,532 public and private organisations have submitted a request to host one or more digital advisers, while almost 46,000 people have signed up to become CnFS.

ENABLING LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO PUT PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

This wide-ranging mobilisation has been particularly evident among local authorities. Those already committed to boosting the digital skills of their constituents responded immediately to this call for submissions, but there were also submissions from hundreds of other territories with little previous experience in the field.

From départements to intermunicipal organisations and individual municipalities, the circumstances encountered are similar: the imminent arrival of CnFS specialists has undeniably spurred these local authorities into action.

Most of them had already made it a policy priority to boost the digital autonomy of their constituents, but had not yet put in place specific initiatives designed to help them achieve this goal.



EMERGENCE AND CONSOLIDATION OF DEDICATED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

The 'inclusive initiatives' exploratory project bringing together local authorities (employees and elected officials), associations, digital outreach specialists and researchers has clearly demonstrated that the deployment of CnFS varies from one territory to the next, informed by dynamics already in play as well as the mobilisation of stakeholders on the ground.

While some local authorities have managed the deployment of CnFS in coordination with government agencies at local level, thus taking the lead on digital inclusion (mostly county councils, but also intermunicipal organisations), in the majority of territories we have seen the emergence of entirely new dialogues on the subject of digital inclusion. These new forms of coordination allow us to work towards a better balance in the territorial distribution of CnFS, particularly by creating posts spanning multiple neighbouring municipalities whose individual requirements do not justify a full-time CnFS.

CREATING AD HOC DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGIES (OR UPSCALING EXISTING STRATEGIES)

The deployment of CnFS experts can, in some cases, pave the way to the creation of more comprehensive digital inclusion strategies. The arrival of trained, qualified digital inclusion professionals can act as a major catalyst for local policy development. These outreach experts may be considered to represent an additional resource at the disposal of territorial stakeholders, or else as a force for questioning, categorising and operationalising the issue of digital inclusion at the local level.

The challenges inherent to their fields of action, their target audience and the nature of support available to citizens oblige local authorities to collaborate with all stakeholders at the local level. The goal is to establish a coherent, complementary digital outreach policy for the territory as a whole, avoiding overlap at the local level and responding to the various needs of the public.

For many territories, the arrival of a CnFS appears to reinforce existing digital inclusion strategies, making it possible to upscale certain initiatives. The challenge is thus to effectively manage the integration of these new professionals into existing digital outreach networks (which have their own culture, vocabulary and established practices).

The contribution of these professionals can also prompt local authorities to think about the longer term, starting by creating permanent posts and shaping the future of the services made available to citizens.

A research programme seeking to measure the effective impact of CnFS on the construction and/or modification of local digital inclusion policies, funded by the ANCT and coordinated by Pierre Mazet, is now in progress. Its first conclusions should be published in Spring 2022.



"ALLER VERS" / COURS DE

URS

PERENNITÉ

FAIRE MN "AILLEURS"
↳

E.N



DELOCALISER

Gonaire. (Eval. Niv)

PAR COURS

**NEW
TERRITORIES
FOR DIGITAL
OUTREACH**

**HIGHLIGHT OF THE MASTERCLASS
LED BY LÉA MASSARÉ DI DUCA**

**EDUCATOR, LECTURER AND JOURNALIST SPECIALISING
IN THIRD PLACES**

The contribution of third places to revitalising our territories



Hyperliens (2020), « Fablab des 3 Lapins : fabriquer du réseau et du lien », season 2, episode 3.

Fablabs, innovation hubs, makerspaces, citizen laboratories, urban regeneration projects, eco villages... Over the past twenty years, our territories have witnessed the emergence of a new categorisation of space. Often grouped together under the term third places, these spaces have profound implications for the way we build and manage our societies.

Léa Massaré di Duca, an analyst specialising in third places and founder of the Wide Open Project agency, has travelled to a dozen countries all over the world to study these spaces, in an attempt to comprehend their singularity and analyse their underlying social, organisational and economic dynamics. She shared her experience of two years' work in the field.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The concept of third places was popularised by American sociologist Ray Oldenburg in the late 1980s, against a backdrop of acute urban pressures.

In the USA, the adoption of public policies designed to prioritise automobiles prompted the middle and upper classes to leave the city centres en masse and move to less densely-populated commuter towns. Thus abandoned, the activities and institutions which had previously defined city centres were scattered across multiple peripheral centres. New centres of decision-making, business, commerce and leisure thus emerged, contributing to the fragmentation of places and their uses.

The functional compartmentalisation of urban space left no room for the emergence of spaces for spontaneous socialisation. And yet, such forums for social interaction, discussion, debate and even conflict have always existed. They include village squares, markets, hammams, corner cafés, palaver trees, wash houses etc. The concept of the third place was used by Oldenburg to highlight the social and political consequences of the disappearance of these living spaces in North American town planning strategies, and the need to preserve them.

TWO GOVERNMENT-BACKED INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT THIRD PLACES

In 2019, the ANCT launched its 'New Spaces, New Connections' programme with a view to galvanising and supporting the development of third places all over France. Two calls for proposals were launched to support the structural development and long-term future of local networks of third places:

→ **Fabriques de territoire** : concluding in September 2021, this call for proposals allowed us to identify and consolidate the economic models of 300 third places capable of acting as network leaders in rural territories and priority neighbourhoods for urban policy (French QPVs).

→ **Manufactures de proximité** : concluding in March 2022, this call for proposals fostered the emergence of third places devoted to the formation and concertation of professional communities in vulnerable territories (small and medium-sized towns, rural areas, QPVs etc.).

READ MORE :

<https://tierslieux.anct.gouv.fr/fr/accueil>

FROM DETROIT TO LOMÉ, WHAT MAKE A THIRD PLACE ?

Nowadays, a vast array of spaces all over the world can be regarded as third places. To cite just a few examples: Ponyride in Detroit (Michigan, USA), El Laboratorio para la Ciudad in Mexico City (Mexico), La Casa B in Bogotá (Colombia), Vila Itororó in São Paulo (Brazil), the Young Project in Griffintown (Montreal, Canada), Hub Cité in Lomé (Togo) and Communa ASBL in Brussels (Belgium) In France alone, the national third place association France Tiers-Lieux identified around 2,500 such spaces in 2021.

In order to navigate this galaxy of spaces, Léa Massaré di Duca has identified three common denominators:

→ **The presence of an intentional community**, i.e. a community united by certain shared values and a desire to appropriate the space and socialise differently.

→ **Territorial roots**, i.e. the capacity of the community to remain attuned to the needs of the local population and to avoid creating a self-absorbed atmosphere disconnected from the social realities of the territory in which they exist.

→ **The importance of the process itself, and the creation of shared assets.** In this respect, third places are first and foremost theatres for action, not determined by functionality, 'laboratories' in which citizens can explore new ways of working and existing together and for the common good.

Above and beyond the material dimension, this dynamic of appropriation and collective self-definition is essential to third places. In this respect, the roundabouts occupied by the gilets jaunes in France may be regarded as ephemeral third places. The third place phenomenon raises important questions for organisations and local authorities regarding their capacity to integrate this collective dimension and its accompanying uncertainty into their strategies and town planning projects.

RESOURCE



TIERS-LIEUX, FABLAB, HACKERS-PACES. ET PLUS SI AFFINITÉS (2015)

An important study which offers a comprehensive overview of existing third places and other forms of experimental, contemporary living spaces. This study was led by socioanthropologist Antoine Burret, and is published by Fyp éditions.

READ MORE

<https://www.fypéditions.com/tiers-lieux-et-plus-si-affinites>

RESOURCE




« LIEUX INFINIS : CONSTRUIRE DES BÂTIMENTS OU DES LIEUX ? » (2018)

Catalogue of the exhibition shown in the French Pavilion at the 16th Venice Architecture Biennale. The Encore Heureux collective, curators of this exhibition, turned the spotlight on ten unplanned, experimental spaces and the processes of creation, appropriation, engagement and governance that take place there.

READ MORE

<https://editions-b42.com/produit/lieux-infinis-2>



Hyperliens (2020),
« Association Ping :
Culture libre
et éducation
populaire »,
saison 2, épisode 4.

HOW CAN WE MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THIRD PLACES ?

Traditional performance indicators are ill-suited to the third place approach. Primarily designed to measure productivity and profitability, they are not immediately relevant when it comes to measuring social impact. Indeed, how can we effectively measure the resilience of a neighbourhood, the territorial roots of a place or the trust of a community?

Supported by the Banque des Territoires, four ESS structures – Plateau Urbain, Approche.s!, Le 24ème and Le Pool – have been working on this topic since 2018. In September 2021 their work bore fruit in the form of the first version of Commune Mesure, a free, accessible, open-source platform presented as a tool for the self-assessment and visual representation of the positive impacts of third places. The indicators used on this platform encompass everything from governance to employment, urban strategy, solidarity, transmission etc.

READ MORE

<https://communemesure.fr>



Hyperliens (2021),
« La Mine : Bien plus
qu'une ressourcerie »,
season 3, episode 1.



EXAMPLES OF NEW SCALES,
PARTNERSHIPS AND TERRITORIES
FOR ACTION

3 informative examples of digital outreach in the field

In a report to France's National Assembly published in 2019, Daniel Agacinski and Louise Cadin argued that the systems connecting citizens to administrative bodies were "at a crossroads." One global pandemic and several lockdowns later, with profound changes in the way we work and an unprecedented mobilisation in favour of digital outreach, can we now say that the entire range of techniques and actions which allow us to comprehend and master digital technologies have reached their own strategic crossroads ?

Above and beyond the need to help French citizens with digitalised administrative formalities, digital outreach is now a well-structured sector taking concrete, coordinated action to empower citizens in our digital society. By forging new bonds among the constellation of stakeholders (associations, businesses, local authorities etc.), NEC21 has demonstrated that digital outreach is no longer at a crossroads; it is advancing apace on a path which is redefining the purpose of digital outreach spaces, delivering more proximity, more openness and more flexibility.

We have selected three particularly noteworthy initiatives which illustrate this paradigm shift, helping to forge a new understanding of public services and the public interest, offering genuine examples of "civic infrastructure for resilience."

