

Association des Bibliothécaires Francais (ABF) French Librarians Association*

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Founded in 1906 mainly for the recognition of librarianship as a profession, *l'Association des Bibliothécaires de France* (the Association of the Librarians of France) or the ABF has since become a forum of exchange and encounter for its members who discuss and benefit from each other's experiences, questionings, knowledge and competences. To reinforce the professional identity of its members, the ABF has also drafted a code of Ethics of the librarian, a federating text for the professional community of libraries.

The role of the ABF is to examine all the questions, be they of scientific, technical or administrative nature, concerning the libraries, their public and their personnel. It rests thus on commissions and think tank groups and cooperates with projects initiated or elaborated by various other institutions or associations. Today, the ABF comprises a training commission, a commission for the libraries for young people, an international commission as well as one named « hybrid libraries» working on the latest technological developments in the field of information, a commission on handicap, a commission on libraries in companies and prisons and another one in hospitals. The ABF which gathers approximately 2500 members has 22 regional groups and is managed by both a national council and an national office elected among the presidents of the regional groups. The current president is Dominique Arot, director of the libraries of Lille (North of France) and president of the regional group Nord-Pas-de-Calais. The association can rely on a team of 5 permanent and regular staff members on its payroll who work in its Paris offices.

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A Network of Information

The ABF circulates among its members information concerning the profession in general, but also news regarding ongoing projects or current events. It remains in permanent contact with the information media and specialized journals. Its website which is presently being reconstructed (www.abf.fr) has been the subject of numerous visits. As an educational body, the ABF offers elementary professional training to assistant librarians which is sanctioned by an examination. Some twenty training centres accommodate approximately 400 trainees per year. The program of this training is regularly updated. The ABF also conducts short periods of study (single days) and study travels. Finally, it organizes specific programs devoted to the technical aspects of the profession or special programs upon request in France and abroad.

Annual Events

The ABF organizes its national meeting in a different area of France each year. This annual congress aims at developing a particular theme according to a current topic of interest related to the profession, offers workshops and one day tutorials around an important professional fair. This event gathers between 600 and 1000 participants each year and receives a wide media coverage.

In partnership with the Association of specialized bookshops for the youth, the ABF supports the *Prix Sorcières* (Witches Award). Since its creation, the award has gained more and more recognition and become a reference for the professionals in the choice of the books for the young. The publishers, authors and illustrators grant much importance to the *Prix Sorcières* for it represents the genuine choice of the professionals who are in permanent and privileged contact with the relevant public.

Publications and Communications Tools

- The bimonthly review *Bibliothèque(s)* (Library(s)): A thematic journal hosting regular sections such as the latest developments of the association, a coverage of a special topic, related information abroad, exhibits in libraries...
- The book series **MÉDIATHÈMES**: where a number of volumes have been published, each devoted to a specific theme (e.g., Cultural diversity and public

libraries, The Disabled and the Libraries, Libraries and Web 2.0, etc.)

- The monthly electronic newsletter *La lettre électronique de l'ABF*

Projects and Topics of Current Importance

The ABF wishes to develop inter-associative work with other associations of specialized librarians, of archivists, and of information and document managers gathered within IABD (inter-association archives libraries documentation) in order to better defend the interests of librarians, libraries and their users. The ABF also engages in efforts to reinforce its ties with booksellers, authors and publishers. The recent topical questions, as in all the countries, are those that concern the development of electronic resources and their legal framing. The subjects dealing with training and the staff regulations are also followed with much attention.