
French system for ETDs (and more) in a cartoon strip

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Abstract

The French system for ETDs presents many original features compared to other countries:

- a national framework based on legal deposit of theses. Effective since the 80s, the legal deposit originally concerned paper. In 2006, the legislation changed to strongly support ETD. Ten years later, ETD is going to become the rule: all French PhD will be ETDs in a few months.

- a national institution, Agence bibliographique de l'enseignement supérieur – ABES, is in charge of metadata, full-text deposit, and allocation of a national identifier.

- cooperation with other national actors : Centre informatique national pour l'Enseignement Supérieur - CINES for long-term preservation, HAL for open access.

- the French system is a complete workflow from the idea of the doctoral project to the graduation, and even more.

To cope with those issues, ABES launched 3 softwares : "STAR" for ETDS, "STEP" for theses and dissertations before defense, and "theses.fr" search engine which gathers all French theses, from 1985 to present.

Around 130 universities and IT schools use this national framework. If universities want it, "STEP" and "STAR" can be connected, upstream with their IT system to recuperate metadata, and downstream with their open repositories. Then, metadata, including the URL to access full-text, are widely disseminated.

The poster is a comic strip focused on the whole "life-cycle" of a thesis from the subject being registered to the post-thesis period. A librarian explains the national framework to a PhD student, step by step.

First, you can see the PhD student preoccupations before defense: how giving information about his thesis in progress ? Metadata extraction from IT system university enables automated cataloging in "STEP". When necessary, the PhD student and the librarian complete cataloging. The PhD project description is then published on "theses.fr" as an ongoing thesis.

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Three years later, more or less, the student graduates. Metadata are pushed from "STEP" to "STAR" and the PDF file is uploaded in "STAR" which controls its quality and push it for long-term preservation to CINES. Meanwhile, the librarian helps the PhD to make up his mind : is open access a good choice to promote his/her theses ? is embargo relevant ? According to PhD wishes, the deposit of PDF file is made by "STAR" in HAL or an another open repository. At the same time, "theses.fr" is updated and provides both accurate description of ETD and access to full-text, when available. "theses.fr" generates a personal HTML page for each person in relation with the thesis : the author of course, but also, the supervisor, the examiners. Each HTML page has a proper and persistent ID.

A few years later, when the PhD becomes a researcher, the librarian will show him how "theses.fr" promotes his thesis and the books written since the PhD defense. The "theses.fr" HTML page for this thesis aggregates all information.

On the authors:

Olivier CIAN, Isabelle MARTIN and Isabelle MAUGER PEREZ are French librarians, currently working for the Bibliographic Agency of higher education (ABES). This French governmental agency manages the network of the French academic libraries. Olivier CIAN is the functional manager of the STAR software, used for production and dissemination of digital theses. Isabelle MAUGER PEREZ is the functional manager of theses.fr, a search engine solely dedicated to French PhD, from the choice of subject to the promotion of the thesis. Isabelle MARTIN is in charge of the coordination between ABES, the Ministry of Higher education and the 130 French universities and "grandes écoles" concerned by PhDs

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