2



Hyperliens (2020),
« Association Avec Nous : Fabriques
numériques des quartiers populaires »,
season 2, episode 2.



1. KAZLAB, A FABLAB IN SAINT-LAURENT-DU-MARONI (FRENCH GUIANA)

KazLab is a fablab created by local association MANIFACT in the Camp de la Transportation (the former colonial prison) in Saint-Laurent du Maroni. In 2020, KazLab manufactured and distributed 7,710 visors to health workers, firefighters, police officers and other frontline personnel all over French Guiana. Like many other French fablabs, this space and the community of which it is at the centre have demonstrated their capacity to share the fruits of digital innovation, to form an effective, collective force in times of crisis, and to forge new and unexpected bonds of solidarity. KazLab has rapidly become an essential partner for help to work organisations, professional development bodies in the cultural sector and organisations working with illiterate citizens.

READ MORE :

<https://franceurbaine.org/actualites/coordination-territoriale-pour-linclusion-numerique-7-territoires-vont-lexperimenter>



2. DIGITAL RESOURCE CENTRES RUN BY AVEC NOUS (MARSEILLE)

These spaces (Fabrique des Flamants, Fabrique de la cité du Clos), entirely managed by a collective of local residents in the northern suburbs of Marseille, are third places devoted to popular education, digital outreach and professional training. Based on the ground floor of tower blocks, they are devoted to expanding access to creativity, digital expertise and new applications. They also support projects aimed at children, young people and parents living in working class neighbourhoods. In partnership with a host of other cultural and entrepreneurial structures, but operating entirely apart from “traditional” tech ecosystems, Avec Nous has succeeded in forging a new model of fablab open to all generations, devoted to empowering people of all ages and backgrounds.

READ MORE :

<https://avec-nous.org/les-fabriques-numeriques>



3. LE JARDIN D'ARVIEU, A THIRD PLACE AT THE HEART OF A VILLAGE (AVEYRON)

In rural Aveyron, Le Jardin d'Arvieu is a living and working space where co-workers, residents and local associations can meet and interact in the heart of their village. What makes it unique is the local council's commitment to making this third place the standard-bearer for their efforts to revitalise the village. In synergy with the “Cantou” centre which hosts the village's library, cyber resource centre, culture department and France Services bureau, the Jardin demonstrates that digital development can be a force for social cohesion, inclusion and the revitalisation of rural territories.

READ MORE :

<https://lejardin.arvieu.fr>

**A FEW EXAMPLES OF TOOLS
AND SERVICES FURTHERING THE CAUSE
OF DIGITAL INCLUSION**

15 territorial hubs for digital inclusion

In order to accelerate the consolidation of digital outreach services across the whole country and deliver coherent policy on matters of digital inclusion, the Banque des Territoires and the ANCT's Digital Society programme have joined forces to foster a network of territorial hubs devoted to digital inclusion.

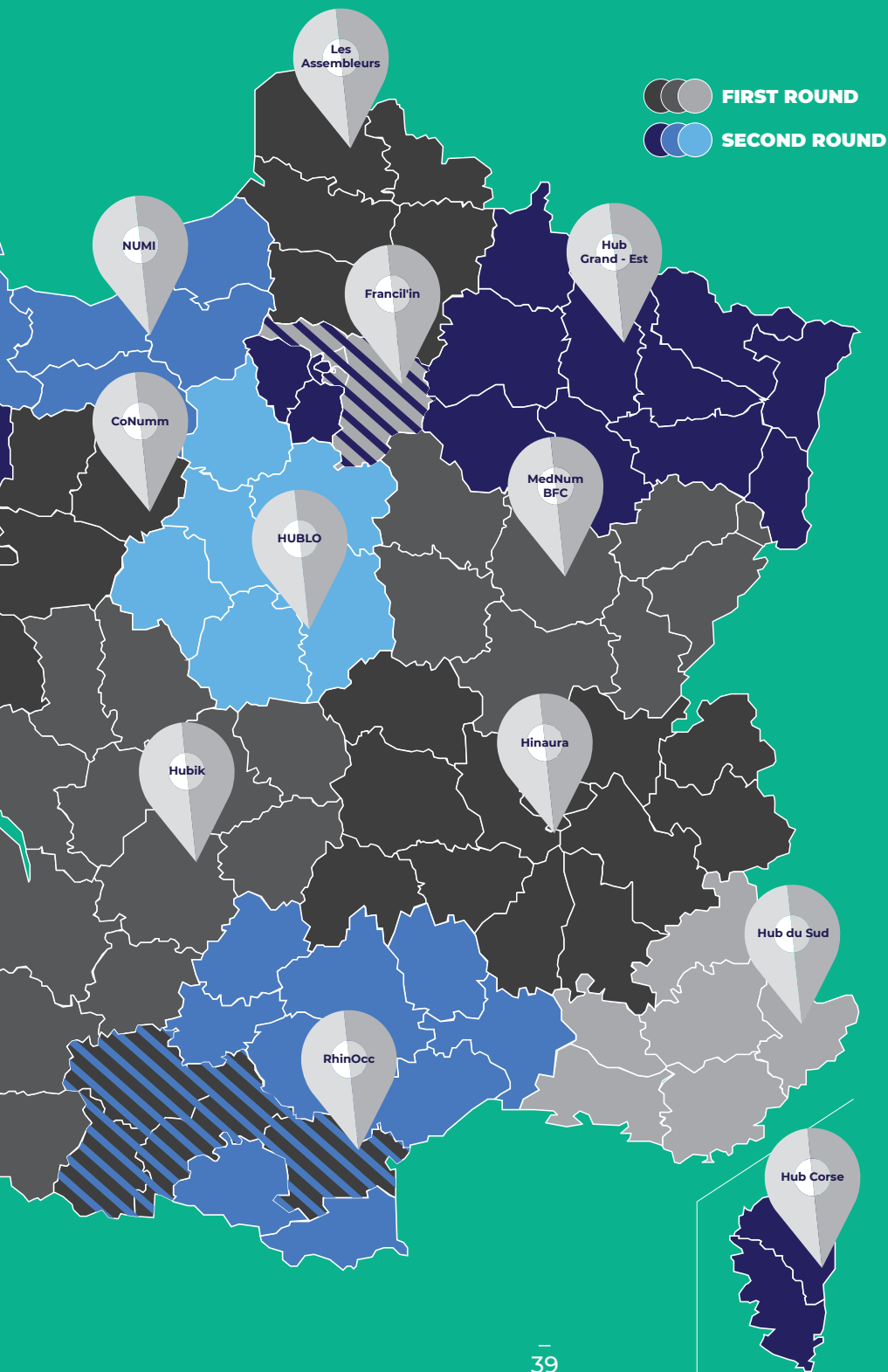
The purpose of these hubs is to coordinate, dynamize and synergise territorial ecosystems. They provide support and tools for stronger digital outreach and inclusion initiatives.

These hubs also ensure closer cooperation with local authorities, public services and the private sector, coordinating and amplifying local digital inclusion strategies.

11 hubs accredited in 2019. In 2021, a call for applications was launched with a view to expanding the reach of this network across the whole of France :

- 5 new hubs identified,**
- 2 existing hubs expanded.**





EPN

Espace Public Numérique



THE HISTORIC SPECIALISTS

EPNs are found nationwide, and have been helping citizens to get to grips with digital technologies since the 1990s.

CCAS

MÉDIATHÈQUE BIBLIOTHÈQUE

MAISON DE LA JEUNESSE

CNAV

LA CAF

CPAM

CARSAT

CENTRE SOCIAL

EXISTING SERVICES IN A STATE OF FLUX

Agencies providing public services

PÔLE EMPLOI



LA POSTE

PRIVATE CONTEXTS already dealing with the public

BANQUE

SMARTPHONE STORES

FOCUS ON THE CHANGING FACE OF DIGITAL
INCLUSION SPECIALISTS

Different forums for digital outreach

EFIS

MAISON
DE QUARTIER

ASSOCIATION
SPÉCIALISÉE



DIGITAL OUTREACH
SPECIALISTS

LES LIEUX DONT
C'EST DEVENU
L'UNE DE LEURS
ACTIVITÉS PRINCIPALES

FABLAB

NEW
SPACES

THIRD
PLACE



DIGITAL OUTREACH
SPECIALISTS

A fablab is a place open to the public that provides all sorts of tools, including computer-controlled machine tools, to design and create objects.



NOUVEAUX
ET NOUVELLES
SPÉCIALISTES

Hybrid spaces, third places
prioritising **mutual support**,
learning and project development.



**HIGHLIGHTS OF
THE 'DATA AND TERRITORIES'
PROJECT AT NEC21**

Do we need a data standard for digital outreach spaces ?

Various stakeholders in digital outreach, particularly territorial digital inclusion hubs, have attempted to conduct a form of census of existing digital outreach spaces and services (an exercise often described as 'mapping'). All too often these projects utilise different formats, which makes it impossible to achieve a full, official and widely-shared vision of the current state of digital outreach services nationwide.

The Data & Territories project led by MedNum and the ANCT at NEC21, with support from Dataactivist, sought to determine what it would take to establish a successful data standard for digital outreach services in France.

Analysing existing systems is an important step towards establishing a common standard. The participants started by looking at the first standard developed by Aidants Connect. They identified a number of areas for improvement, fleshing out this initial review. This collaborative project also drew upon four territorial mapping efforts undertaken by regional hubs (Les Assembleurs, Hinaura, RhinOcc, Conumm) which met the following criteria: territorial diversity, approach, data format and exhaustivity. The fields contained in each of these mapping efforts were compared to identify points of divergence and convergence in the data.

DEFINITION

DATABASE SCHEMA :

A system used by a database to organise data.

BASED ON THIS ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE FOR A FUTURE DATA STANDARD:

→ PRICE

In spite of some divergences (sometimes the fields in the databases are open, sometimes they use multiple choice format, some are optional and some required), this field is simple to standardise because it involves identical series of characters and values (free/for a fee).

→ SUPPORT FORMAT

The standardisation of this field will require a redefinition of its scope, since certain portals only offer training programmes while others include training and support services.

