September 2005

International Dateline -- Aux Amateurs de Livres: How to Hold French Books Painlessly

Claire-Lise Benaud

University of New Mexico, clbenaud@unm.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Benaud, Claire-Lise (2005) "International Dateline -- Aux Amateurs de Livres: How to Hold French Books Painlessly," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 17: Iss. 4, Article 30.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4533>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

I Hear the Train A Comin' from page 78

does this submission process provide into the policy's prognosis? Put another way, what practical factors may influence the policy's adoption for researchers who fall outside of either "true believer" faction? In these early days, perhaps the biggest selling point for the dispassionate author is the ease of the submission mechanism. The Web form is simple, quick, and nontechnical. The submitter need not have any special computer savvy to prepare the manuscript. The time and energy a submitter must exert to get a paper into **PubMed Central** is minimal. Indeed, according to early data released by the **NIH Public Access Working Group** of the **NLM Board of Regents**, 84% of submitters indicated a submission time of ten minutes or less.

There are several factors, however, which may limit widespread adoption among authors. For one, the submission process is confusingly silent on copyright matters. No copyright statement is included in the submission form. Separately, in the *NIH Public Access Policy Authors' Manual*, a section states, "Authors and/or their institutions should ensure that their final manuscript submissions to **PMC** are consistent with any other agreements, including copyright assignments that they may have made with publishers or other third parties." Authors unsure of their article's copyright status and the procedures for obtaining clearance may avoid submission altogether.

Another gating factor is the duplication of effort that **PubMed Central** submissions involve. Authors submit their papers to the journal. They submit them to their institutional repositories. Yet another upload of the same metadata, no matter how simple the **PMC** form is, may prove untenable to some. The **National Library of Medicine** no doubt hopes to work with publishers to create a common submission or data forwarding mechanism. Squaring away the motivations of each party would seem a delicate task.

Finally, it is not clear how the **National Library of Medicine** might scale to meet the potential success of the policy. At present, all XML conversions are performed by the **National Library of Medicine**. With an adoption rate among funded researchers at less than 5%, **NLM** resources have not yet been taxed. Whether such labor-intensive efforts are sustainable at higher adoption rates is a very open question. Any restriction placed on file types, or conversion requirements pushed back to the submitters will undoubtedly dent uptake among the authoring community.

In concluding my look at the practical application of the **NIH** policy, I again pull away from the extremes. The system works well, but not perfectly. It is a good "1.0," but is not so developed as to render participation costs nil. It is neither perfect nor flawed enough, in sum, to provide succor to either tribe of true believers.

Where will **PubMed Central** go from here? I'll speculate that adoption rates among funded researchers will remain low unless one of two shifts occurs. The first shift would be the re-

placement of the recommendation for deposit with a requirement as a condition of funding. It is generally true that a rule yields greater adoption than a request. The second shift would be the recruitment of major publishers as strategic partners in the initiative. Publisher delivery of papers to **PMC** in automated fashion could reduce the author's role to checking an opt-in box. Piggybacking papers' markup on existing journal production systems would also alleviate scalability concerns.

The first shift relies on legislative intervention. Given the history of the original policy's wording, in which key language was progressively watered down over the course of a year (see <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/nihfaq.htm> for history) this may be a non-starter. On the other hand, perhaps the modest early results will embolden the cause's political champions to strengthen the provisions. As someone who voted for **Gray Davis**, **Bob Dole**, and **Paul Tsongas**, I fear my intuitions on matters political are insufficient to offer a reasoned prediction here.

The second shift would require the true believers within the **NIH** and the publishing industry to decide that the risks of collaboration are preferable to the alternative. Why might this be? Fear, mostly. Fear among the publishing community that prolonged antagonism will push the government to proceed with mandated participation. Fear among the **NIH** that publisher resistance will subtly suppress participation for long enough that the enterprise will be labeled a failure. Fear among all parties that the spilling of this debate into public consciousness will damage their standing among the researchers that provide their lifeblood.

What might the give and take of collaboration resemble? One can surmise that the publishers would seek to limit the free duplication of their proprietary content. This might mean extending the moving wall to 18 or 24 months. Alternatively, the publishers might push for public access to only the most current articles, with any content older than, say, two months pushed back to restricted access. Publishers would also likely seek to reinforce the value of their proprietary copies as the versions of record. For its part, the **NIH** might push for all relevant manuscripts from participating publishers to be forwarded unless the author explicitly declines (i.e., changing the aforementioned opt-in check

box to opt-out). They might also require a standard delivery mechanism from all participating publishers to streamline production.

