

The French Review

From the Editor's Desk

In September 2009 the *National Bulletin* presented a promising undertaking by Fabrice Jaumont of the French Embassy in New York. The article outlines the many possibilities for communication in French (and in English) among Francophiles and Francophones through the creation of a "New York in French" blog called "Ning" (Chinese for "peace"). It is a free, apolitical, non-commercial, community blog open to anyone in the New York area and its extended surrounding (I take this to mean the world) and is free. Within 20 days after it was created in the spring of 2009, 1150 people had signed up, much as one might do for *Facebook* or *MySpace*. This platform (Ning) allows individuals to present their thoughts on topics of their choice and facilitates exchange of all kinds of information.

As of June 2009 38 interactive blogs had been created, including an "organisme séjour," Jobs, Petites annonces, Theatre in France, Cinema in France, Art in France, French as a Foreign Language, For Teachers, Interviews (some under the rubric, Canapé), a calendar of Francophone events, and videos. It is clear that the sky is the limit. Posts by Julia Frey on topics like the Ch'tis, Food and the French Tongue, Name Dropping/Le Name Dropping, and Jaumont's creation of a verb "ninguer" were all features. "Ning" was created in California by Marc Andreesen and Gina Bianchini. It was Andreesen who launched Netscape and Opware.

Anyone may create his or her own social network for free. It seems to me that French teachers everywhere should get their students involved in "Ninging" and should also hook up with local Alliance Française chapters in order to maximize the strength of an enterprise that gives greater voice to Francophones and Francophiles in their own countries. Then they should have their school newspapers and local paper write up their endeavors. In order to join one should go to <http://newyorkinfrench.net>. University and college teachers should also contact Francophones who are on their campuses through their International Programs' offices. There is no reason why Francophone teachers can not create their own blogs so that their students can learn more about Francophone countries and meet the creators of the blogs. I am sure that some of you are probably already doing this.

Another interesting development is the creation of Gold Radio Miami, which links with "gold Radio Webradios Francophone" in order to meet the needs of the 50,000 French-speaking people now living in Florida. Why shouldn't we teachers of French encourage our students in French clubs or our own classes to imitate Gold Radio and to create their own radio programs. Students could then approach their campus radio stations and ask to play French-language music and other features in a 30-minute slot each week. International Francophone students could also get involved. Students might be required to listen to the resulting program and study the songs they hear.

In these hard times when enrollments in French are declining and positions being lost we need to gain greater visibility for our program and initiatives. We have already found that National French Week has paid dividends. Now it is clear that blogs and radio shows are two more fruitful ways of supporting French. Please write to me and let me know what has worked for you!

Christopher P. Pinet, Editor in Chief