→ ACCESSIBILITY

Participants identified a problem with the degree of detail in the data available for portals, with disparities in the types of demographic used and a general lack of uniformization. Accessibility and its associated values need to be redefined.

→ TERMS OF ACCESS

This field is relatively easy to standardise since the portals use similar values: open access, sign-up, subscription required. The types of data involved may vary (figures, strings, geographical data), and the list may be open or use data presets.

→ TARGET AUDIENCE

Participants recommended redefining the scope of this field and limiting the number of possible values.

→ STATUT

Convergence in terms of the values used (public/private), the types of data (strings) and the data lists (preset). The value of having more detailed status descriptions was questioned in the workshop sessions.

→ SERVICE

There is a great deal of divergence in the services field, with between 10 and 100 values depending on the portal. Some are open, some have preset values, and the nature of the services themselves varies considerably.

**In order to collectively define the bases of a future standard, MedNum will further pursue this exploration in 2022, with support from ANCT, in a number of working groups. To take part, sign up to the mailing list:
https://framalistes.org/sympa/subscribe/schema_mediation_numerique**

DEFINITION

DATA :

In IT terms, data is how information is represented within a computer programme.

FIELD

A box to be filled in.

DEFINITION

PORTAL

Welcome page providing access to sites and/or services online.

VALUE

In a database, the information contained in a column.

NEC21 IN FIGURES

400

participants on site

2

days of workshops and discussions

60

speakers

6 300

participants joining remotely and

1 211

watching the catch-up video

6



Explorations

10



Masterclass

6



**Discussion
sessions**

30



Rendez-vous

au Comptoir

NEC 21 IN BRIEF

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NEC21 PLENARY SESSIONS

At the 4th edition of Numérique en Commun[s], we had the honour of welcoming Cédric O, Secretary of State for the Digital Transition and Electronic Communications, Amélie de Montchalin, Minister for Public Sector Transformation and the Civil Service, Joël Giraud, Secretary of State for Rurality, Nele Leosk, Estonian Ambassador for Digital Affairs, and Carine Seiler, the government's High Commissioner for Skills. This high-profile event also provided an ideal opportunity to officially launch the digital inclusion creators' week, via video link with the OctoberMake team in Toulouse.



“

In Estonia, we started building the digital state back in 1997 with massive investment in computers for schools and a big emphasis on educating our young people in how to use these new technologies. The aim was to ensure that nobody lacked the tools and skills required to participate fully in our digital democracy.”

— Nele Leosk, Estonian
Ambassador for Digital Affairs

“

Nowadays, digital tools enable us to make educational materials more attractive, to solidify teaching, to involve learners, to facilitate interactions and to get away from outdated top-down models where knowledge is dispensed from on high by authority figures. We are firmly convinced of the importance of digital opportunities, and we are determined to developing shared resources in the public interest.”

— Carine Seiler,
High Commissioner for Skills



“

The large-scale deployment of digital infrastructure has gained pace in recent years, with major improvements in network coverage as we seek to improve connectivity for all citizens, wherever they live. Nevertheless, we must not forget the importance of digital support services, particularly in rural areas, as digital becomes ever-more a part of our daily lives.”

— Joël Giraud,
Secretary of State
for Rurality



“

Nowadays, three quarters of all interactions between citizens and public services occur digitally: emails, mobile applications, websites etc. If these experiences are not simple, ergonomic and accessible for people with disabilities, then our public services are not fulfilling their essential responsibilities.”

— Amélie de Montchalin,
Minister for Public Sector
Transformation and the Civil
Service



“

Tools are the gateway to the digital world: video calls with your grandchildren, online administrative formalities, online shopping, interacting on social media. And yet, these practices raise fundamental questions about privacy, our relationship to knowledge, and our approach to parenting, among other things. The transition we are witnessing is a cultural one. The old world is disappearing and a new one is emerging in its place; we must now ask ourselves what we want the future of our society to look like. That is the very essence of Numérique en commun[s]: working together to further the cause of public-interest digital development, for our collective future.”

— Cédric O,
Secretary of State for the Digital Transition
and Electronic Communication



A YEAR-ROUND MOVEMENT

The NEC movement continues to grow and evolve all year round, in our territories, driven by professionals on the ground. **Events and initiatives throughout the year serve to reinforce this shared culture and better equip those working on a daily basis to deliver public interest digital development.**



ONLINE SESSIONS:
masterclasses, workshops
providing training and
creating resources and tools
all year round



DESIGN WORKSHOPS
to collectively identify the
challenges we face



LOCAL NEC SESSIONS:
events organised at the local
level, bringing together
territorial stakeholders to
co-construct shared road
maps (see 'What impact is the
NEC movement having on our
territories?', pp. 20-25).

2021

Magnac-Lavalette-Villars

Hosted by the Digital Society program (ANCT) and Mednum, with Futur Composé.

2020

Lyon

Hosted by the Digital Society program (ANCT) and Mednum, with Futur Composé (online).

2019

Marseille

Hosted by the Digital Society program (ANCT) and Mednum, with Urban Prod.

2018

Nantes

Hosted by the Digital Society program (ANCT) and Mednum, with PING.

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL NEC

PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN NUMÉRIQUE EN COMMUN[S] 2021



An event coordinated by

THE ANCT'S DIGITAL SOCIETY PROGRAMME

The **National Agency for the Cohesion of Territories**, established in January 2020, provides advice and support to local authorities on how to design, define and deploy projects, with a particular focus on expanding access to digital technologies.

The ANCT's **Digital Society programme** aims to develop the capacities of all citizens to seize the opportunities offered by digital technologies, particularly by supporting the digital transition of our territories. Piloting the national digital inclusion strategy, the ANCT works with local authorities and other territorial stakeholders to structure, equip and accelerate projects for a more innovative and inclusive society.

With **Numérique en Commun[s]**, the Digital Society programme has established a framework for collective reflection which is also conducive to action. With a high-profile national event and numerous online initiatives and local offshoots, NEC is bringing together a growing community of stakeholders with a shared interest in making public-interest digital development more inclusive, ethical, sustainable, open, accessible and sovereign.



In collaboration with
LA MEDNUM

Since 2017, MedNum has been developing digital inclusion solutions in pursuit of its three core missions :

- Structuring the digital outreach ecosystem ;
- Helping public and private organisations to tackle the challenges of the digital transition ;
- Developing innovative initiatives to promote digital inclusion and digital outreach.

MedNum has joined forces with the Digital Society programme to pilot Numérique en Commun[s] :

- Because NEC is the leading forum for digital outreach, connecting with a range of professionals from other sectors ;
- Because NEC provides a space for building projects together ;
- Because NEC enables organisations to contribute to the construction of shared knowledge and tools.

Territorial players in the Nouvelle Aquitaine region :



THE NOUVELLE AQUITAINE REGION

In order to accelerate the environmental transition, in October 2020 the Nouvelle Aquitaine region adopted a new roadmap for responsible digital development structured around three key objectives: more energy efficiency, more social and ethical responsibility and more openness and resilience.



THE CHARENTE DÉPARTEMENT

With the 'Charente digital pass', the département has made a strong commitment to helping all of its citizens to develop the essential digital skills they need to access public services and complete their administrative formalities, as the digitalisation of these everyday procedures continues to gain pace.



THE LAVALETTE TUDE DRONNE INTERMUNICIPALITY

The CCLTD is committed to making the digital transition a vector for solidarity, cooperation and shared learning, drawing upon the entire ecosystem of local stakeholders to tailor education and digital outreach work to the needs of local people.



ESPACE NUMÉRIQUE SUD CHARENTE

Since 2009, the ENSC has been providing local, high-quality digital support which is open to all, while also nurturing innovative digital projects, improving access to online services and expanding the involvement of local citizens in order to dynamize this rural territory.



HUBIK

The Nouvelle-Aquitaine Territorial Hub for digital inclusion is at the centre of an active network of partners working in the field, collaborating with businesses and local authorities as well as training professionals to tackle the challenges of digital inclusion.



VILLAGES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OF NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE

Since 2021, PQN-A has been working to further territorial digital inclusion with a host of support services for local authorities, in partnership with Hubik – the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Territorial Hub for digital inclusion – in order to help local authorities and other territorial stakeholders to reduce digital inequality and promote social cohesion.

With public and private partners:



LA BANQUE DES TERRITOIRES

A faithful partner of Numérique en Commun[s] since the very beginning, La Banque des Territoires works to build connections between all those engaged in digital outreach. To this end, it supports public policy and helps to make digital a source of empowerment for support workers and citizens alike, promoting digital inclusion initiatives for people all over France.



MAIF

MAIF is the insurer of choice of the charitable sector, a “social purpose company” since 2020, and a supporter of Numérique en Commun[s] since its inception, driven by a shared vision of digital as a force for the greater good, powering concrete action for a more responsible economy, for the ecological transition, for solidarity, education and risk prevention.



MGEN

MGEN is an insurer specialising in protecting public sector employees, committed to supporting the work done by public authorities, economic partners and civil society to further digital inclusion and digital commons in our regions, for a fairer and more responsible society.



LA POSTE

La Poste is now a “social purpose company”, committed to promoting ethical, efficient and inclusive digital development. La Poste is a key territorial presence, and has been a partner of Numérique en Commun[s] since its creation in 2018, sharing the same values and actively striving to close France’s digital divide.

Numérique en Commun[s] is organised and coordinated by the Futur Composé team, a subsidiary of the charitable association Fréquence Ecoles.

FUTUR
COMPOSÉ

UNE FILIALE DE

FRÉQUENCE
ÉCOLES

3



**DIGITAL
COMMONS
FOR OUR
TERRITORIES**

The sustainable digital transformation at local level

Transform — transitive verb (latin transformare) :

To make something different, to change its form or modify its general characteristics.

DEFINITION

ONTOLOGY

A philosophical discipline devoted to studying the broadest concepts of being, such as existence, possibility, duration and becoming. It entered the digital lexicon around a decade ago in the domain of knowledge engineering and artificial intelligence, used to refer to artefacts created within a modelling framework which provide conceptual points of reference.