It is not immediately clear whether such collaboration will occur. One factor that bears watching is the mindset of the funded researcher. It may be that author indifference to **PubMed Central** continues over time, or that participation grows dramatically as the concept is demonstrated. Such an attitudinal shift would no doubt influence the strategies of each vested party.

My hope and expectation is that this column will spark discussion and debate. To that end, I welcome your thoughts—my email address is <greg@bepress.com>.

The APS Journal Legacy Content

SAVES you 200
Linear feet of
SHELF SPACE

14 Journals of the **American
Physiological Society**
www.the-aps.org

International Dateline — Aux Amateurs de Livres: How to Get Hold of French Books Painlessly

by **Claire-Lise Benaud** (University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131)
<clbenaud@unm.edu>

Introduction

As a librarian and selector for French and francophone literature at the **University of New Mexico**, I had the opportunity of doing a four-month internship at the bookstore **Aux Amateurs**

de Livres *International* in France during a sabbatical. To work for the other side is always an interesting experience. I went from working for an institution whose job is to spend money wisely

continued on page 80

to working for a company whose goal is to make money. Of course, the goal of **Aux Amateurs de Livres** is much broader. Through the sale of books, they are promoting the French language, literature, and culture. Central to their expertise are books and periodicals published in France and other French speaking countries such as Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Africa and the Caribbean.

Environment

Twenty staff members work in rather cramped quarters next to the **Eiffel Tower** — space is at a premium in Paris — on three levels. The office is located in a former store and has large windows overlooking the streets. One can see office workers sitting in cafés, pedestrians, and traffic zooming by while at work. The bookstore functions solely as a bookdealer and has no stock on the premises. However, all books transit through the library — being received from publishers and then sent again to the appropriate libraries — creating a lot of traffic. A total of 210,000 pieces transit each year through the bookstore (186,000 books and 24,000 standing orders). **UPS** and **FedEx** workers and runners are in and out all day. During my stay, several writers also stopped by to check how their books were selling. **Aux Amateurs** is not only international because of its business dealings but also because of its staff. There are natives from England, Germany, Portugal, Guinea, and Columbia. French and English are routinely spoken, sometimes in the same sentence. This makes for a lively place.

Brief history

The bookstore **Aux Amateurs de Livres International** was established in 1930. The goal of the original owner was to export francophone books to US libraries and to promote the French language overseas.¹ This goal has not changed over the years. The bookstore changed hands in 1980 and the owner at the time added the sale of rare books and created a publishing house. He left in 1989 and kept the publishing house under the name of **Editions Klincksiek**. **Gilles de la Rochefoucauld** became the new president and continues to this day. He continued to focus on exporting francophone books, created his own publishing house, the **Editions Clément Juglar**, but discontinued the sale of rare books.

Aux Amateurs de Livres sells books and journals, the vast majority being books. The first priority of the bookstore is to order books for universities and research institutes. **Aux Amateurs** deals with nearly 1,500 universities and research institutes worldwide. The bookstore serves a majority of foreign customers (85%), the rest being French customers. Of the foreign customers, half are US and Canadian customers, the rest being divided among Europe, especially Germany, England, and Spain. The US is by far the largest client with 680 active customers.

As far as ordering is concerned, orders from US universities are steady. Canadian institutions, on the other hand, are expanding their collections and **Aux Amateurs de Livres** has also been able to recruit new clients there. The bookstore is trying to increase its European business. It is recruiting new clients, especially in Luxembourg, Belgium, Switzerland, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, and Spain. The bookstore's 2004/2005 sales of € 5.4

million are divided among the following categories: 55% firm orders, 15% approval titles, 15% standing orders, 10 % periodicals. Five percent are English titles sold to French universities (**Bookmaster**). eBooks have not entered the picture yet.

