

Position paper for the W3C Workshop on “Publishing and the Open Web Platform”

Nathalie Mosquet

EDITIS is the second largest publisher of the French market, with a wide publishing scope both in education and trade sectors. We have a large variety of products, ranging from complex illustrated textbooks, guide books, children books to practical books, mangas and trade books.

The challenge we are now facing is to establish processes and workflows, and integrate tools that will allow a real multi-output production for all these very different types of books. Print will remain a key focus for publishers, especially when the POD model develops, but digital can no longer be considered as a secondary product to print. In addition to gaining productivity, in particular with authoring tools, we will have to exploit much more possibilities offered by the digital world than we are currently doing. And it is clear that contents will generate more than one digital product, opening up for enhanced creativity.

But because the online world, together with distribution ecosystems, are still strongly evolving and often independently of the publishing sector, it is therefore difficult to master all the parameters that drive customer experience. Never before have production and distribution been so intertwined. The more so in a globalized world, where barriers are totally unwelcome, and getting different and uncontrolled experiences hardly tolerated by customers. Interoperability has thus become a key word, together with accessibility for a larger community of readers. As book publishers, we currently have to rely on formats and DRM systems, to ensure proper rendering of our contents and an acceptable level of protection of those contents. Epub3, with its new features integrating html5 and CSS 3 richness, will definitely develop with the delivery of the Radium SDK. How online reading will pick up as a model and for which contents is still a question for us.

Lastly, confronting a book with the wide open web is still a stimulating game! Discoverability through standardized enhanced metadata, adapted to the various product forms, can still be improved. These metadata, together with functionalities enabling dialogues between authors and readers, will help the readers meet their favourite books... and vice versa.

All this demands a special mix of editorial and technical skills which still need to be acquired. This is why it is critical and strategic for publishing groups to work with W3C, to actively participate in designing the new publishing world.