

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Oxford
Unit of Assessment: 28 Modern Languages and Linguistics
Title of case study: The <i>Candide</i> App: Engaging School Students with Classic Literature
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Professor Nicholas Cronk, has in collaboration with others, created an app which is an enhanced edition of Voltaire’s <i>Candide</i>, freely available, for use on tablets. <i>Candide</i> is a timeless and universal text with perennial appeal, and this digital edition renders it accessible to a wide variety of new readers. Cronk has been encouraging engagement with Voltaire’s texts through more traditional channels but this latest innovation has won new readers for Voltaire, especially among a young generation often more familiar with new media than with traditional books. The app, with its dual level of annotations, illustrations, manuscript images, commentaries, and the Polyadès recording, has been well received by a wide range of readers, and functions in a curatorial capacity to preserve an important work of French classical literary heritage in a new, sustainable format. The <i>Candide</i> app represents a revolutionary tool for both independent learning, and also for classroom teaching.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The <i>Œuvres complètes de Voltaire</i> (OCV) [1] are the first ever scholarly edition of the entire output of Voltaire’s writings. The project began in 1968. As general editor, Nicholas Cronk (Professor of French Literature, and Lecturer in the History of the Book) has managed the project for the last decade and has been credited with revitalising it. The project is now entering its final phase. The edition will be complete by 2018, in over 200 print volumes. It has been widely acclaimed as a monument of Enlightenment and textual scholarship. Cronk has himself edited a number of volumes, notably the <i>Questions sur l’Encyclopédie</i> [2], a massive and relatively little-known late text by Voltaire which is appearing in eight volumes; Cronk is co-author of the introduction to this text, which is a monograph in itself.</p> <p>Cronk’s place at the centre of Voltaire studies has given him an exceptionally deep and wide knowledge of Voltaire’s copious oeuvre and its literary and intellectual context. He has published extensively on aspects of Voltaire’s work and more generally on questions of authorship, writing, and publishing in the eighteenth century. [3, 4, 5] He has given particular attention to what is perhaps Voltaire’s most famous work, <i>Candide</i>. In 2009, Cronk organised in Oxford (together with Professor Nathalie Ferrand, associate researcher at the <i>Maison Française d’Oxford</i>), the major international celebration of the 250th anniversary of <i>Candide</i>, a three-day international conference with over 40 speakers, the proceedings of which have been collated in a forthcoming publication [6].</p> <p>The <i>Cambridge Companion to Voltaire</i> [7], edited by Cronk, provided another opportunity to bring together the leading Voltaire scholars in the UK and France, and to encourage them to synthesize the most recent research in a way which would be accessible to the widest number of readers.</p> <p>As Director of the Voltaire Foundation, Cronk created the Besterman Centre for the Enlightenment, as a means of involving scholars from a variety of disciplines in the study of the international Enlightenment. He is currently <i>Président</i> of the French <i>Société des études voltairiennes</i>, based at the Sorbonne, and is thereby connected with networks of scholars across Europe.</p> <p>To win new readers for Voltaire, especially among a young generation often more familiar with new media than with traditional books, it is necessary to take advantage of new technology. For this purpose, <i>Candide</i>, with its perennial appeal, was the ideal text. The OCV includes the definitive critical edition of <i>Candide</i> by René Pomeau, which was the starting point for the digital edition ‘<i>Candide, l’édition enrichie</i>’ an iPad app. Cronk initiated the app’s production, finding a funder and the partners in France with whom to collaborate. He then acted as the academic leader on the project. Orange (France) provided the funding for the research and the project management; the Bibliothèque nationale de France provided access to their collections, and facilitated collaboration with schoolteachers to write parts of the app. Planning began in autumn 2011, the work was carried out in 2012, and the first prototype of the app was launched as an iPad app at the beginning of 2013. A second enhanced version was released later in 2013.</p>

3. References to the research

- [1] The *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire* [In REF2] are published under the aegis of the British, French and Belgian Academies. The British Academy makes an annual grant to the project, as does the International Union of Academies (UIA). The French Academy awarded OCV the Prix Hervé Deluen in 2010 (€25,000). The AHRC made a grant of £603,527 (the largest ever awarded to a French literature project, Mar 08 – Feb 13). Air Artisan Paris made a grant of £200,000. http://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/www_vf/ocv/ocv_index.ssi

“The Complete Works of Voltaire are unquestionably one of the most prestigious publications in humanities scholarship in the UK. The excellence of the published volumes is recognised worldwide.”(Arts & Humanities Research Council, 2008)

« La Commission reconnaît pleinement l'importance [des Œuvres complètes de Voltaire]. L'UIA peut s'enorgueillir de ces travaux dont le résultat final sera une édition enfin définitive de l'œuvre entière de Voltaire. La Commission a exprimé ses félicitations. » (Union académique internationale, 82e Session annuelle du Comité, Bruxelles, 2008)