The bookstore is also the exclusive distributor for the following prestigious publishing houses: **Voltaire Foundation**, **Centre international d'études du XVIII^{ème} siècle**, **Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie**, and the **Editions Clément Juglar**. **Les Editions Clément Juglar** publish mainly the works of **Maurice Allais**, 1988 *Nobel Prize of Economics*, and the "*Revue du Droit de l'Union Européenne*," a quarterly publication, selling to European libraries, law school, and legal institutions. In 2001, **Aux Amateurs de Livres** acquired **Bookmaster**, a specialized bookseller of English language titles to francophone universities, business schools and a range of other documentation centers. **Bookmaster** satisfies the needs of those professional librarians, teachers, lecturers and other researchers and academics who require English language materials.

Overall view of publishing in France

100 books a day are published on average in France but only 20-25 of these are of interest to academic libraries. Publishing is quite decentralized but the last few years have seen a concentration in fewer hands. There are some 7,000 publishers in France but 80% of the business is done with 20% of the publishers. French publishing is concentrated between 2 major groups: **Hachette** and **Editis**. **Hachette** with current sales of 1,431 € is the largest. In its literary grouping, **Hachette** includes **Fayard**, **Grasset**, **Lattès**, **Stock**, **Calmann-Lévy**, and **Pauvert** among others. In its university grouping, it includes **Dalloz**, **Dunod**, and **Armand Colin**. It also includes **Larousse** and **Hatier**.

Editis, which was previously owned by **Vivendi-Universal Publishing** was then purchased by **Hachette**. However, because of anti-trust laws, part of it was repurchased by **Editis**. **Editis**, with current sales of 717 € is the second largest publisher in France and includes the **Presses Solar-Belfond** (**Presses de la cité**, **Solar**, **Belfond**, etc.), **Univers-Poche**, **Plon**, **Robert Laffont**, **Nathan**, and **Bordas** among others. Together **Hachette** and **Editis** have more than 50% of the market. Other publishers are **Gallimard**, one of the most prestigious (it is still family-owned by **Antoine Gallimard**, grandson of the original owner **Gaston Gallimard**), **Flammarion** which was sold to an Italian group, **Le Seuil**, which was just purchased by **La Martinière**, **Actes Sud**, **Presses universitaires de France**, and **le Cherche midi**. The consolidation and purchasing of publishing houses cannot only be explained by economic reasons, especially in the case of book publishing which is not a very lucrative business. Purchasing a publishing house continues to exert a certain fascination, the cultural and intellectual dimension often being a stronger impetus than the strictly financial interest. Local university presses have become more active lately and now publish extensively. Some of these newly revitalized presses are: **les Presses universitaires de Rennes**,

Presses du Septentrion at Lille, **Presses universitaires de Caen**, **PUL at Lyon**, **PULIM at Limoges**, **Presses universitaires de Grenoble**.

French publishing exhibits some local characteristics. Well-established publishers such as **Gallimard**, **Le Seuil**, **Grasset**, or **Fayard**, stock for some of their series extensively (e.g., *la Collection blanche* at **Gallimard**). It is still possible to buy books published 20 or 30 years ago. France also publishes books written for a general audience which are neither popular nor academic. Such books, for example, a new biography of **Louis XIV**, fall into this in-between category and are written for an enlightened public. They are read by métro commuters, but contain some scholarly references even though they are not considered research publications. US academic libraries need to decide if such publications belong to their collection. Likewise, the format of French books does not fall in the two categories familiar to the US customer, hard-cover and paperback. Most books are "broché" i.e., soft-cover but printed on high quality paper. A good example, both for content and format, are books published by **Robert Laffont** in the series "Bouquins." These paperbacks are printed on thin paper, open easily, are very pleasant to read, and are considered tools for

research. However, these present a dilemma for libraries as their binding may not stand the test of time.

Even though modern printing technology allows to print small runs, well-established French publishers do not publish very small runs — it is rare to find books printed for 200 copies. Only the smaller publishers, which are more flexible, are able to print smaller runs. When it comes to discounts, a 1981 law "loi sur le prix unique du livre" prohibits a larger than 5% discount to protect small independent bookstores from megastores.

Even though national and sometimes local regulations all affect how to conduct business, **Aux Amateurs** sells the same book at the same price to all its customers.

