

UK *THEMA* NATIONAL GROUP – Minutes

Location: CILIP Building, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE

Date and time: Wednesday 13th September 2017, 10:30am

Minutes taken by: Alaina-Marie Bassett

Present

Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC
 Graham Bell, EDItEUR
 John Bell, HarperCollins Publishers
 Richard Davies, Elsevier
 Fiona Green, Bloomsbury Publishing
 Andrew Henty, Virtusales (AHE)
 Azar Hussain, Faber & Faber (AHU)
 Lada Kriz, Penguin Random House
 Karina Luke, BIC

Chris Saynor, EDItEUR
 Gabrielle Wallington, Waterstones
 Howard Willows, Nielsen (Chair)

Apologies

Kat Coveyduck, Virtusales
 Isabel Gouveia, Amazon
 Euan Hirst, Blackwell's
 Alan Trewartha, HarperCollins Publishers

1. Introductions and apologies

HW welcomed the Group to the meeting and delivered the apologies. With great sadness, he informed the Group that Alfred Willmann (AW) of PRH has passed away on Thursday 7th September 2017. HW noted that AW was a firm supporter of *Thema* and contributed to the work of this Group from its inception; he will be sorely missed.

2. Competition Law – Conduct Reminder

The Group were reminded about BIC's Competition Law Policy – for further information regarding this policy, click here: <http://www.bic.org.uk/149/BIC-Competition-Law-Policy/>

3. Review minutes and follow up on actions from the last meeting

The minutes from the last meeting were approved and the following actions were discussed:

- Attendance of the UK *Thema* National Group meetings
 AMB reported that she has not yet received a response to her correspondence to individuals concerning attendance. The Group agreed that the individuals in question should be asked what the obstacles are for their attendance, i.e. are afternoon meetings more viable, and whether the inclusion of specific topics (that are of interest to their organisations) on the agenda for this Group might ensure their attendance. (NB Dial-in should be offered in exceptional circumstances only, and not as a routine means of attendance). As per the Terms of Reference for this Group, individuals that are unable to attend a meeting should provide a delegate to attend the meeting in their place, wherever possible.
 - **ACTION:** AMB to continue liaising with members of this Group who have missed 2 or more consecutive meetings.

- Thema v1.2 to BIC 2.1 mapping
GB reported that this mapping had been in the wrong place on the EDItEUR website previously but has since been moved to the following webpage:
<http://www.editeur.org/151/Thema/>
- French Thema National Group
CS reported that his action from the last meeting of this Group is ongoing although he confirmed that information regarding the French *Thema* National Group and France's national subject classification scheme (CLIL) has been forwarded to IG.
➤ **ONGOING ACTION:** CS to continue liaising with IG about this item.
- UK market examples for the Thema Basic User Instructions document
CS reported that further examples are required for the *Thema* Basic User Instructions. He noted that by submitting examples, publishers will be providing permission for their titles to be referred to in the document and for corresponding jacket images to be used in *Thema* training documents and presentations, etc.
➤ **ACTION CARRIED OVER:** ALL to provide examples for the UK market which can be included in the *Thema* Basic User Instructions document to CS, GB and HW, ASAP.
- Geographical qualifiers in Thema
CS confirmed that a volunteer from this Group (LK) was identified to sit on the geographical qualifiers working group. A PDF containing the proposals for *Thema* V1.2 place qualifiers was circulated to this Group on Tuesday 5th September 2017 and GB encouraged the Group to provide feedback on this document.
➤ **ACTION:** ALL to provide feedback on the Place Qualifiers document to CS, GB and HW, ASAP.
- BIC Breakfast on Creative Classification using Thema
AMB confirmed that this event is on the agenda for the BIC Training, Events & Communications (TEC) Committee and is likely to take place in early 2018.
- Suggestions for Thema V1.3
CS confirmed that IG collated and circulated Amazon's list of suggestions for *Thema* V1.3 to EDItEUR following the last meeting. He noted that a *Thema* V1.3 Working Group has now been formed and will begin work shortly; the Group was informed about the international membership of this Working Group.

4. Update on *Thema* Activity

- Thema v1.2 translations
CS noted that there are no new *Thema* translations to announce following the last meeting of this Group – permissions for the launch of Chinese and Korean translations are still being sought. CS reported that new functionality and synonyms / alternative spellings and/or common misspellings have now been added to the *Thema* browser (and are used extensively in the English language version): <https://ns.editeur.org/thema>. CS

noted that EDItEUR has access to actual (anonymised) searches used on the browser, but feedback from this Group is also required. He also requested feedback on any subject areas where organisations have experienced difficulties in categorising to date.

