



Bilingualism and Scholarly Publishing in Canada

by Alan Colin Arce | 12 January 2026 | English, Insights and Signals Reports



Lisez-le en français

This insight and signals report was written by Brittany Amell and Alan Colin-Arce with thanks to INKE Partners Lucía Céspedes, Elizabeth Kalbfleisch and Catherine Lachaine for their comments and review.

At a Glance

Topic / Titre	Scholarly Publishing
Key Participants / Créateur	Government of Canada, Fonds de Recherche du Québec, Érudit
Date / Période	2024 – present
Keywords / Mots-clés	Bilingualism / bilinguisme, scholarly communication / la communication savante, Canada, bibliodiversity / bibliodiversité, policy / politique, diamond open access / le libre accès diamant

Summary

This report examines some of the challenges facing French-language scholarly publishing in Canada, despite the country’s official bilingual status since 1969. Key takeaways include the federal government’s significant investment (\$4.1 billion Action Plan with \$8.5 million specifically for French research infrastructure), Quebec’s leadership through Érudit’s digital publishing consortium and the FRQ’s \$10 million commitment to a collaborative network for francophone journals, and comprehensive recommendations for reforming research evaluation practices to better value multilingual scholarship and support the transition to diamond open access models that can sustain French-language publishing in Canada.

Bilingualism and scholarly publishing in Canada

Canada officially became a bilingual country in 1969 with the passing of the first federal Official Languages Act. However, while the number of French-speaking Canadians is at an all-time high ([according to the 2021 Census](#)), English still dominates the digital landscape (Canadian Heritage, 2023). Indeed, as Larivière et al. (2021) note, “80% to 90% of newly created journals [in Canada] have been

anglophone. From 2010 on, practically all the journals created were anglophone” (15).

In 2003, the Government of Canada launched the [Action Plan for Official Languages](#) with the objectives of improving English and French bilingualism in the federal public service, enhancing official language minority communities, and strengthening the country’s linguistic duality. Since then, the Government has implemented successive five-year action plans to counter the demographic decline of Francophones in Canada and promote bilingualism.

The most recent [Action Plan 2023-2028](#) will receive a total of government investment of up to \$4.1 billion. As part of this initiative, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour will invest [\\$8.5 million to support and strengthen Canada’s French-language research ecosystem](#) by offering better support for the production, discoverability, and dissemination of work by French-speaking researchers. To assist with these efforts, the Government of Canada created the [external advisory panel on the creation and dissemination of scientific information in French](#) to advise about the development of a federal strategy that ensures the long-term viability of Canada’s French-language ecosystem.

[Érudit](#), a Pan-Canadian interuniversity consortium comprising the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and Université du Québec à Montréal, has provided infrastructure and support to disseminate Canadian journals in open access, including bilingual and Francophone journals. In a brief submitted to the Standing Committee on Science and Research in [November 2022](#), Érudit noted that it provided access to 140,000 scientific articles published across more than 150 scholarly journals.

According to Beth et al. (2024), the number of active scholarly journals in the province of Québec is estimated to be around 160. Of this number, half (80) publish exclusively in French, 10 journals publish exclusively in English, and the remaining are bilingual or plurilingual. Thanks to the digitization efforts of Érudit, the majority of journal articles through Érudit are written in French. This is critical since, as Érudit notes in their 2022 brief to the Standing Committee on Science and Research:

The overall importance of the English language in all spheres of activity, the internationalization of exchanges in all fields of research, but especially the systemic devaluation of all languages except English in journal ranking systems (Mongeon and

Paul-Hus 2016), increasingly discourages francophone researchers from publishing in their own language. This linguistic impoverishment of scholarly publishing is problematic in many ways for francophone research communities in Canada and for Canadian society as a whole. (4)

Importantly, *Érudit* and the Association francophone pour le savoir (Acfas) make several **recommendations** (pp. 13-19) in their jointly authored report that speak directly to ensuring knowledge dissemination in French is bolstered and valued (Beth et al., 2024). For instance, suggestions relating to the evaluation of research included:

1. Reviewing evaluation practices for researchers and research to prioritize qualitative evaluation practices and to give greater value to editorial activities and communications methods beyond scholarly articles.
2. Giving due value to communications in languages *other than English*, and to those aimed at a wider non-academic readership or audience.
3. Taking inspiration from the principles established in **CoARA** and **DORA**, and implementing them.