A new 2003 copyright law entitled "*Loi sur la rémunération des auteurs pour le droit de prêt*" AKA *la loi Lang* (established by the earlier **Ministre de la Culture Jack Lang**) states that all libraries lending books should compensate the authors accordingly. French authors receive two types of royalties, some from the publisher at the time of the sale of the book and some if the book is purchased by a lending library. As a result, every time **Aux Amateurs** sells a book to a French library, it redistributes 6% of its price to the author. The monies will be sent to an organization that will redistribute the royalties to authors accordingly. This government entity is being put in place as we speak. French bureaucracy is alive and well! This new law does not overly affect **Aux Amateurs** as the majority of its business is with foreign libraries. Copyright issues, like in the US, are being hotly debated in France.

Over the years, academic publishing has been decreasing in France. For example, traditional academic publishers such as **les Presses universitaires de France**, **Klincksiek**, or **les Belles Lettres** publish less research-oriented

continued on page 81

SpringerLink

The premier online publishing service from Springer!

SpringerLink, is a powerful central access point for researchers in science, technology and medicine. Today, our collection spans the universe of research – more than 1,200 peer reviewed journals and 2,500 volumes within our Online Book Series, plus a constantly expanding library of eBooks, Online Reference Works and Online Journal Archives.

Customize your serials collection with quality journals from Springer in:

- Behavioral Sciences ► Biomedical & Life Sciences ► Business & Economics
- Chemistry & Material Science ► Computer Science ► Earth & Environmental Sciences
- Engineering ► Humanities ► Mathematics ► Medicine ► Physics & Astronomy
- Social Sciences & Law

To learn more about SpringerLink, please contact a Licensing Manager or visit our website at springeronline.com/onlineproducts.

011595x

International Dateline from page 80

works and more manuals or textbooks. This has made a difference to US customers who have approval plans. Less books are candidates for approval than in the past. Some small publishers and the university presses have been able to fill the vacuum and publish small print runs of academic titles.

The goal of **Aux Amateurs** is to provide *all* books. This includes the “presse grise” (grey press) which are semi-clandestine publishers and other hard to find books. Such publications are known as “l’enfer de la bibliothèque nationale.” Today, there are no forbidden books; one cannot speak truly of censorship as it is extremely rare in France to have a book censored. The latest well-published case was a book published in 1996 by **Mitterand’s** doctor which was pulled out of bookstores two days after its publication because it revealed **Mitterand’s** health conditions (*Le Grand Secret* written by **Dr. Gubler** and originally published by **Plon**). This battle was fought in court and the book was finally re-printed and distributed in 2005, this time at the **éditions du Rocher**. **Aux Amateurs de Livres** works with all publishers, even the smallest ones, and with self-published authors. It can also provide books that are published on demand such as these.

Activities

In order to find out what is published in France, the staff uses two publications. The French system of **Dépot Légal** makes matter simple. By law, all publishers — including self-

published books — are required to send four copies to the **Dépot Légal** which is part of the **Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF)**. As a result, the listing from the BNF is nearly complete. The **BNF** lists, organized by broad **Dewey** numbers, are no longer published in printed form but can be printed from the **BNF** “base de données en ligne.” The second publication is “**Livres Hebdo**,” which is more timely than the **BNF**, and lists new books published weekly as its name indicates. These two publications are used by **Aux Amateurs** to indicate what books will be placed on approval — and for whom — and selection criteria. Selections include a star rating (3, 2, 1 star) with 3 indicating the most relevant titles for academic or research libraries. The database **Electre**, an offshoot of **Livres Hebdo** is also used to verify availability. Publishers’ catalogs are also used extensively. They are more timely than the **BNF** lists and **Livres Hebdo**. Publishers’ catalogs provide a depth of information and a variety of publications not always listed in the other two publications. For example, books listed in a catalog from an Algerian publisher will not always appear in the **BNF** or **Livres Hebdo**. **Aux Amateurs** keeps close contact with hundreds of publishers in order to keep receiving the appropriate catalogs.

Staff members do ordering, receiving, cataloging, and accounting in a database called **AS400 (IBM eseries)**. Many modules were developed to satisfy the needs of the bookstore. It is quite clunky, has no windows interface, but it does the job. This database is used both for creating order records for libraries and order

records for publishers and distributors. The **AS400** database automatically populates the **Aux Amateurs’s** catalog on the Web (www.auxam.fr).