- [2] Voltaire, *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, critical ed. by N. Cronk & C. Mervaud, 7 volumes of text published (2007-13); 1 volume critical study forthcoming (2014). In REF2.
« Les Questions sur l'Encyclopédie furent un véritable tour de force : quelque 440 articles sur des sujets qui ont passionné et amusé un Voltaire septuagénaire. Après avoir presque disparu de la circulation, les Questions réapparaissent aujourd'hui dans toute leur originalité et leur splendeur irrévérencieuse, grâce aux soins d'une équipe internationale de spécialistes voltairiens. » (Robert Darnton, Harvard University)
- [3] (Ed., with J. Stalnaker), 'Authorship in the eighteenth century/Être auteur au XVIII^e siècle', special number of *Romantic Review*, 103.3-4 (2013), including Cronk's own essay, 'The selfless author: Voltaire's apocrypha'. Available on request.
- [4] 'Voltaire and the posture of anonymity', *Modern Language Notes*, 126 (2011), 768-84. DOI: 10.1353/mln.2011.0064. In REF2
- [5] 'Les œuvres (in)complètes de Voltaire', dans *Composer, rassembler, penser les « œuvres complètes »*, éd. B. Didier, J. Neefs et S. Rolet (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2012), pp. 307-32. Available on request. In REF 2.
- [6] Nicholas Cronk & Nathalie Ferrand (ed.), *Les 250 ans de Candide: Lectures et relectures* (Louvain: Peeters, 2013). Available on request.
- [7] (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Voltaire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) [Portuguese translation (São Paulo: Madras, 2010)]
« L'équipe éditoriale rassemblée par la Voltaire Foundation met à la disposition des historiens et des honnêtes lecteurs un texte fondamental, éclairé généreusement, expliqué par une annotation pertinente, dans son contexte et dans ses références. L'édition de 2009 fera date. » (Daniel Roche, Collège de France)

4. Details of the impact

Cronk has had experience of presenting Voltaire to a broader public: he wrote and presented three programmes on Voltaire in the Radio 3 series 'The Essay' (November 2010), and more recently spoke about *Candide* on Melvyn Bragg's *In Our Time* (May 2012); in 2013 he did a number of press, radio and TV interviews about his 'discovery' of some Voltaire manuscripts, and gave a talk about this ('Voltaire's lost letters') at a recent Oxford alumni reunion, and at another alumni gathering in Paris. He has recently written an article on the posthumous image of Voltaire for a special dossier on Voltaire which appeared in the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* in July 2013. He finds that communicating his ideas about Voltaire to these different audiences has given him a more acute awareness of why Voltaire remains such a relevant figure in modern society.

This case study focuses on two specific areas of impact arising from the research on OCV: namely the cultural and educative experiences open to the general public, and particularly to school students, facilitated by the development of 'Candide, l'édition enrichie'^[IS5: A], a free iPad app version of Voltaire's *Candide*. The app has been developed as part of a wider commitment by Cronk and

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the editors of *OCV* to rendering the collection available and accessible to as wide a public audience as possible, for example, the *OCV* edition of *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, when complete, will appear also in the distinguished and best-selling Bouquins collection published by Robert Laffont.

The *Candide* app is free to download and is available from the iTunes app store. There have been over 7000 downloads since January ^[A]. A free website was launched in April 2013, and further versions of the app (for iPhones and Androids notably) are also scheduled for release during 2013. The early success of the app is attested by its receipt of a Silver 'European Design Award' in 2013 for communication design excellence ^[B].

The app is divided into three parts:

1. **Le Livre:** The French text, with as an optional extra, access to the main (La Vallière) manuscript on the left-hand side of the screen. The reader can read a plain text; or choose the academic annotation of the Voltaire Foundation edition; or choose a simpler annotation, specially commissioned, aimed at teenagers in the first instance. The reader can also opt to hear the text read by one of France's leading modern actors and comedians, Denys Podalydès; his reading was specially made for this app.
2. **Le Monde:** Readers can access a map of *Candide's* travels around the world, and from there access further information about any idea of interest: there are short essays on themes, iconographical collections, maps, short videos of talks, etc. This section will continue to grow.
3. **Le Jardin:** The reader is encouraged to dig deeper and so cultivate *Candide's* garden. Each reader can label his/her favourites, amongs the texts, pictures, recordings, videos, and so constitute a private anthology of material. Each such anthology takes the shape of a tree of learning in the garden. This section will be a vital learning tool for schools: teachers will be able to create their own presentations in the garden and invite their students to contribute to them, and students will be able to read each other's work. This section has been classroom-tested ^[C], and will be available to all schools in autumn 2014.