In addition to the above, they also ask for:

1. Increased funding for journals publishing in French that is indexed for inflation.
2. Strengthened institutional support from universities and scientific institutions (for example, implementing teaching relief for journal editors, counting student publishing internships).
3. A horizontal, collaborative common structure that brings Québec scholarly journals together in a way that respects and reflects their diversity while overcoming the atomized landscape that Québec scholarly journals and their teams currently work within.

Together, these recommendations emphasize the need for coordinated support of French-language scholarly publishing, setting the stage for broader conversations about how digital research infrastructure can help meet these needs (see also [here](#)).

Indeed, it appears some progress is underway—in May 2024, the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) **announced** it would provide \$10 million in funding for the creation of the **Quebec research and sharing network for scientific journals**, which ended up becoming the **Réseau Circe**. This project seeks to reinforce Quebec's

Francophone scholarly communication ecosystem and facilitate the transition towards a diamond open access model for Francophone journals. The FRQ was the first Canadian funding organization to join cOAlition S in 2021 (read more [here](#)).

In addition to efforts carried out in Quebec, some national organizations are also carrying out initiatives to promote bilingualism. For example, the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences organizes the yearly [Scholarly Book Awards](#), which include translation grants of \$30,000 to support the English or French translations of books in the humanities and social sciences. The Federation also awards the [Canada Prizes](#) to “recognize the country’s five most inspiring, impactful, and transformative scholarly books in the humanities and social sciences annually.” At least two of the books that receive this prize each year must be written in French.

Another national organization, The [Canadian Research Knowledge Network](#) (CRKN) has been a member of the [Fédération des milieux documentaires](#) since 2019. This membership allows CRKN to advance contributions to the Francophone library and information science field in Canada.

Response from INKE Partners

Elizabeth Kalbfleisch (Senior Program Officer, CARL) and Catherine Lachaine (Student Success Librarian, University of Ottawa Library; Visiting Program Officer for Open Education, CARL):

Research libraries are a central axis of scholarly communications. As a bilingual pan-Canadian organization, CARL is concerned by the linguistic inequities of an ecosystem that favours English, in spite of the efforts by *Érudit*, *Réseau Circé* and others to support and invigorate scholarly communications in French. This lag is not just to the detriment of francophones. As a country, we all stand to benefit from a course correction: a strengthened francophone ecosystem strengthens the Canadian research ecosystem, and with it, the visibility of Canadian research in both its official languages on the international stage. We believe in and support all initiatives that will foster the francophone scientific output, but we also wish to avoid two non-integrated systems, so we advocate for a fluid and robustly single integrated bilingual Canadian research ecosystem.

Visibility of research in French is hampered by the fact that the databases and search engines commonly used by researchers and students prioritize English-language content, making research published in French less visible. This can be offset by supporting the development of bilingual, accessible and interoperable institutional repositories with high quality French-language interfaces. Interoperability with other national and international infrastructures, such as OpenAIRE, ORCID, Dataverse, etc., is key so that French-language content is visible, indexed and reusable on a global scale. Ongoing development at Université Laval on the *Répertoire de vedettes-matière* (RVM), the national open access indexing standard in the French language, is a valuable intervention. The RVM offers five specialized thesauri and is subject to continuous enrichment, including an important work of revision of the vocabulary related to Indigenous peoples; the implementation of this linked, controlled vocabulary contributes to more precise and effective searches.

Artificial intelligence tools hold promise in this arena. With increased investment, tools such as natural language processing models, indexing automation, rich metadata generation, and smart recommendation systems could strengthen functionality in both languages and with it, narrow the gap between English and French.

References

Beth, Suzanne, Gwendal Henry, Annie-Marie Fortier, and Simon van Bellen. 2024. *Recognize, Promote, Reinforce: Recommendations from the Symposium Québécois Des Revues Savantes*. Érudit and Acfas. <https://www.erudit.org/public/documents/recommendations-symposium-journals.pdf>.

