

UK THEMA NATIONAL GROUP – Minutes**Location:** Penguin Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, Pimlico, London SW1V 2SA**Date and time:** Wednesday 22nd November 2017, 10:30am**Minutes taken by:** Sophia Sophocleous**Present**

Graham Bell, EDItEUR
 John Bell, HarperCollins Publishers
 Fiona Green, Bloomsbury Publishing
 Andrew Henty, Virtusales (AHE)
 Azar Hussain, Faber & Faber (AHU)
 Lada Kriz, Penguin Random House
 Gabrielle Wallington, Waterstones
 Howard Willows, Nielsen (Chair)

Apologies

Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC
 Kat Coveyduck, Virtusales
 Richard Davies, Elsevier
 Isabel Gouveia, Amazon
 Euan Hirst, Blackwell's
 Karina Luke, BIC
 Chris Saynor, EDItEUR
 Alan Trewartha, HarperCollins Publishers

1. Introductions and apologies

HW welcomed the Group to the meeting and delivered the apologies. He thanked LK for hosting the meeting.

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 Thema National Group meetings
 SS reported that AMB has still not received a response to her correspondence to individuals concerning attendance.
 - **ACTION:** AMB and HW to liaise regarding the membership of this Group.
- French Thema National Group
 GB reported that the action on CS from the last meeting of this Group is ongoing although he confirmed that CS has been liaising with the French *Thema* Group. GB reported that there is more representation from online retailers on the French Group.
 - **ONGOING ACTION:** CS to continue liaising with IG about this item.
- UK market examples for the Thema Basic User Instructions document
 GB noted that, in the absence of sample titles specifically provided by publishers, examples used in training material and presentations, or examples from the companies represented at the meeting may be added to documentation, unless there is any objection. There were no objections.
- Geographical qualifiers in Thema

GB noted that proposals for additional extensions had been approved by the International Steering Committee (ISC) at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2017 and had been incorporated into *Thema* documentation and the online browser.

- Thema v1.2 translations

GB stressed the importance of the Group to provide synonyms / common misspellings that could be added to the *Thema* browser's search index (i.e. American spellings). These synonyms improve the search facilities within the online browser.

LK reported that Czech libraries have finished their translation of *Thema* to Slovak and Czech, and that he is currently reviewing it. GB noted that once LK has finished reviewing it, this could be made available online (initially as a test version and later alongside all other translations).

➤ **ACTION (carried over):** 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.

GB reported that he had met with Apple at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2017 and discussed *Thema*. GB noted that it seems as though Apple is accepting *Thema* increasingly. HW speculated whether Apple should be asked considered to provide a quote of endorsement regarding *Thema*.

- Interest age / expressing audience

HW noted that a brief survey to establish this Group's opinions / requirements for classifying interest age in *Thema* had been conducted. He noted that the results of the survey had been split between those who think interest age qualifiers should be removed from *Thema*, and those who think they should be extended and revised. HW stated that as the result was split, this will be left as it is for the moment as there is no way of resolving it. GB agreed that arguments on both sides had been strong.

4. Educational qualifiers for the UK markets

GB introduced CS's UK national qualifiers document addressing the question of whether there is a need in the UK market to allow publishers to flag not only the levels and subjects but also to say for which exam board the title could be used as well. ONIX allows for the indication of an official endorsement and adding the boards to *Thema* would allow the relevant titles to be flagged with a subject, level and (unofficial) exam board suitability. GB noted that there is a difference between a publisher stating that the book is 'designed for' or 'suitable for' a certain exam or exam board, and stating the book is 'endorsed by' a board, and that he and CS will discuss this further internally. FG pointed out that this distinction could result in confusion. GB acknowledged that there are some reservations on this from academic publishers but the response has been generally favourable.

GB also raised the proposal of a flag for 11+ exam material. FG noted that this would be beneficial for use with study guides, such as those for non-verbal reasoning (which is a component of the 11+ exams).

- ❖ **DECISION:** The Group were all in favour of adding a code for 11+ exam material.

5. Proposals for v1.3 Fiction section – feedback from Group

GB noted that CS had looked at how bookshops categorise their fiction titles when compiling the list of proposals for v1.3 Fiction document. GB asked the Group to send any more proposals they may have to HW.