- **ACTION:** ALL to put forward suggestions for synonyms / common misspellings that could be added to the *Thema* browser's search index; send these to GB and CS, ASAP.
- **ACTION:** ALL to put forward subjects that their organisation has experienced difficulties in categorising to GB and CS, ASAP.
- **ACTION:** LK to liaise with CS regarding his proposal for Czech Republic synonyms.

- *Thema* v1.2 international development

CS reported that a new *Thema* Trans-National Group that represents a number of Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas has now been formed through the CERLALC organisation. A decision will be made going forwards as to whether this multinational Group will use a single unified code for its regional qualifiers or whether the qualifiers will be listed under the most appropriate region's country code instead. CS noted that provisional interest in forming a National Group has been received from New Zealand.

- Educational qualifiers

CS reported that the educational publishing sectors in Germany and Spain intend to adopt *Thema* and so have requested a great number of proposals for values that reflect their respective education systems. GB noted that although the proposed subjects are highly granular they are important in their market, and that the vast majority are added as National Extensions, and so need not be used in the UK or other countries. The proposals document for new educational qualifiers was circulated to this Group on Tuesday 5th September 2017 for comment. IG provided feedback on the document prior to this meeting.

- **ACTION:** ALL to provide feedback on the German / Spanish educational qualifiers document to CS, GB and HW, ASAP.

- Geographical qualifiers in *Thema*

CS noted that the draft proposal for geographical qualifiers (see Item 3) was produced by an international Working Group. He noted that a number of suggestions for each region were put forward and collated in order to produce the shortlist. A significant volume of books had to be identified to ensure each qualifier is necessary. CS noted that some regions, such as Finland, Japan and Turkey, are still discussing their own proposals whilst other regions (which do not currently have a *Thema* National Group) have been contacted for their input; e.g. Greece. CS noted that there are some regions which have minimal or will not have any geographical qualifiers added because the working group found very few titles currently available. Main cities for some of these regions have been added to the *Thema* browser as synonyms.

CS informed the Group that, where necessary, the headers for geographical qualifiers have been amended. GB noted that all of the proposals for geographical qualifiers can be seen on the *Thema* browser (at the test URL <https://ns.editeur.org/thema128>). CS

also reported that suggestions for new, core, geographical codes (i.e. those not using the national extension code structure) have been put forward but will be included in the *Thema* V1.3 update.

- **ACTION:** GW to liaise with her Russian-speaking colleagues at Waterstones regarding the proposed translations and new, hierarchical structure for Russia's geographical qualifiers, sending the feedback to CS, GB and HW ASAP.

Post-meeting update: The test URL is no longer in use.

- Thema V1.3

CS noted that a document for *Thema* V1.3 (which consists of proposals that have been put forward by various *Thema* National Groups) is being compiled. He noted that the *Thema* v1.3 Working Group (which meets regularly) assesses each proposal to ensure it is justified, useful and appropriately expressed. CS raised the concept of Category Romance for discussion: this refers to series of Romance titles published on a regular basis, effectively like a serial, which are very important in the romance market in Norway and other countries and need to be distinguished from other Romance books; this has been proposed as a Fiction code. CS requested feedback from the Group on this concept. HW commented it is not a subject or a genre – should it be in *Thema* at all? Could it be a Norwegian National Extension or is it more widely used, etc.?

- **ACTION:** JB to liaise with Mills & Boon regarding the classification of Category Romance and report back, ASAP.

HW commented that the Fiction section of *Thema* is running out of available space at a high-level, for the addition of new codes. GB agreed but noted that *Thema* is the only subject classification scheme that allows organisations to combine Fiction codes with relevant non-fiction codes – something which the forthcoming BIC Breakfast on creative classification using *Thema* will emphasise. This effectively creates thousands of detailed terms for describing specific types of Fiction.

GB informed the Group that V1.3 is likely be ratified in early 2018. An overview of the V1.3 proposals may be available in time for the *Thema* International Steering Committee (ISC) meeting at Frankfurt Book Fair 2017 (FBF17), but not a definitive list of proposals for ratification. At present, the proposed solution for including a code in *Thema* for 'Shakespeare' is set to be included in V1.3.

- **ACTION:** CS to update the V1.3 proposals document to include the new proposals for Fiction and circulate it to this Group.
- **ACTION:** ALL to provide feedback on CS's V1.3 proposals document and put forward suggestions for the classification of Category Romance to CS and GB, ASAP.

Post-Meeting Update: The amended proposals document for V1.3 was circulated to this Group on Thursday 28th September 2017 with a view to obtaining feedback prior to the Thema ISC meeting at FBF17.