The dictionary definition of the word transform does not cast much light on what exactly the “digital transformation” of our territories entails. Too often, we wrongly assume that digital technologies are simply tools, whereas in reality these diverse components contribute to the formation of a genuine ontology; we must remain particularly attentive to the potential blind spots arising from all “changes of form” engendered by information technologies. These blind spots can in fact help to reveal some of the unspoken political aspects of the digital “transitions” which, unfortunately, are not always ethical or concerned with the public interest and the greater good. In the process, we can perhaps seek to ensure service designers and promoters shoulder their share of the responsibility for the disengagement of certain groups: what about the design faults with platforms which cause problems for many citizens? Who makes development decisions? Who measures their efficacy? Why do we permanently focus upon the lack of support available – real though it may be – by making users feel guilty, and why do we gloss over other forms of responsibility by letting the designers of these interfaces off the hook?



Nec Local Atlantique,
La Rochelle
(Charente-Maritime)
from October 22 to 23, 2020.

Why do we permanently focus upon the lack of support available – real though it may be – by making users feel guilty, and why do we gloss over other forms of responsibility by letting the designers of these interfaces off the hook ?



Hyperliens (2021),
« La Piscine : La démocratie de Terrain »,
season 3, episode 3.



Often going against the grain of so-called “disruptive” innovation, inclusion is not a solution to the growing number of people being left behind; it is in fact an obligation for the digital future. **We have highlighted three initiatives which we feel respond, each in their own way, to some of the challenges posed by the need to make territorial digital development more inclusive, sustainable and ethical.**

1. DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR MORE RESILIENT TERRITORIES

The challenges posed by digital inclusion apply to the majority of third places. Because the principles of deliberative democracy and the common good are often hardwired into the DNA of these spaces, it is interesting to observe their singular vision of what it means to deliver a public service. In third places, the public plays a key role in the running and definition of services. As such, we regard them as laboratories for experimentation on a day-to-day basis, expanding the notion of “public service” towards something much more resilient and more attuned to the real needs of local people.



2. CREATING THE CONDITIONS TO MOVE FROM AN IMPOSED DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TO A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF CHOICE

The #RESET initiative, led by FING, invites participating local authorities (Métropole Européenne de Lille, Région Bretagne, Métropole de Lyon etc.) and businesses (La Poste, Berger Levrault, Orange, MAIF etc.) to break free of “digital fatalism” and to collectively imagine a more efficient and more human digital future. This initiative aims to define in detail the challenges which tomorrow’s digital world will face, imagining desirable outcomes from which everybody can benefit and discussing the recommendations and tools which can help make them a reality.

READ MORE :
<https://reset.fing.org>



3. HELP-TO-WORK PROGRAMMES UPCYCLING COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

The transition to a circular economy, as promoted by the French Energy and Environment Agency (ADEME) is a complex affair which will require action on many fronts, one of which is the upcycling of computer equipment. There are many initiatives already up and running in France, combining this culture of repair and maintenance with help-to-work programmes (ESAT, ACI, IAE, etc.) in order to align socioeconomic integration with digital capacitation. In this respect, upcycling is a means of taking care of the world of the future. Since last year, the “reconditioned computer equipment” branch of ANCT’s Digital Society programme has been working to support this sector.

READ MORE :
<https://ademe.fr/expertises/economie-circulaire>
<https://materiel.societenumerique.gouv.fr>

HIGHLIGHTS OF
THE DESIGN & COMMONS SESSION
AT NEC21

What makes digital commons the right solution?

Digital commons are digital resources which, by their very nature, are non-rival and non-exclusive. As such, the preservation of digital commons does not restrict access or usage rights to a select community.

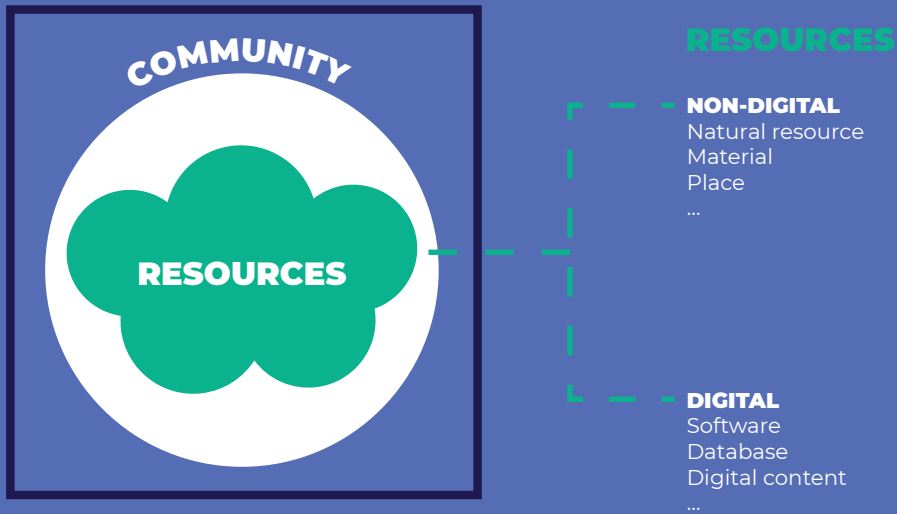
Meanwhile, the digital transformation in which we are engaged requires organisations from all sectors to work more closely and collaboratively.

Public services are no exception: faced with the urgent need for more resilient systems and more bespoke digital services, the digital commons model appears to be an obvious solution. Digital commons allow for a more equitable distribution of the value generated by the collective, involving service users in the maintenance and development of those services. This contributive practice also renders the service more accessible. For local authorities, there is also the immediate advantage of being involved in the development of a resource which has already proved its worth at the local level, as well as a genuine sharing of the costs involved.

Widespread use of digital commons is entirely in keeping with the spirit of France's Digital Republic Act, passed in 2016.

DIGITAL COMMONS, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY

Digital commons are **resources** produced and/or maintained collectively by a **diverse community of stakeholders, governed by rules** established by that community, guaranteeing the shared, collective status of the resource.



THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Commons are **open and shared**, and have their own specific characteristics:



NON-RIVAL

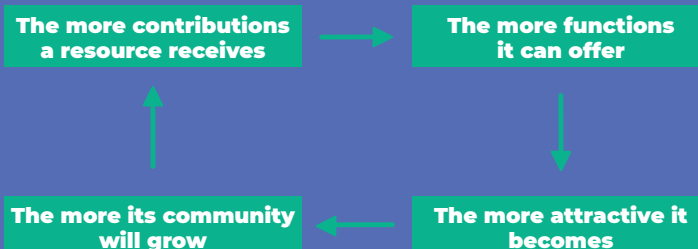
Use of the resource by one party does not impinge upon its use by others.




NON-EXCLUSIVE

The resource is not preserved by restricting usage rights to a select community.

The community, its dynamics and its size are important **factors in rendering common resources attractive and sustainable in the long term.**





HIGHLIGHTS OF
THE 'DESIGN & COMMONS' SESSION
AT NEC21

An action plan for digital commons in our territories

There are a number of initiatives in France which could be considered to represent digital commons, or already claim to do so, and which also respond to public interest issues. Sometimes poorly identified, isolated or lacking in visibility, these initiatives are nonetheless working towards making our digital systems more interoperable, resilient and sovereign.

The 'Design & Commons' experimental workshop held at NEC21 allowed us to sketch out a shared vision of all of the initiatives being taken by public-sector organisations to promote the use of digital commons. From here on, we are required to take the shared needs of the ten participating administrative bodies into account in order to identify a number of projects to be launched or further pursued. The goal is to continue to gradually break down the barriers impeding the adoption of digital commons and to make them an essential element of public policy.

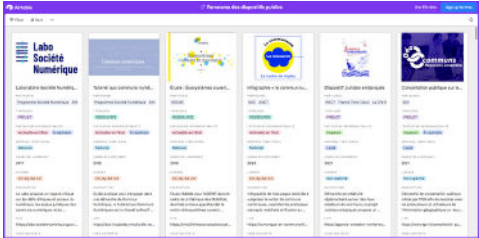
5 examples of projects to promote digital commons:

- **Mapping existing digital commons**, boosting the visibility of their output.
- **Promoting the creation of data standards**, at a time when the proliferation of new digital services is accelerating. Interoperability between digital tools and services creates added value for the whole chain of interested parties.
- **Educating and informing political decision-makers**, particularly elected officials, on how digital commons work (governance, legal structure etc.).
- **Making it easier for public-sector organisations to use digital commons**, particularly for public tender procedures.
- **Developing digital commons models which can be directly replicated by local authorities**, in partnership with local ecosystems on a public-private collaborative basis.

NOT ALL COMMONS ARE 'INTANGIBLE' !

The concept of commons is now well-defined, and refers to one or more resources (natural, tangible or intangible) which are used, managed, produced and/or promoted by an autonomous community, and in this respect can be regarded as common assets. This sense of shared ownership opens up a third way between the familiar categories of public and private property. More recently, there has been a tendency to assume that information-related commons account for the majority of common resources and are, by and large, "intangible" (software, open databases etc.). This is misguided, since the most important common resources are in fact our natural resources (water, forests, fish etc.) and certain 'digital' commons are in fact tangible resources: MESH wireless communication networks provide a good example (non-hierarchical telecoms infrastructure – see Box on next page).

RESOURCE



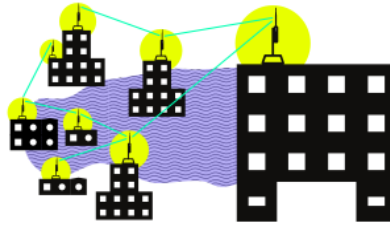
PANORAMA OF PUBLIC INITIATIVES, AIRTABLE

Panorama of existing public initiatives to promote digital commons, produced as part of the "Design & Commons" exploration on the pooling of public initiatives (20 & 21 October 2021) led by Inno3. Now available on Airtable, the panorama is being migrated to an open source tool.

A PREVIEW OF THE PANORAMA
<https://airtable.com/shrriImwxzTTg2eMVC/tbJHLtNpM3MEyCabr>

TO CONTRIBUTE
<https://airtable.com/shrtww6khpzCsh5PL>

CONTACT
nec-ateliers@inno3.fr



A MESH NETWORK

Community-based wireless computer networks wherein individual nodes are connected on a peer-to-peer basis with no central hierarchy, creating a sort of mesh structure.

