

ABF: l'Association des Bibliothécaires de France

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Founded in 1906 mainly for the consideration of librarianship as a profession, l'Association des Bibliothécaires de France (the Association of the Librarians of France), or 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 federator text for the professional community of libraries.

The role of ABF is to examine all the questions, be they or scientific, technical or administrative nature, concerning the libraries, their public and their staffs. It rests thus on commissions and think tank groups and cooperates with projects initiated or elaborated by various other institutions or associations. Today, ABF comprises many workshops: professional training, libraries for young people, international relations, « hybrid libraries» (working on the latest technological developments in the field of information), handicapped public, libraries in companies and prisons, libraries in hospitals.

ABF gathers approximately 2800 members, regardless of the type or the size of library they work in, and regardless of their function in the library. They are organized in 22 regional groups. The association is managed by both a national council made up of the presidents of the regional groups, and a national executive board elected among them. The current president is Pascal Wagner, director of the library of Saint-Jean-de-Védas (South of France) and president of the regional group Languedoc-Roussillon. The association can rely on a team of 5 permanent and regular staff members on its payroll, who work in its parisian offices.

A network of information

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 press. Its website, which is presently being reconstructed (www.abf.fr) has been the subject of numerous visits. As an educational body, the ABF provides 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. ABF also conducts study meetings (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

ABF organizes its national meeting in a different place in 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, ABF supports the "Prix Sorcières" (Witches' book prize). Since its creation, the award gained more and more recognition and become a reference for the professionals in the choice of books for young people. The publishers, authors and illustrators grant much importance to the 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)*: 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 Libraires, Libraries and Web 2.0, etc.)
- The monthly electronic newsletter *La lettre électronique de l'ABF*

Projects and topics of current importance

ABF wishes to develop interassociative work with other associations of specialized librarians, of archivists, and of information and document managers gathered within IABD (interassociation archives libraries documentation) in order to better advocate for the interests of librarians, libraries and, last but not least, their users. 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.