1. Ordering

Library orders are received through the mail, through emails, or through the vendor’s Website. **Aux Amateurs** is encouraging its customers to order electronically. **Aux Amateurs’** paper slips are printed on beautiful paper with a baby blue highlight. Paper slip lovers will now have to pay to receive these elegant forms. Beginning in the spring of 2005, the bookstore began charging a fee of € 0.04 per slip, to cover the cost of shipping, handling, printing and paper. Hopefully, this will decrease the use of paper slips. E-slips are sent twice a month via email attachments (versus once a month for paper slips) and are free of charge. Customers can also order directly through the Web catalog at www.auxam.fr. This is by far the most efficient way to order. The Web record indicates if the book has been placed on approval and includes a selection criteria (1 to 3 stars). The Website is divided into two sections: new titles, which are added twice a month, and the full database. One can search using broad **LC** or **Dewey** classes, or can also do a very useful interdisciplinary search by country (Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Haiti, etc.), by topic (Judaica, feminism, gay and lesbian studies, management, accounting, reference, etc.) or by time periods (antiquities, Middle Age, renaissance, 17th-, 18th-, 19th-centuries).

As of today, sixty-three libraries order through the Website (only eight are European), and of these,

continued on page 82

25-30 do so on a regular basis (they are mostly American). In 2004, Web orders numbered an average of 850 titles per month. This year, it averages over 1,000 titles per month. **Aux Amateurs'** goal is to receive 100 Web orders per day.

Once received, orders are entered in the bookstore's **AS400** database, which today contains over 320,000 titles. The **AS400** includes order records, a corresponding **UNIMARC** record, standing orders, subscriptions, a list of publishers, and a list of customers. It contains close to 3,000 publishers out of a total of 4,200 French publishers. It also generates statistics by client, by country, etc. Once entered in the **AS400**, orders are automatically grouped by publishers or distributors and are sent by mail, and soon electronically, to the appropriate distributors.

Once the books are received, they are checked against the database, packed, and sent via **UPS**. Regular correspondence is sent by **FedEx**. Like all bookdealers, the bookstore searches out-of-print books and does extensive searching concerning small publishers (are they still in business? What is their current address?). They also do some research when library orders are incomplete or incorrect. **Aux Amateurs** goes out of its way to serve its clients and prides itself in this type of services.

2. Firm Orders

Over the years the bookstore has established a list of publishers that reflects their customer base and they are in close touch with those. It is a list that is constantly expanding. Firm orders are processed immediately and books are shipped daily via **UPS** to ensure the shortest possible waiting periods. They can also provide overnight delivery upon request. The "Your Account" section of the Website is a management tool that allows each customer to fully analyze their purchases. The order status can be monitored from order date right through completion, and useful management statistics can be calculated. For out-of-print titles, staff members use a network of booksellers throughout France. They are able to fill 55 % of OP requests.

3. Approval Plans

Working within a profile and a book budget previously set by each client, the bookstore selects titles each month. As with any approval plan, several subject and other parameters can be included in the profile. Approval titles are selected from **Livres Hebdo**, the **BNF** lists, and publishers' catalogs. Of these only a fraction are chosen for the different approval plans. For French literature, the bookstore offers an alphabetical « Authors list » that allows a library to find all literary authors published in France after 1900. Recent awards for the **Goncourt**, the **Médicis**, the **Renaudot**, the **Fémina**, and the **prix de l'Académie française** are indicated next to the author's name. This list remains open and updated on a regular basis. All titles selected on approval are systematically checked upon arrival in the office and fully cataloged. With book-in-hand, **Aux Amateurs** again evaluates the rating system to make sure that a particular title is worth what the publisher's catalog or **Livres Hebdo** claimed it to be. A book may lose or gain a star — or two.

Currently, the bookstore has 57 customers with approval plans (46 in the US, eight in Canada, two in Germany, and one in Great Britain) and is negotiating with two other libraries. The number of books purchased on approval is increasing for US customers. This may be due to the fact that there are less French specialists in American libraries. On the other hand, European libraries with French expertise in-house, do not rely on approval plans. They also lack budgets necessary for such plans.

The bookstore caters to the specific needs of its customers. For example, three customers (German, Canadian, and American) ask to receive copies of the **BNF** lists indicating what they have received on approval. Bibliographers then use the lists to order books on a title-by-title basis — making sure not to order what they will automatically receive through their plan.

4. Other types of Orders

Aux Amateurs de Livres handles more than 3500 serial titles published in France and other French speaking countries. All orders are automatically renewed each September and October and most titles are sent directly by the publisher to libraries. The bookstore also provides all types of standing orders including continuing series, multi-volume sets, directories, yearbooks, etc. It handles over 6,000 French or foreign titles.

