

E4BOOKS ACCREDITATION FOR SYSTEMS SUPPLIERS AND E-COMMERCE SERVICE PROVIDERS

The e4books project is an initiative of Book Industry Communication (BIC) aimed at increasing the use of e-commerce in the book industry supply chain. Its chief objective is to ensure that all relevant companies and organisations should be capable of exchanging basic electronic messages with their trading partners. The required functionality, as defined by the project, is for booksellers:

- accessing up-to-date product information;
- ordering and processing of order acknowledgements and delivery notes;
- processing electronic invoices/credit notes;
- returns management;

and for publishers and distributors:

- supplying product information and updates;
- handling incoming electronic orders from various sources and systems;
- generating electronic order acknowledgements;
- generating electronic invoices and credit notes;
- handling electronic returns requests.

An accreditation scheme exists to enable publisher/distributors, publishers who outsource their distribution to accredited distributors, wholesalers and booksellers to demonstrate their compliance with the objectives of the e4books project. Systems suppliers and e-commerce service providers are invited to apply for accreditation within the same scheme.

Companies in this category wishing to apply for accreditation should submit a free-form application stating (in less than 1000 words) why they believe they should be accredited and appending a list of the services or systems they provide. It will be necessary to demonstrate that:

- The systems and services are consistent with the objectives of the e4books project;
- The systems and services provided are of high quality and reliability;
- As an organisation a real contribution is being made to the successful outcomes of the e4books project.

Applications should also include the following information:

- The names of book trade customers showing the range of sectors and the types of businesses served (also include non-book trade customers if appropriate);
- The market sector (bookseller, distributor, publisher) for which their products and services are primarily designed;

- The e-commerce capabilities of the systems and services provided;
- The suitability of the services provided to address the specific e4books project message requirements;
- How supply chain e-commerce is promoted to customers, particularly in the book trade (e.g. extracts from websites, marketing materials, sales presentations etc);
- The level of interoperability with other systems of the services provided (e.g. Nielsen BookNet, Batch.co.uk and PubEasy);
- The level of adherence to BIC and other book trade standards;
- A commitment to automate any processes still involving manual input or output.

Accreditation is judged by an independent BIC panel convened from time to time and granted for the calendar year in which it is awarded.

Applicants may be interviewed about their applications and their e-commerce credentials and asked specific questions about any details which are unclear either before or immediately after the judging process.

The successful applicants will be entitled to display the e4books accreditation logo in their business where it relates to supply chain e-commerce and to the systems or services for which the company was accredited.