MESH networks use wireless local network technologies (e.g. Wi-Fi) to create increasingly large clusters, at town or city level. Some of these networks are used to provide internet connection, particularly when individuals share their unlimited ADSL and/or fibre connections, for a fixed cost. When such forms of access are unavailable or too expensive, community-based wireless networks may provide a partial, low-cost alternative (the only costs involved are buying the computer equipment and ensuring a supply of electricity). Terms such as mesh, distributed, decentralised, ad-hoc WiFi, community wireless, local, autonomous etc. are, in most cases, used to refer to similar technologies, but above all to the communities of individuals making use of them.

Such networks can be regarded as examples of “inverted” infrastructure: bottom-up, self-organising networks managed by and for users. Inverted infrastructure, also referred to as “infrastructure commons,” is not subject to centralised, top-down control by governments or big companies, breaking with the model which has dominated the telecom, rail and electrical networks for decades. Instead, these networks are developed and run by citizens and small businesses who collectively succeed in expanding them, sometimes to the point of creating new global infrastructures.

READ ME

[François Huguet \(2017\)](#), « Le déploiement des réseaux communautaires sans fil (MESH) », *Netcom*, 31-1/2.

Available online: <https://journals.openedition.org/netcom/2612>

[François Huguet \(2022\)](#), « Jeux de ficelles sans-fil à Motown: Les réseaux MESH de Détroit comme formes de lyannajismes numériques », in L. Allard, A. Monnin, N. Nova (dir.), *Écologies du smartphone*, éditions Le Bord de l'Eau.



“

We tend to forget that while data allows us to see certain things, it also conceals other aspects. We make choices when representing social phenomena and problems with data, which means that the data do not represent everything. And that which is not represented, for which there is no data, often ends up being left out of the public policy agenda.”

— Antoine Courmont, scientific director of the Cities and Digital Technologies department at the École Urbaine, Sciences Po

EXAMPLES OF
NEW ACTION-ORIENTED PARTNERSHIPS,
REMITTS AND TERRITORIES

3 inspirational uses of data in our territories

The pandemic has provided a striking example of the crucial role of data in public policy decisions. Numérique en Commun[s] has been looking at the creation of visualisation tools which are broadly accessible, and the importance of open data for both institutions and other communities of stakeholders. In this section we highlight three initiatives which provide examples of open data in action.



1. GEORISKS

Managing natural risks is an issue that is much discussed and yet, paradoxically, our collective memory of such risks is failing. With this in mind, the Ministry for the Ecological Transition joined forces with the Geological and Mining Research Bureau (BRGM) to create the GéoRisques portal, gathering together technical files dealing with previous phenomena and sorting them by scale, location and date. The tool also includes numerous interactive maps covering risk prevention strategies (PPRs), industrial pollution data etc. All of these geographical data are available for download, along with an API tool.

READ MORE :
<https://georisques.gouv.fr>



DON'T TAKE DATA FOR GRANTED!

Data are neither objective nor neutral. At Numérique en Commun[s], during the 'What does citizenship look like in the age of Open Data?' debate, researcher Antoine Courmont offered a striking example. In 2014-2015, only two or three public toilets were listed on the Métropole de Lyon's open data platform. This information is not much use unless we situate it correctly within the context in which it was produced. Produced by the Sanitation Department, these data were primarily intended to inform the facilities management teams which of the city's public toilets needed cleaning, since most of them are now automated. While this example might seem trivial, it is in fact significant on account of the contextualised nature of the data.

Failing to take proper consideration of context increases the risk of making policy decisions on the basis of impartial or misinterpreted data. This is a matter of particular importance for working-class neighbourhoods, which are often underrepresented in institutional and private datasets. And yet, just because the data do not exist, we should not assume that there is nothing going on in these neighbourhoods!

Since 2012, **local charity Alternatives pour des projets urbains ici et à l'international (APPUII)** has been working to involve residents from working-class neighbourhoods in the process of urban renewal. Their work has included "**ethnoaccounting**" projects, laying bare the social realities which often go undetected by the studies conducted by local authorities and housing providers, helping political decision-makers to understand the real consequences of demolition and urban regeneration projects on existing forms of formal and informal solidarity.

DEFINITION

ETHNOACCOUNTING :

A branch of evaluation anthropology which aims to ascertain what really matters to people, and how these priorities are understood by those involved as well as institutions and public authorities. This approach challenges some of the assumptions made by data producers – regarding that which is deemed to be "of value" and worth representing in data – as well as highlighting the value and depth of informal relations and exchanges which are not reflected in traditional datasets. To read more on this subject, see the work of Alain Cottureau.



2. MA DADA (ACCESSING INFORMATION FROM ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS)

The Ma Dada platform handles and facilitates requests for access to administrative documents.

Freedom of information is a right enjoyed by all citizens, who are entitled to access all documents published or received by public institutions and agencies (e.g. government departments, local authorities and any other organisation providing public services). Ma Dada simplifies these requests thanks to an interface which provides contact details for all administrative agencies and allows users to submit access requests and receive documents and correspondence directly, as well as information on the progress of their outstanding requests. Ma Dada played an important part in the preparation of a recent report by French charity Secours Catholique, entitled “Nothing in return: the case for a minimum guaranteed income.” This report maps and analyses the circumstances of people receiving the French RSA allowance (basic benefit payment), as well as the associated supervision and penalty procedures, and argues for the introduction of an unconditional minimum guaranteed income. Among others sources, this report was based on data gathered from the departmental councils responsible for managing RSA payments (obtained via Ma Dada), in order to determine the percentage of benefit recipients who have been penalised for wrongful claims in recent years.

READ MORE :
<https://madada.fr>



3. MAKING OPEN DATA USEFUL, AS A SHARED ASSET SERVING THE PUBLIC INTEREST

In 2007, Bruno Latour highlighted the ambiguity liable to arise from the Latin root of the word “data” (things that are given), which overlooks the fact that data are generally “obtained” through considerable effort, and their ownership is often “disputed.” But how can we ensure that this obtained information is put to good use, furthering the cause of inclusion, social innovation and the public interest in general?

There is a whole ecosystem of interested parties working to answer that question:

Based in Lyon and structured as a charitable organisation, TUBA is a collaborative workspace and laboratory dedicate to developing smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive cities. Since its creation in 2013 (under the aegis of the Lyon metropolitan council), TUBA has been using data provided by the metropolitan authorities, cross-referencing this public information with data from private-sector sources to accelerate outreach efforts, citizen participations, business development and the work done to nurture collaborative projects.

Cooperative partners Dataactivist and La Turbine (formerly La Péniche) are engaging directly with issues of open data and data usage, working to build a more collaborative, open and responsible digital world. By providing support to the ICT structures that own data projects, as well as running data mediation initiatives, Dataactivist and La Turbine are working, each in their own way, to reduce asymmetries of information and give everybody the opportunity to take charge of their own data, without being either naïve or overly pessimistic.

READ MORE :
<https://www.tuba-lyon.com>
<https://dataactivist.coop>
<https://turbine.coop>

A FEW EXAMPLES
OF TOOLS AND SERVICES
FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

IFN: getting to know the citizens excluded from digital services

Created collectively by an array of partners and several local authorities (La Rochelle, SICOVAL – Toulouse, the Hauts-de-France region etc.), the Digital Vulnerability Index (French IFN) is a mapping system and statistical decision-making tool which helps users to better visualise territories where the population is at risk of struggling with online administrative tasks, of being isolated by poor internet access, or of being cut off from digital support services.

Created in 2019 thanks to a digital transformation grant for public services, mobilised by IncubO at the Occitanie SGAR, in partnership with MedNum and Ansa, the IFN tool allows for a coherent vision of the geographical realities of digital exclusion. Designed to function incrementally, and presented as an interactive map of zones considered to be “at risk of digital vulnerability” (all over France), the tool allows users to analyse these risks, to share consistent information with multiple partners, and also to use public and proprietary data to better understand digital exclusion and, ultimately, to guide initiatives which are more closely-tailored to the needs of local territories and people.

THE IFN ALLOWS USERS TO:

- obtain dynamic forecasts for digital vulnerability in their territories, complementing qualitative studies;
- identify and categorise zones of digital vulnerability;
- access decision-making tools which allow for better targeting of priority audiences.

Regularly updated since 2019, the IFN is now an API-compatible digital tool with open databases provided by project partners (allowing for continuous improvement of the statistical model, and particularly the scope of the variables used).

The IFN is designed for all parties working on issues of digital inclusion, as well as elected officials in need of a decision-making tool – helping them to target efforts to reduce digital vulnerability – as well as a tool for dialogue, capable of bringing together different stakeholders around a shared objective. The IFN is now backed by ANCT under the banner of its Digital Outreach Tool AMI (France Relance).

TOOLS

THE E-ADMINISTRATIVE VULNERABILITY INDEX CREATED BY LABACCÈS

Developed by the LABAccès project team (see p. 77), the e-administrative vulnerability index adopts a different approach to that which informs the IFN, considering the digitalisation of administrative services from the perspective of the digital demands which government services now place on citizens when it comes to accessing public services digitally, utilising territorial statistics to represent the obstacles and user behaviours found in different territories.

Combined with numerous studies and territory-specific profiles of attitudes to digitalised administrative services (questionnaires, interviews, monographs etc.), this indicator is more qualitative than quantitative, and is designed to complement statistical and cartographical approaches. It also allows users to better identify the formal and informal resources available to combat known vulnerabilities.

READ MORE:

<https://www.labacces.fr>

DEFINITION

API

API stands for Application Programming Interface, an IT solution which allows applications to communicate with one another and exchange services or data. An API can allow users to access the data or functions of applications remotely, generally via another application, by means of a standardised application interface.



THE ACCESSI- BILITY OF DIGITAL SERVICES

EXAMPLES OF
NEW ACTION-ORIENTED PARTNERSHIPS,
REMITTS AND TERRITORIES

3 examples of involving users which provide food for thought on the way we design services



Making the leap from doing something “on behalf of” somebody to doing it “with” them is never easy, and yet it is the only way to design genuinely inclusive digital services. As things currently stand, many interfaces are lacking in modularity: they are not capable of effectively adapting to our actions, our levels of understanding, our skills or our handicaps. The concrete manifestation of such services is often overlooked, when it should be the starting point of the design process. The three initiatives detailed here provide an interesting shift of perspective, demonstrating that more user involvement is not a wager but a solution in its own right.