5. Bibliographic Services

The bookstore offer several bibliographic services to its customers. For orders entered via the **Aux Amateurs de Livres'** Website, libraries registered for this service can receive order records for uploading into their library system. They can also receive acquisition records with embedded invoice data. Customers registered for this service receive order records, at the time of shipping/billing, in the **MARC** format for uploading into their library system. These services are offered free of charge. Libraries can also receive full **MARC** records with embedded invoice data.

6. Cataloging and Physical Processing

In the spring of 2004, **Aux Amateurs de Livres** hired an experienced cataloger to provide fully cataloged **MARC** records for its customers. This need is driven by North American libraries which expressed an interest in purchasing books with their corresponding records. So far, European libraries are more traditional and prefer to do their own cataloging. Currently, all approval books are cataloged using **UNIMARC**. Records include **LC** subject headings and call numbers, and are cataloged according to **AACR2** and the **LC Rule** interpretations. The **UNIMARC** records are then converted into **MARC21** using a commercial converter. Customers registered for this service receive the records at the time of shipping and billing. The fee for these Full-level **MARC** records is \$ 5.50/record. If a library needs fully cataloged titles for other types of orders, the fee for these Full-level **MARC** records is \$ 7.50/record. The bookstore hopes that this new service will interest an increasing number of customers.

The bookstore sends minimal **MARC21** records monthly to **OCLC** and records in the **MAB** format to a network of German libraries.

Customers can also purchase physical processing for their approval books. The bookstore will do stamping, barcoding, due date slips, and tattle-tapping, or whatever processing the library requires. There is a flat fee of \$ 0.60 per vol-

ume for this service.

Conclusion

Aux Amateurs prides itself with the quality of its service. This is what **Danielle Annino**, the co-director, calls "le travail de dentelle," meaning that services are tailor-made for each customer. **Aux Amateurs** caters to the needs of each of its customer, either through a very particular approval plan, physical processing, or other services. A staff member even sent a baking mold to a customer living in the Midwest who could not find one locally to bake "cannelés," a specialty from the town of Bordeaux! The staff goes the extra mile to provide excellent service.

Twenty years ago, **Aux Amateurs** provided books to universities. Today, it continues its primary mission but sees its service activities expanding in two areas: selection and cataloging. Libraries, especially in the United States, are less inclined to employ subject specialists. As a result, they will rely more on vendors to select the appropriate titles. The bookstore already sees this trend as more libraries are relying on approval plans for their purchases. Likewise, catalogers in US libraries are less specialized than in the past and the need for the cataloging of French books is shifting to the vendors. **Aux Amateurs** anticipates that the bookstore will select, catalog, and provide the books to libraries and research institutes. Even though European libraries are actively putting their collections online, US academic libraries are more driven by technology than their European counterparts. This is seen as a benefit by **Aux Amateurs de Livres**. By serving the US market, they can better anticipate what is on the horizon for European libraries. Stop by the **Amateurs'** stand at **ALA**. They will be delighted to meet you, both at the **Annual Conference** and at **Midwinter**.²

On a personal note, it struck me how prominent writers and philosophers are in French society. Several examples come to mind. Many political figures write extensively to put forward their ideas. These books sell briskly. To be a public servant and to write are intermingled in French life. This was especially true as France debated the vote on the new European constitution. Cities are also active players. In May 2005, the city of Toulouse organized "le marathon des mots." Writers and readers met all over the city in cafes, in theaters, in bookstores, in churches, and in the streets. French and foreign writers, actors, and singers shared their passion about words by reading to the people of Toulouse. The festival lasted four days and included some 150 events. TV channels also routinely invite authors to discuss their books in prime time and entire programs are devoted to literature. Even fashion magazines present extensive book reviews and literary interviews. Even though French writers do not quite attain the same status as movie stars or sport figures, they come as close seconds. Some even make the cover of popular magazines.³

Endnotes

1. "La société Aux Amateurs de Livres *Internationale*" written in 2000 by Dina Degras as part of a university research paper.
2. Aux Amateurs' North American representative is Jane Maddox (<jmaddox@auxam.fr>; tel: 360-714-0622).
3. Frédéric Beigbeder made the cover of *Voici*, May 2005.