The app, with its dual level of annotations, illustrations, manuscript images, commentaries, and the Polyadès recording, offers rewards to a wide range of readers, and functions in a curatorial capacity to preserve an important work of French classical literary heritage in a new, sustainable format. In particular, the app's encouragement to the reader to engage with the text offers a unique, interactive experience: 'Ainsi la très belle initiative d'Orange, de la BNF et la Voltaire Foundation (aucun diable américain, les chagrins le constateront...) qui vous proposent de redécouvrir une œuvre majeure de notre patrimoine littéraire, *Candide* de Voltaire. [...] Si vous avez un ipad, vous pouvez vous rendre ici et télécharger cette application qui vous invite, dans une approche à la fois ludique et scientifiquement rigoureuse, à découvrir ou redécouvrir cette œuvre de Voltaire, au gré de vos envies. Elle offre de nombreux enrichissements autour du texte ainsi que des éclairages qui contribuent à la compréhension de l'œuvre.[...] Pas mal du tout!' ^[D]

Several users have commented on the app's function in establishing an innovative format for classic literature; for example, the French publisher 'Edilivre' mentions the app in an online article about the books of the future, 'Par ailleurs, même les textes anciens peuvent être enrichis. En décembre 2012, la BNF, associé à Orange et à la Voltaire Foundation, publia une version numérique enrichie de *Candide*. Une lecture sonore avec la voix de l'acteur Denis Podalydès était disponible. De plus, avec un simple tapotement sur l'écran l'accès à des définitions, des fiches sur des personnages clés du récit, des lieux, des concepts et des illustrations du texte exécutés par des graveurs du XVIII^{ème} siècle était garanti. Une carte informant sur le voyage de *Candide* était agrémentée d'approfondissements pédagogiques autour de l'œuvre ainsi que d'un espace collaboratif.' ^[E] Historical writer Anna Gibson mentions the app on two of her French culture blogs: 'In the best of all possible worlds, more publishing houses would look to the example of the [sic] Orange, the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Voltaire Foundation with their new, digitally enhanced version of Voltaire's *Candide*. This new digital version may be better named an "experience" rather than simple digital book.' ^[F] Cronk has written about the app's development, publicly sharing his experience of the particular challenges involved in preparing a literary classic for transmission in a digital format, in the journal of the Bibliothèque nationale de France ^[G].

'Candide: l'édition enrichie' has also been specifically targeted at school students. French teenagers studying literature at school now rarely read books from cover to cover: the syllabus asks them to study extracts from novels, arranged thematically. So part of the challenge was to devise an app which would encourage engagement with a classic, and impel students to then read the book in its entirety. The *Candide* app represents an extremely useful tool for both independent learning, and also for classroom teaching, as demonstrated by the enthusiastic response from practitioners via twitter ^[H], for example: @francophilia , 'French teachers, gorgeous free ipad app, interactive, participative for Candide. The future is now!'; @celine_louis, 'j'aurais adoré avoir ça à l'école RT @LaboBnF: Candide, l'édition enrichie!'; @FrenchatLeeds, 'The Candide app: the best of all possible apps...'. G-Souto's, on his digital teaching blog, writes: 'As a specialist of Humanities & ICT, I'm really happy! Voltaire's Candide app is marvellous! This will be an exciting teaching and learning tool to academics and students. Classical Literature lessons will be creative and contagious.' ^[I]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [A] The App <https://itunes.apple.com/fr/app/candide-ledition-enrichie/id581935562>
We have graphs available on demand, which provide full download figures for the app.
- [B] European Design Awards: <http://www.europeandesign.org/submissions/voltaire-candide-ledition-enrichie/>
- [C] A teacher classroom-tested the edition and blogged about her lesson plans in detail: <http://guerrieri.weebly.com/3/post/2013/04/comment-lapp-candide-de-la-bnf-entra-dans-ma-classe-et-ce-qui-en-advint.html>
- [D] A blog dedicated to bibliophiles also included the app in a wider discussion: <http://bibliophilie.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/miscellanees-du-bibliophile-einsatzstab.html>
- [E] On the website Edilivre, Flora asks what the books of the future will be like: <http://www.edilivre.com/communaute/2013/01/11/comment-sera-le-livre-numerique-du-futur/>
- [F] Anna Gibson featured the app on both her [tumblr](http://vivelareine.tumblr.com/post/37942854842%20and) and [blogspot](http://vivelaqueen.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/the-voltaire-foundation-and-new.html): <http://vivelareine.tumblr.com/post/37942854842%20and>; and <http://vivelaqueen.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/the-voltaire-foundation-and-new.html>
- [G] Nicholas Cronk & Alexandre Chautemps, 'Candide: Éditer et (re)lire les classiques en numérique', *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, no 42 (2012), p.29-35.
- [H] A storify was created recording tweets of the first two months of the release. They can be read here: <http://storify.com/CTrevien/candide-app>
- [I] Voltaire's Candide: app for iPad in Education, G-Souto's blog, 7 January 2013, <http://gsouto-digitalteacher.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/voltaire-candide-app-for-ipad.html>