- Educational qualifiers for the UK

CS asked whether this Group requires national qualifiers for the UK's eight examination

boards. FG noted that publishers are often not permitted to cite examination boards or specific syllabuses in / on their books. GB noted that there are lots of unofficial guides for exams which will be to be identified / differentiated.

- **ACTION:** FG to investigate why Bloomsbury Publishing has previously been discouraged from linking a book to an examination board and report back to this Group.
- **ACTION:** CS to circulate a document relating to the proposed UK national qualifiers for examination boards to this Group, ASAP.
- **ACTION:** ALL to provide feedback on CS's national qualifiers document to CS and GB.

Post-Meeting Update: The UK national qualifiers document was circulated to this Group on Thursday 14th September 2017.

5. *Thema* promotion in UK

HW reported that the BIC 'Implementing *Thema*' training course will take place on Wednesday 18th October 2017. In addition, KL reported that a new button will be added to the homepage of the BIC website shortly for those looking to obtain a *Thema* code.

Post-Meeting Update: this new button is now live on the BIC website: <http://www.bic.org.uk/>

6. Reports of *Thema* progress from members

- HW – Nielsen's new system (which can accept and disseminate *Thema* codes) has now gone live but has experienced some issues which are in the process of being resolved. HW commented that BIC subject classification is still the primary scheme of the UK but the adoption of *Thema* is moving in the right direction. When setting up a new feed for publishers, both *Thema* and BIC are requested by Nielsen.
- AHU – Faber & Faber has almost completed assigning *Thema* codes to its backlist titles.
- AHE – New / existing customers of Virtuales systems are now using *Thema* mappings.
- FG – Bloomsbury Publishing will begin to implement *Thema* into its system in Autumn 2017; FG reported that Bloomsbury's mappings will be tested shortly.
- LK – In relation to Penguin Random House's ongoing work, GB noted that some new / additional BISAC codes will be released by the end of December 2017.
- RD – Elsevier has already implemented *Thema* into its book system and is now considering how to classify its scientific content.
- GW – Waterstones is interested in both *Thema* and ONIX 3.0, as such GW suggested that its implementations may be rolled into one. JB asked whether Waterstones might alter its website / browse tree or whether it will treat *Thema* as a new subject classification scheme. GW noted that Waterstones will need to discuss this internally.
- JB – HarperCollins produces its internal analytics based on BISAC codes, however JB reported that it is looking to use *Thema* for these analytics going forwards. He noted that it remains difficult to raise interest in *Thema* in N. American divisions of HarperCollins. GB advised that the Canadian bookseller chain Indigo is using *Thema*. CS commented that feedback is required from Canada on some of the V1.3 proposals, such as Indigenous peoples, to meet the needs of the Canadian market.
- GB – Apple is now using *Thema* but isn't accepting qualifiers to date; LK noted that Apple cannot accept metadata for the products for this reason. GB noted that Apple appears

to have misunderstood the importance of the qualifiers. LK informed the Group that Penguin Random House and CoreSource continue to liaise with Apple about this matter.

- **ACTION:** GB and LK to liaise with their respective contacts at Apple regarding its inability to accept *Thema* qualifiers with a view to resolving this matter ASAP.

7. A.O.B.

- Interest age / expressing Audience

GB and CS informed the Group that a possible revision of the Interest Age Qualifiers is part of the proposals for *Thema* V1.3 and will be discussed accordingly at the forthcoming meeting of the *Thema* ISC meeting at FBF17. Essentially, the options are whether the Interest Age Qualifiers should be removed from *Thema* (as they relate to Audience not Subject); or should be extended and revised; or are sufficient and useful as currently structured (i.e. just as lower age statement, e.g. “from c 5 years”). If they are to be revised, should this be by adding a parallel set of upper age limits (e.g. “to c 7 years”), for users to combine as required; or should there be set age bands inserted beneath each current heading (e.g. from c 5 to c 7 years”). HW suggested that a survey should be produced to canvass this Group.

GW noted that Waterstones’ chief concern is helping its customers to find books that are appropriate for their needs. She noted that retailers are anxious not to put inappropriate content into the hands of children. FG agreed, noting that adults often choose a book which is too advanced for their child to read themselves in order to read the book to them. GB noted that interest age and reading age can be specified in ONIX already and that the Audience field in *Thema* is more about a book’s content (for a certain readership which is determined by age).

- **ACTION:** HW, GB and CS to liaise ASAP in order to produce a brief survey to establish this Group’s opinions / requirements for classifying interest age in *Thema*.
- **ACTION:** ALL to respond to this survey prior to Frankfurt Book Fair 2017 so that HW can attend the next meeting of the *Thema* ISC with a general consensus of this Group’s requirements / preferences.

8. Date of the next meeting

Wednesday 22nd November 2017.