1. DATA EXPEDITIONS AS TOOLS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

As part of the consultation workshops organised by the Caisse d’Allocations Familiales (CAF, the family benefits agency) in Paris, the École des Données arranged a series of expeditions **into three Parisian neighbourhoods**. The purpose of these participatory workshops was to respond to a request formulated by the CAF, keen to obtain a combined situation analysis bringing together the needs of its beneficiaries and the perspective of people working on the ground in the respective neighbourhoods (local services, neighbourhood councils, local associations, etc.). Starting with this brief, a group of participants were accompanied by local guides as they explored a variety of subjects, seeking out and making use of multiple data sets. This “joint” diagnosis gave rise to fruitful discussions on how to construct objective, reliable responses to certain existing prejudices or, on the other hand, how to capitalise on the lessons learned from user feedback. These “data expeditions” also provided an opportunity to take stock of the data available for each neighbourhood, and the quality of these data, making suggestions for improvements where relevant. Finally, the unique format of these workshops served to highlight the benefits of using open data in the context of public consultations, and engaging directly with users through innovative outreach initiatives.

Data Shipping CAF,
La Chapelle, Paris
on March 22, 2017.

READ MORE:

<https://fr.okfn.org/ecole-des-donnees>





2. THE LABACCÈS PROJECT

A research-action project focusing on access to rights and services in a context of sweeping digitalisation, LABAccès aims to highlight the effects of this digitalisation on the way citizens engage with public services while also identifying and experimenting with concrete solutions to address the problem of individuals failing to access rights and services to which they are entitled. Led by Ti Lab, a regional laboratory for public-sector innovation (financed by the Brittany regional council and prefecture), LABAccès works to identify concrete measures for improving facilities, practices and opening hours (France Services, administrative offices, CAF, CCAS, Pôle Emploi, CPAM and other services). It also works with real users to develop empowerment strategies through digital technologies, bolstering the administrative autonomy of citizens. By examining the ways in which individuals and collective entities engage and interact at the territorial level, LABAccès continues to lay the foundations for public-interest digital development.

READ MORE:

<https://www.labacces.fr>



3. IDENTIFYING AND INTEGRATING THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF USERS

Above and beyond making user consultation a systematic requirement for operators and public services, the Interministerial Directorate for Public-Sector Transformation (DITP) is keen to encourage the active involvement of all civil servants, particularly those who are in direct contact with users and are thus best-placed to make this process truly effective. With the Public Services + programme, the DITP is providing government agencies with tools, resources and methodologies to help them engage more closely with service users. One of the most important measures has been the creation of a platform allowing citizens to share their experiences of the public services with which they interact. The programme also supports existing networks with the task of upskilling public service staff: training units, operational materials for higher-quality interactions with users, identifying measures for improving services at local level etc.

READ MORE:

<https://modernisation.gouv.fr/offre-daccompagnement-de-la-ditp/ecoute-et-experience-usagers>

THE NATIONAL INVESTIGATION PROGRAMME (NIP)



The NIP is a support programme led by ANCT's Territories Incubator. It works to identify the most pressing needs of local authorities and help them to resolve public policy problems encountered at local level.

In 2021, fifty investigative teams from thirty-two local authorities or other public organisations received support and training in the applied design methodology used to build and improve public services, both digital and non-digital. While some of those teams are now running their own projects at local level, others are still receiving support from the incubator and working on developing a national framework for public services, rolling out existing services to new territories, receiving bespoke assistance or developing local incubators. They are all members of a community of partners, coordinated by the incubator and working to accelerate the digital transition of our territories.

READ MORE:

watch the episode of Hyperliens dedicated to NIP
<https://youtube.com/watch?v=Els0wggvD5A>

and find more details of fifty investigations here:
<https://incubateur.anct.gouv.fr/investigations/?promo=1>



A FEW EXAMPLES
OF TOOLS AND SERVICES
FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

Adapted digital services: 4 key steps

1



(RE)FRAMING THE PROBLEM



Like any system, digital services are extremely sensitive to the context in which they operate.

Depending on factors such as the sociodemographic profile of the territories involved, the infrastructure present, the social norms governing digital behaviour, the structure of targeted ecosystems etc. the same service may produce radically different effects in different contexts. Before engaging directly with potential users, we recommend conducting a review of the existing literature on the issue at hand and comparing the fruits of this documentary research with studies focusing more specifically on the social characteristics of the territories or groups who are the intended beneficiaries of the mooted service.

Objective: to fine-tune, or even recalibrate, initial working hypotheses.

2



INVESTIGATIONS IN THE FIELD



Taking proper account of social realities, to avoid the risk of creating rootless digital services.

Qualitative approaches are a useful supplement to the documentary analysis undertaken in the re(framing) phase. Observations, individual and collective interviews... we recommend meeting with people directly affected by the issue you seek to address, in order to reflect the variety of opinions, practices and experiences. The involvement of collective entities already working in the field is often a good way of ensuring the reliability of the sample and facilitating the survey process.

Objective: to test initial hypotheses and ensure that the design of the service is rooted in the ecosystems and social dynamics encountered on the ground.

3



CO-CONSTRUCTION WITH THOSE INVOLVED



Working with people and organisations to ensure there is no exclusion by design.

There are numerous ways to involve those directly affected by the service/initiative from the design phase onwards: including them in design teams, involving them in project follow-up as part of a steering or governance body, holding collaborative design workshops etc. Special attention should be devoted to the conditions required for proper engagement with users: time constraints, socioeconomic vulnerabilities etc. We recommend that these conditions are defined in advance, in agreement with the people or groups involved.

Objective: to ensure that the end service is relevant to the social circumstances and habits of its target audience.

4



EXPERIMENTATION AND EVALUATION



Once the service has been designed, it can be tested and evaluated on a small scale before it is approved for widespread deployment.

The experimental phase allows us to test a prototype of the new service with a panel of users, selected to be representative of the diversity of circumstances associated with the issue the service seeks to address. We recommend combining this phase with a process of continuous assessment, both quantitative and qualitative, which should continue once the service has been launched in order to ensure that it fulfils its stated objectives and meets the needs of its target audience.

Objective: to improve the service with feedback from early users, but also to identify and forestall situations in which users fail to engage.

THE 'RIGHT' WAY TO DEVELOP DIGITAL PUBLIC SERVICES

In parallel to ongoing efforts to digitalise the 250 most common administrative formalities, the Interministerial Digital Directorate (DINUM) coordinated a year-long research and experimentation project in partnership with design cooperative OÙ sont les Dragons, aimed at identifying the necessary conditions for "good" digital public services to thrive.

Following a literature review and analysis of the existing documentation available in various branches of the public sector, the study was enriched by a field study gathering feedback from practitioners (developers, designers, project managers etc.) and political decision-makers.

One of the biggest lessons to emerge from **this process has been the importance of the organisational issues raised by digital projects within public-sector organisations**: boundary disputes over decision-making powers and resource allocation, a lack of proper alignment among the various project stakeholders, unsuitable governance structures etc.

Key recommendations:

- **Identify the stakeholders involved and clarify their respective roles in terms of project governance** (e.g. operational project managers, political sponsors etc.) at every stage in the project process;
- **Structure the governance of the project in network form**, involving internal partners, the project team and users;
- **Develop a shared and adaptative vision of the criteria used to evaluate** digital public services;
- **Form a team of interdisciplinary experts** in order to satisfy the demand for specialist skills which will continue to evolve throughout the project life cycle.

These initial findings were presented and discussed at Numérique en Commun[s]. An expanded version is set for publication in 2022.

READ MORE :

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=xvHho1WC8IQ&t=1s>



DESIGN & COMMUNS

Concevoir autrement les services numériques publics

NUMÉRIQUE EN COMMUNES

Administration

2

Espace Numérique
ENESC L'Insertion
Sud Charente

Espace Numérique
La Jeunesse **ENESC**
Sud Charente

Espace Numérique
ENESC La Fabrik
Sud Charente

Famili Bus **ENESC** mobile
Sud Charente 0980 40

Espace Numérique
ENESC Coworking
Sud Charente

Engaging with users in empowering environments

The concept of peer support is at the heart of many initiatives seeking to combat digital exclusion. And yet, the results of numerous scientific studies, national surveys and the longitudinal study of local NEC events make it clear that there is no definitive, “one-size-fits-all” definition of what constitutes peer support. What we find instead is a broad variety of missions fulfilled by different people working in specific contexts.

The idea of “helping,” or even “taking care,” in the digital sphere – and the consequences of these actions – cannot be dismissed as a box-ticking exercise. On the contrary, it is a question of pathways and networks, of creating an empowering environment within easy reach of users and tailored to their needs, their specificities and their geographical location. In this context, the notion of digital literacy — the base level of cross-cutting skills required to be “comfortable” with ICT tools and practices (see box on next page) – is invaluable. This concept helpfully combines highly practical skills with the more symbolic capacities we often associate with digital praxis. Put differently, we need to define a grammarology, a means of approaching all things digital which transcends “technology” to better appreciate its effects on the social connections between users.

DIGITAL LITERACY

The combination of knowledge and know-how required to make proper use of technology, including the technical skills required to work digital tools and the cultural knowledge associated with their use. Digital literacy thus encompasses the array of technical and social skills required to successfully navigate digital environments. Approaching the use of digital technology from this perspective can help us to avoid the temptation to adopt a purely instrumental view of technical knowledge, focusing instead on the symbolic, contextualised capabilities which imbue praxis with meaning.

By now it should perhaps go without saying that if we want to create a truly “empowering” and inclusive digital future, we will need to think very carefully about the digital outreach and coordinated digital pathways required to enable citizens to navigate, explore and adjust to a digital world which feels like a choice and not an obligation.

