

W3C Workshop on Electronic Books and the Open Web Platform Position Paper

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Gallimard, Flammarion and Seuil La Martinière are one of the main publishing groups in France. They both share the same will of extending the digital offer (in terms of volume – new publications and backlist – products – texts, illustrated and enhanced ebooks), while maintaining the booksellers in the digital chain.

In 2009, they founded Eden Livres, a distribution platform, which became one of the main ebooks distributor in France, gathering around 180 publishers, 150 bookstores and over 20 000 titles.

As the market grows, publishers experienced that all the efforts to create an interoperable environment have to be kept. It means for them to focus on their truly valuable part in the chain: finding authors with ideas and readers, expanding their brand and their self-knowledge, privileging creativity and commercial flexibility, etc.

Now that the “first” digital offer is born, available through a first set of e-reading solutions, we do need tools and paths to extend this offer to our production, in her diversity: comics, illustrated books, guides, etc, and to our partners downstream.

Considering that we already product or distribute several formats (PDF, standard reflowable ePub 2 and 3, fixed layout, enhanced fixed layout, IOS and Android applications, mobi and kf8, websites, etc), those tools will not be effective without the strongest effort to create a wider and standardized market, letting us working with creators in a stable environment, booksellers proving that their jobs are even more important in a digital environment, and readers choosing in a simply and free way their books (meaning their bookseller and their device also).

This technical standardization is fundamental on every level of the chain: production (formats, controls, and versioning), distribution (metadata, identifications, conformance between contents and reading systems), and rendering (quality, conformance with authors and editors choices). For all these reasons we do think that this W3C eBook workshop is a great opportunity for us to bring these topics to the forefront.