



Profile Françoise Pellé

Françoise Pellé is currently the director of the ISSN International Centre, a role she has been in since 1998. The organization's mission is to maintain the international system for the identification of serial publications and other continuing resources – the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), well known by all players interested in serials. Françoise works closely with her US opposite number, Regina Romano Reynolds (profiled in *Serials*, November 2011, DOI: 10.1629/24208).

Work of this kind is no small undertaking, so your Editor began by asking Françoise about how she sees the organization. "The ISSN International Centre is an intergovernmental organization located in Paris, which might sound like a 'big organization'. Actually the International Centre itself is a relatively small organization, whose role consists, among others, of the coordination of a network of member countries (currently 88 countries). This membership is fundamental; it reflects the importance of the ISSN system. Thus I would say that the ISSN network (and system) is a big organization, in terms of size, mission, and role, to mention only a few aspects."

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When asked what it means to be in charge of the ISSN International Centre, she replied, "In my opinion, it means first of all to be responsible for an organization which has a mission – identification of continuing resources – and which needs, to fulfil that mission, to carry out many different tasks, ranging from marketing, sales,

231 accounting, bibliographic issues, database management, computer system management, standardization, promotion, training, and of course exchanges with many different countries all over the world: think, for instance, of the 88 countries which are members of the ISSN network today." She continued, "We also have various partners, we participate in various projects, ... well, [it is] impossible to get bored! This variety is one of the characteristics of the role, mainly due to the small size of the International Centre. In my opinion, it is one of the aspects which makes the job so interesting."

It is clear that this is a role that Françoise relishes and her enthusiasm shines through. Your Editor was keen to find out what it is about the work that particularly appeals to her and whether there is one aspect that is most appealing. "I would probably choose the international dimension, which is so rich, so surprising sometimes, other times so challenging, but most often so incredibly positive ...", though she added, "... I don't know if that is due to the professional dimension of the ISSN network, where we all share a set of strong professional rules based on regular exchanges among experts who respect each other."

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Françoise obviously enjoys the co-operative nature of the work, adding that "... when the network meets (on an annual basis), the professional and friendly links among participants are immediately revived. This does not mean that we all always agree on all topics, far from that! But we try to keep the discussions on professional and factual grounds, and to build consensus."



Françoise with colleagues at the 34th Meeting of Directors of the ISSN National Centres

When pressed further about the nature of those discussions, Françoise noted that many relate to the principles of ISSN assignment, "... that is typically a matter of policy which is important to the whole network and to all the ISSN users, and where everyone can participate through their own experience. I should perhaps go back to the last revision of the ISSN ISO standard – ISO 3297 – where one of the most fundamental principles for assigning ISSN was discussed with the network, of course, but also with the ISO working group which included representatives of publishers, subscription agents, and other standards with which ISSN has links of some kind, such as ISBN, DOI, or OpenURL. Starting from very diverging views, we finally came to an agreement among all interested parties – it was quite a challenge, believe me, but it is still today for me a great pleasure to acknowledge the remarkable open-mindedness demonstrated by all participants."

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The mention of ISO intrigued your Editor, so he asked whether he had heard correctly. "Yes [you] did – and thank you for the question. I did mention ISO because the ISSN is an ISO standard, and part of my work is dedicated to that aspect of the ISSN life." Françoise has other reasons to be interested in this topic – she is also currently the chair of the ISO

232 technical committee devoted to information and documentation, ISO TC 46. She went on to add, "That is also a fascinating responsibility – needless to say that it comes in addition to my other professional responsibility as director of the ISSN International Centre. There is an obvious synergy between ISSN and ISO TC 46, although I should rather say, part of ISO TC 46, namely the 'identification and description' part, ISO TC 46/SC 9. There are many other areas under the ISO TC 46 umbrella: technical interoperability, quality, statistics and evaluation, document storage and conditions for preservation, archives/records management, as well as some of the most broadly used ISO standards such as country codes, with 72 participating and observing countries at the TC 46 level. I am convinced that standardization is fundamental to exchanges, and exchanges are, and have been for a very long time, at the core of the activity of librarians."

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It was reassuring to hear Françoise mentioning libraries, so your Editor pressed her to find out where this understanding of libraries comes from. "Probably because I am a librarian! I got my librarianship degree in Paris, at the national librarian school (ENSSIB, which is now located in Lyon) after an academic degree in comparative literature." Françoise went on to add, "... I also got a degree in computer science with a specialization in the automatic processing of natural languages. I worked in French academic and public libraries, at the French Ministry of Culture and as a consultant for private companies." When asked about her working roles, she added, "Prior to being in charge of the ISSN International Centre, I worked at the French Ministry of Higher Education where I was project manager for the strategic planning of the French academic libraries, which resulted, among other things, in the creation of ABES and SUDOC, the organization and set of tools supporting the network of French academic libraries. That period of my professional life was as fascinating as the ISSN period!"

Before finishing the interview, your Editor asked Françoise how she sees the global information community in the 21st century and the many changes that have affected it over recent years. "It is fascinating to see the huge changes that have taken place in what we (in the ISSN network) call the 'serials world' (sometimes also the 'serials jungle!'). Indeed it is a world in itself, and an ever changing one." She added, "Electronic publication was first developed by serials publishers, and all the related issues have first been identified and dealt with in that context, by publishers, distributors, subscription agents, librarians of course, and many others. Not surprisingly, all colleagues in the ISSN network are enthusiastic about their job. And I consider myself a very lucky person because I have been working in that environment for over 14 years now."

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And so, on that thought, your Editor thanked Françoise for her time and ended the interview.