This terminology is not new; for many years it has been part of the repertoire of many stakeholders directly involved in the emergence of NEC (cf. ‘What impact is the NEC movement having on our territories?’ p. 22). They include actors from the fields of popular education, media awareness, public libraries, local social centres (CCAS), youth centres (MJC), social centres etc., who were among the first to adopt this vision of digital development. Nonetheless, recent digital transformations – or perhaps the serious consequences of digital disengagement in terms of the rights and duties of citizens – have made this logic of support and accompaniment more essential now than ever before.

Canoes
France services
in Guyana.



IDENTIFYING THOSE IN NEED

The ability to identify citizens affected by digital difficulties or vulnerability – and then to provide the support and endow them with the confidence required to overcome that sense of exclusion – is no foregone conclusion. All too often, such matters are not explicitly defined as falling within the remit of traditional public service provision, and nor are “digital pathways.” In order to capitalise on their expert knowledge of local people and environments, some territories choose to rely on field practitioners whose primary area of expertise is not in the digital sphere. Tools for mapping digital vulnerabilities and problems with digitalised administrative procedures have also emerged in recent years. They help to avoid the risk of dismissing “digital difficulties” as just a matter of catching up, when what is really needed is a concerted effort to develop digital literacy.

These new forms of interaction between stakeholders helps to make digital inclusion a shared concern, conducive to more effective public policy and more productive networks of interested parties.

ENGAGING WITH USERS IN EMPOWERING ENVIRONMENTS

Above and beyond the need to identify those in need, ensuring that all French citizens have a certain degree of digital literacy requires us to reach out directly to users. This can take many forms: digital outreach initiatives can now be found in a variety of places popular with certain social groups (social centres, libraries, CCAS etc.), sometimes in unexpected locations (cafés, shopping centres etc.) or in premises already occupied by existing public services. **By making these familiar, reassuring spaces hot spots of digital literacy, we can avoid the pitfalls often associated with the creation of new spaces which are off-putting to citizens already ill-at-ease with all things digital** (most people in this situation are afflicted by a real sense of shame at their inability). But “reaching out” to people can also take more concrete forms, on Reunion Island, the Caisse d’Allocations Familiales has a mobile office in the back of a truck which allows them to engage directly with the inhabitants of the “Highlands;” in French Guiana, a France Services pirogue wends its way up and down the river system to reach citizens in the “isolated municipalities” furthest from the prefecture. On mainland France, the France Services buses serve a similar purpose. In the Allier département, mobility is a key consideration in territorial inclusion policies and the Bourbon’net bus, a mobile service operated by the council, travels around rural villages offering a range of digital services. These are positive examples of user-oriented public services getting out and engaging with citizens in their day-to-day environment.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MASTERCLASS LED
BYCÉLINE EXTENSO & BÉATRICE PRADILLON
CO-FOUNDERS OF THE FEMINIST-DISABILITY RIGHTS
COLLECTIVE LES DÉVALIDEUSES

Rethinking accessibility to genuinely consider the needs of people with disabilities



In spite of the existing legal obligations regarding accessibility, government agencies, local authorities and other key actors on the ground still struggle to properly comprehend the diversity of disability when designing services. In 2020, only 13% of public-sector websites were considered accessible for people with disabilities, and in day-to-day life these users still have to deal with numerous forms of discrimination.

Numérique en Commun[s] invited Céline Extenso and Béatrice Pradillon, co-founders of the feminist-disability rights collective Dévalideuses, to reflect upon the structural factors behind this state of affairs and propose concrete actions for making digital public services genuinely empowering environments for all users.



Accessibility is not just about passive audiences. In concert halls, there are disabled seats inside the auditorium but there is usually nothing to make the stage, the backstage or the technical facilities accessible. But we are not just spectators, we can be actors too!”

— Céline Extenso, Les Dévalideuses

ABLEISM, A MISUNDERSTOOD CONCEPT

Activism in favour of equal rights for people with disabilities first emerged in the English-speaking world in the 1960s and 1970s. Drawing inspiration from the civil rights movement, students with disabilities who required regular assistance began to mobilise in defence of their right to live autonomously. They refused to be restricted to dedicated institutions, and demanded that campuses be equipped so that they might live autonomously.

This movement gave rise to a new theoretical examination of our relation to disabilities, which would develop into what we now call disability studies. Whereas the previously dominant medical perspective had regarded disabilities as biological defects conferring morally and/or materially inferior status, the new social model resituated disabilities within the collective context. If an individual suffers as the result of a disability, the true cause of that suffering is the fact that the environment is not sufficiently adapted to their needs.

This shift of perspective places more responsibility on society as a whole, moving beyond condescending notions of charity and solidarity to think seriously about the autonomy and self-determination of people with disabilities.

Nowadays, anti-ableist movements tend to position themselves somewhere between these two models. Without disputing the fact that some disabilities exist independently of the environment – some people will always be afflicted by certain restrictions, by fatigue or by chronic pain, even in an accessible environment – they decry ableism as a form of oppression which discriminates against people with disabilities simply because they do not comply with so-called medical standards of what constitutes normality.

“

**It is better to rebuild a site
from scratch rather than keep
sticking plasters onto a wooden
leg.”**

— Béatrice Pradillon, *Les Dévalideuses*

SO WHERE DOES DIGITAL FIT IN?

The history of Les Dévalideuses is testament to the richness and complexity of digital tools. The collective formed via social media, in response to the failure of activist communities to properly include people with disabilities (meetings that were not accessible, unscheduled trips etc.) Video conferencing tools have greatly facilitated the holding of meetings, informed by a commitment **to planning in line with the most challenging situations in order to enable all participants to work together on an even footing.**

Nevertheless, the majority of tools, including free access and open-source tools, suffer from serious compatibility problems, which have obliged the collective to repeatedly update its communication practices. Most disabilities (mobility, sensory, cognitive, psychological) are rarely taken into consideration when designing digital services, despite the fact that all public-sector organisations and all businesses with annual turnover of more than 250 million Euros have been required to meet certain accessibility standards since the adoption

of the “law for equality of rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship for people with disabilities”, known as the Disability Act, of 11 February 2005.

Accessibility is too often regarded as a burden. Too many organisations are content to give their work a belated and superficial sheen of “accessibility” – a strategy which is not only counter-productive, but also extremely costly. And yet, government-backed resources have been available for many years. There are regularly-updated reference guides (see below ‘General guidelines for improving accessibility [RGAA]’), and support programmes such as the Transformation Numérique des Territoires scheme (TNT, or Digital Transformation of Territories) have been rolled out for local authorities to replace the former DCANT programme (Coordinated development of territorial digital administration) as of 31 May 2021.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY (RGAA)

Since 2009, digital public services, along with certain private services, must comply with certain criteria regarding online accessibility, ensuring that people with disabilities enjoy the same quality of service as those without. The RGAA guidelines are designed to facilitate the process of making websites compliant. They are divided into two sections:

- a first section aimed at web professionals and accessibility officers, setting out their obligations;
- a second section for use by RGAA auditors, containing the criteria to be used to assess the compliance of websites.

The RGAA guidelines are published and regularly updated by the Interministerial Digital Directorate (DINUM) to keep up with changes in online practices and the regulatory framework. The most recent version is dated 18 February 2021 (RGAA 4.1).

READ MORE :

<https://numerique.gouv.fr/publications/rgaa-accessibilite>

In order to move things forwards, Céline Extenso and Béatrice Pradillon have identified three concrete courses of action :

→ **Imposing accessibility as one of the quality criteria used by the algorithms which rank search engine results**, as Google did in the past with the HTTPS protocol (HyperText Transfer Protocol Secure) in order to give priority to secure websites.

→ **Directly involving people with disabilities in the design of digital projects and services**, drawing inspiration from the ERU method (easy to read and understand) which holds that the best way to ensure the accessibility and clarity of a document is to systematically involve people with learning difficulties in the writing, translation and rereading processes. In other words : “Don’t just ask us, hire us!”

→ **Raising awareness of accessibility issues and providing training for everybody working in the digital sector** (web development, networks, ergonomics, design, communication etc.). Relatively few ICT programmes include lectures on digital accessibility, despite the importance of “training to develop techniques and appreciate the importance of applying them.”

Designing sites with the most challenging user situations in mind would greatly improve accessibility for the twenty million people in France who experience difficulties engaging with digital technologies: people with disabilities, people who speak other languages (see ‘Promoting multilingualism for greater online inclusion’ pp.90-94), elderly people, isolated people in rural areas, single parents etc.

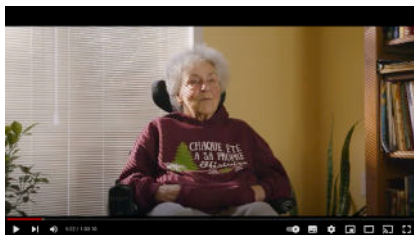


31 RESOLUTIONS TO FIGHT ABLEISM (2020)

A project launched by Les Dévalideuses, looking at 31 examples of ableist prejudice. This document contains resources for understanding what ableism means (Resolution No.1), answering children’s questions about disabilities (Resolution No.8), making the internet more accessible (Resolution No.28), and updating your repertoire of insults (Resolution No.15)!

READ MORE

<http://lesdevalideuses.org/les-projets/bonnes-resolutions-anti-validistes>



FUTURE PAST: A HISTORY OF THE STRUGGLES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, PAST AND PRESENT (2021)

A documentary directed by Yan Grenier and Daniel Vandal exploring 50 years of activism and mobilisation by people with disabilities in Quebec, told in their own words. Produced by Carrefour Familial, a Quebecois association for people with disabilities.

READ MORE:

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=utQo0JyBc8>



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MASTERCLASS

LED BY ABÈDJÈ SINATOU SAKA

JOURNALIST AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE FEMINIST-
DISABILITY RIGHTS COLLECTIVE IDEMI AFRICA

Promoting multilingualism for greater online inclusion



Immigrant and international populations are particularly exposed to this problem (33% of adults arriving in France report experiencing difficulties with the French language), but there are also many native French people who find themselves isolated for literacy reasons. Although 71% of people classed as functionally illiterate report that French was the only language spoken in their household when they were 5 years old, 49% of these people are out of work and 50% live in scarcely-populated areas.

In 2018, for one in four people experiencing digital difficulties these problems could be attributed to an insufficient command of French. This headline figure conceals a diverse array of situations, including functional illiteracy (people who attended school in France but who cannot write French properly), people who are not comfortable with writing French but can write in another language, and total illiteracy (people who have never learned to write in any language).