Canadian Heritage. 2023. *Demographic Trends for Official Languages (2021 Census of Canada)*. Question Period Note PCH-2023-QP-00010. Open Government. Government of Canada. <https://search.open.canada.ca/qpnotes/record/pch,PCH-2023-QP-00010>.

Érudit Consortium. 2022. *Brief on Research and Scientific Publication in French*. Brief. Presented to the Standing Committee on Science and Research. Canada. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/SRSR/Brief/BR12135616/br-external/Consortium%C3%89rudit-10709768-e.pdf>.

Larivière, Vincent, Suzanne Beth, Simon Van Bellen, Eve Delmas, and Émilie Paquin. 2021. *Canadian Scholarly Journals in the Humanities and Social Sciences: A Quantitative and Qualitative Portrait*. Érudit. https://www.erudit.org/public/documents/Canadian_scholarlyjournals_HSS_2021.pdf.

Search



Archives



Categories

Community News

English

French

Insights and Signals Reports

Observations

Observations and Responses

Policies

Responses

Tags

[AI bots / Robots d'indexation IA](#) [AI governance / Gouvernance de l'IA](#)

[AI safety / Sécurité de l'IA](#) [Berlin Declaration / Déclaration de Berlin](#)

[Bethesda Statement / Déclaration de Bethesda](#) [bibliodiversity / bibliodiversité](#)

[Bilingualism / bilinguisme](#) [Budapest Statement / Déclaration de Budapest](#) [Canada](#)

[Canadiana.org](#) [Canadian government/le gouvernement du Canada](#) [CAPOS](#)

[CARL / ABRC](#) [collaboration](#) [community engagement / engagement communautaire](#)

[Compute Canada / calcul Canada](#) [copyright / droits d'auteurs](#)

[credibility / crédibilité](#) [CRKN / RCDR](#) [Cybersecurity / Cybersécurité](#)

[data management / gestion des données](#)

[diamond open access / le libre accès diamant](#) [Digital Commons / Commun numérique](#)

[digital scholarship / version numérique](#) [en français / French](#) [English / en anglais](#)

[events and gatherings / événements et rassemblements](#)

[Federation for the HSS / Fédération des sciences humaines](#)

[funding agencies / organismes de financement](#)

[generative artificial intelligence / l'intelligence artificielle générative](#)

[identity management / gestion de l'identité](#) [implementation / mise en oeuvre](#) [INKE](#)

[International OA Week / Semaine internationale du libre accès](#)

[international policy / politique internationale](#)

[licensing agreements / accords de licence](#) [Multilingualism / Multilinguisme](#)

[Naylor Report / le rapport Naylor](#) [open access / libre accès](#)

[open data / données ouvertes](#) [open education / éducation ouverte](#)

[open government / gouvernement ouvert](#) [open infrastructure / infrastructure ouverte](#)

[Open Scholarship Press](#) [open science / science ouverte](#)

[open social scholarship / approches sociales des savoirs ouverts](#)

[open source software / les logiciels libres](#) [ORCID](#) [peer review / critique des pairs](#)

[Perpetual Access / Accès perpétuel](#) [PKP](#) [Plan S](#)
[Plan S update / mise à jour du Plan S](#) [policy / politique](#)
[policy guide / guide des politiques](#) [promotion et titularisation](#) [publishing / édition](#)
[RDC / DRC](#) [RDM](#) [RECODE](#) [recommendations / recommandations](#)
[reports / les rapports](#) [repositories / les dépôts](#)
[research creation / recherche-crédation](#)
[research evaluation / l'évaluation de la recherche](#)
[research libraries / les bibliothèques de recherche](#)
[research output / les résultats de la recherche](#)
[research security / sécurité de la recherche](#) [RPT / révision](#)
[scholarly communication / la communication savante](#) [SFU Library / Bibliothèque](#)
[social media / les médias sociaux](#) [Tri-Agency / des trois organismes](#) [UK](#)
[UK / Royaume-Uni](#) [UNESCO](#) [UVic Libraries](#) [Érudit](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