These figures can be largely **explained by the social and territorial dimensions of linguistic practices**. Pupils in rural areas, much like non-French-speaking pupils arriving in France, are at greater risk of finding themselves in a state of linguistic insecurity (see box on next page) at school, with reference to the linguistic practices of teachers and fellow pupils. An obvious contributing factor to educational underachievement, these problems have serious consequences for individual pupils' lives and career paths.

DEFINITION

NON-NATIVE SPEAKER

A non-native speaker is somebody whose first language is not the official language of the country or territory in which they live.

“

Our access to the web is limited by the languages we use ; the internet is not infinite.”

— Abèdjè Sinatou Saka,
Idémi Africa

DEFINITION

THE CONCEPT LINGUISTIC INSECURITY

Discomfort experienced by individuals during verbal exchanges, primarily in situations requiring formal communication, i.e. governed by specific linguistic norms corresponding to dominant practices. This definition is a translated extract from Leila Messaoudi's article 'Insécurité linguistique' (2020) in *Publicationnaire: Dictionnaire encyclopédique et critique des publics* : <http://publicationnaire.humanum.fr/notice/insecurite-linguistique>

To further explore this oft-neglected subject, Numérique en Commun[s] welcomed Beninese journalist Abèdjè Sinatou Saka, co-founder of the Idémi Africa collective which campaigns for better internet access for people who do not speak one of the world's dominant languages, particularly speakers of African languages which are still sorely underrepresented on the internet.

THE GREAT INTERNET LANGUAGE DIVIDE

Of the world's 7,000 known languages, only around a dozen allow users to navigate the web satisfactorily.

As it currently stands, the web does not make any allowance for oral or visual languages, despite the fact that they account for just over 40% of the languages used worldwide. On a more general level, computer equipment, interfaces, applications and the services available online are primarily developed by private companies working in the economically dominant languages.

RESSOURCE

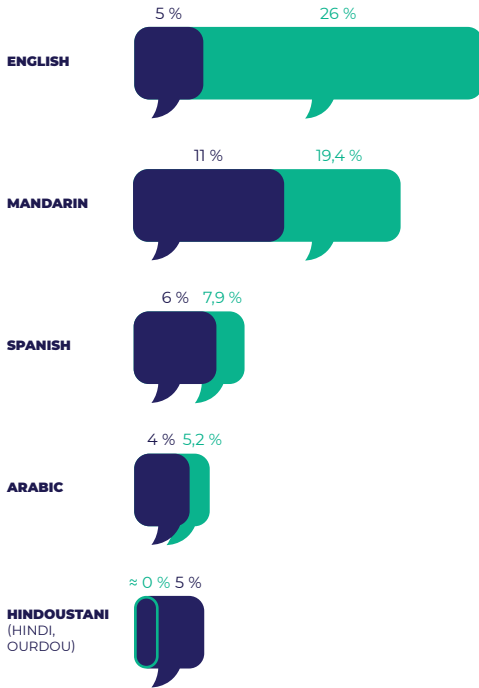



"STATE OF THE INTERNET'S LANGUAGES REPORT" (2022)

The first report to provide an overview of the current state of language inequality affecting users' capacity to access knowledge and content available online. The report incorporates a qualitative dimension, with testimony from speakers of minority languages, and a quantitative dimension based on the analysis of databases sourced from the world's most popular digital platforms and applications. A joint publication by Whose Knowledge? The Oxford Internet Institute, and the Centre for Internet and Society (India).

READ MORE

<https://internetlanguages.org/en>



 *Mother language in % of the population*

 *Language of navigation in % of the population*

Put simply, many people find themselves obliged to master another language than their native tongue in order to access and interact with the internet, due to problems such as keyboards not offering the characters they need, a lack of effective translation tools or simply a lack of content. Inequality of access to information and the production of information has direct consequences on what is produced, and how we collectively perceive and construe events, places and knowledge.

FRENCH MONOLINGUALISM AND THE ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN FRANCE

French is far from the only language spoken in France. The most recent census – held in 1999 – looking at the linguistic practices of the French population, identified almost **400 languages which were spoken within the country**. Half of these were regional or cross-border languages and dialects (Alsatian, langues d’Oc, langues d’Oil, Breton, Creole languages, Catalan, Corsican etc.). The other half were primarily languages linked to France’s history of immigration (Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, Berber languages, Italian dialects, Turkish, Vietnamese, Bantu languages, Indo-Iranian languages, Tamil, Wolof etc.). Underappreciated and often actively stigmatised, this rich cultural and linguistic diversity is often not passed on to younger generations.

The implementation of the French Heritage Act of 4 August 1994 is significant in this respect. Designed primarily to protect the French language from the creeping incursion of Anglicisms into everyday speech, this law requires French to be used in all public services, along with translation into at least two foreign languages.

No arrangements are made for regional or cross-border languages, or the languages of immigrant communities,

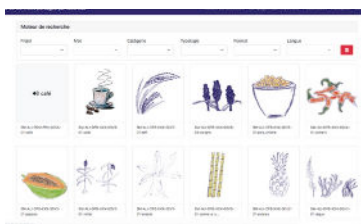
despite the fact that the people speaking these languages could potentially be in a state of linguistic insecurity when it comes to completing administrative procedures which, by definition, require a mastery of formal French.

In practice, none of France’s government websites are translated into any language that does not use the Latin alphabet (e.g. Arabic, Cyrillic, Chinese, Tamil etc.), and most are translated only into English.

FIVE PROPOSALS FOR (RE)THINKING LINGUISTIC INCLUSION

- **More translation of public services, publications and websites.** Translation can kill two birds with one stone, making content accessible to non-French-speaking audiences while also boosting the online visibility and reputation of minority languages. Nevertheless, we must be very wary of automated translation tools, which have a tendency to produce misreadings and amplify gender bias.
- **Organising linguistic workshops for digital outreach professionals,** promoting dialogue, identifying problems encountered in the field, challenging existing representations and designing pertinent outreach tools.
- **Developing new functions for websites to promote oral communication,** thus expanding access to information for users not comfortable with written communication (e.g. making voice command tools available in different languages, along the lines of Mbaza, a chatbot developed in Rwanda to ensure that essential information about Covid-19 is available to the widest possible audience).
- **Supporting associations working in the field** to help non-native speakers with administrative tasks, helping them to document and share their linguistic expertise.
- **Deploying interpreters in administrative offices and user-facing services,** taking the linguistic dimension into account when designing and updating support systems (e.g. tools such as Aidants Connect would benefit from taking potential language barriers into consideration).

RESOURCE



DATABASE SHARED BY FABLE-LAB

Published by fable-lab under an open license, this shared database contains illustrations, translations, stories, audio recordings and more, all designed to facilitate outreach and communication in a dozen languages. Currently available in beta format, the database is scheduled for an official launch in September 2022.

READ MORE :

<https://bdp.fable-lab.com/presentation>



CONCLUSION

The 2021 edition of Numérique en Commun[s] is now behind us, but the work of NEC never truly stops: regular support for digital inclusion efforts at local level, meetings with the community of activists working to deliver public-interest digital development, reaching out to new audiences, developing digital commons, etc.

Now firmly embedded, the Numérique en Commun[s] movement is a year-round phenomenon because digital inclusion, outreach and accessibility, data sovereignty and the pertinence and resilience of our systems are all essential building blocks of the France, and indeed the world, of tomorrow.

We all have many happy memories of the most recent NEC gathering: the new faces, the laughter, the dancefloor, the debates, the wind almost uprooting the trees in the gardens of the Château de la Mercerie, the oyster bar, the encouraging words of our host Didier Jobit, mayor of Magnac-Lavalette-Villars, the consolidation of fruitful partnerships and the immense satisfaction of coming together to work, to exchange ideas and to build the public-interest digital future, more necessary now than ever as we face up to the great ecological, social and economic challenges of our times.

We are already enthusiastically looking forward to 2022, with a promise to you regarding our next get-together : we will do our utmost to act upon the comments and proposals you shared with us before, during and after the event, in order to craft a programme which is tailored ever-more precisely to the demands of outreach experts, local authorities, public service professionals and all those working to dream up and design new tools and interfaces.

Workshops, demonstration sessions, explorations of initiatives from France and elsewhere, dynamic working sessions, empowering masterclasses, bespoke resources, illuminating interdisciplinary discussions ; the programme for Numérique en Commun[s] 2022 is already shaping up to be richer and more exciting than ever, reaching out to mobilise and involve an ever-broader and more diverse community.

If you want to join us, and make sure you never miss out on the latest developments, follow us on social media or sign up to the NEC newsletter.

**www.numerique-en-communs.fr
[@numencommuns](https://twitter.com/numencommuns)**

***To be quite honest, we can't wait.
See you soon.***

SPEAKERS AT NEC21 :

Alain Régnier
Amélie Naquet
Anne Devoret
Anne Prugnon
Antoine Bidegain
Apolline Le Gall
Audrey Tang
Bastien Dufau-Seguín
Benjamin Fabre
Benjamin Jean
Benoît Vallauri
Bertrand Mercade
Boyan Kaftandjiev
Béatrice Pradillon
Camille Legeron
Carole Leclerc
Caroline Corbal
Cedric O
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Christophe Mangé
Claire Legros
Clément Dulude
Cécile Coutant
Cécile Le Guen
Céline Extenso
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Déborah Dobaire
Églantine Dewitte
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Fanny Verrax
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**Opening of data, new territories
of digital mediation, safeguards
of dematerialization, local strategies
for a digital society of public interest,
the role of digital advisors and Digital
Advisors France services,
digital accessibility, the need
to develop digital commons as well as
to think about a sustainable digital...**

This edition of NEC,
October 20 & 21, 2021
was an opportunity to
collectively address
these issues by asking ourselves
beyond the why :
how to do it ?

Un événement porté par



AGENCE
NATIONALE
DE LA COHÉSION
DES TERRITOIRES



SOCIÉTÉ
NUMÉRIQUE

en collaboration avec



mis en œuvre par

FUTUR
COMPOSÉ

UN PARTENAIRE