The following existing proposals that form a part of the Thema v1.3 update were discussed:

- FBAN: Urban fiction
 The Group offered examples of urban fiction and its authors, such as Zadie Smith and Irvine Welsh. GB stated that these examples are essential in order to use in the notes of the documentation.
 ❖ **DECISION:** The Group agreed that the code ‘urban fiction’ requires an explanatory note.
- FJMA: Contemporary military thriller
 ❖ **DECISION:** The Group agreed that ‘thriller’ should be changed to ‘fiction’ and that the codes should be used together with time codes to indicate the period.
 ❖ **DECISION:** The Group agreed that the title of this code should be changed from ‘contemporary military thriller’ to contemporary military fiction’.
- FJW: Westerns / FRJ: Romance: Westerns
 It was noted that in various other language markets, the term ‘Westerns’ is not always understood and correctly translated and that useful synonyms and alternative terms should be added to as a note.
 ➤ **ACTION:** ALL to think of synonyms for the western genre (e.g. frontier, outback, outlaw, pioneer fiction).
- FKF: Dark fantasy
 It was noted that dark fantasy has been suggested as an addition to horror as the horror aspect outweighs fantasy aspect.
 ❖ **DECISION:** The Group approved this proposal.
- FLD: Science fiction: hard science
 It was noted that hard science is a type of ‘scientifically-plausible science fiction’. HW added that this code could be used, for example, with non-fiction codes such as nanotechnology and astrophysics to indicate the particular science in question.
 ❖ **DECISION:** The Group approved this proposal.

- FLP: Science fiction: near-future & high tech
GB noted that 'space exploration' should be removed from the notes.
❖ **DECISION:** The Group approved this proposal.
- FLPB: Science fiction: biopunk
GB stated that he is not convinced that this is a big enough genre for a code, as a biology code used with a fiction code would be sufficient.
❖ **DECISION:** The Group agreed that this genre is not large enough to warrant a code.
- FMB: Epic fantasy & FMPBG: Heroic fantasy / sword & sorcery
❖ **DECISION:** The Group agreed that these categories need more description in the notes.
- FMR: Fantasy romance, dark romance
GB noted that CS has proposed that 'dark romance' is removed from FMR. The Group discussed the difference between 'dark fantasy' (FKF) and 'dark romance' (FMR).
➤ **ACTION:** GB and CS to investigate the difference between 'dark fantasy' (FKF) and 'dark romance' (FMR).
- FNF: Folk & fairy tales
FG noted that it is possible that this code could be mistakenly used for children's books and the title should therefore be changed.
➤ **ACTION:** GB and CS to amend the title of this code.
- FRF: Clean / sweet romance
The Group agreed that one word (i.e. clean or sweet) should be used for this genre, with the other words being added to the notes as synonyms. GB noted that the alternative name for this genre is 'sweetheart romance'.
❖ **DECISION:** The Group approved this proposal.
- FYR (or FRY): Category romance OR category fiction
JB stated that Harlequin should be removed from the comments for this code.

GB noted that he is avoiding adding the word 'series' or 'collection' to define these books due to the confusion it may cause (most notably in the French market). He noted that the USA and Norway both refer to this genre as 'category fiction'. GB stated that 'category romance / fiction' along with a description in the notes should suffice, but if the Group can think of a better term (excluding 'collection' or 'series') to let him know.
❖ **DECISION:** The Group approved this proposal.
- FYV: Fiction: adapted from or inspired by films, TV, video games or other electronic media

❖ **DECISION:** The Group agreed that this genre should be renamed ‘novelisations and fiction inspired by other media’.

- Holiday romance / Vacation Romance

JB stated that it should be made clear in the comments that ‘holiday romance’ refers to Christmas romance (‘holiday’ being the US term for the Christmas period), and that ‘vacation romance’ refers to more general holiday romances.

- Gothic romance

JB noted that HarperCollins publish a large amount of gothic romance fiction. GB asked what type of gothic romance this is (i.e. classic gothic fiction or romance aimed at the ‘goth’ subculture audience). JB noted that he will investigate this further, along with whether the dark romance that HarperCollins publish is better suited to romance or horror.

- **ACTION:** JB to investigate what sort of ‘Gothic Romance’ Harper Collins publish.
- **ACTION:** JB to investigate whether ‘Dark Romance’ fiction contains more horror or romance elements (i.e. should ‘Dark Romance’ be classified under horror or romance?)

Note: all of the above Group decisions on *Thema* v1.3 proposals are recommendations only and are subject to the further approval, firstly of the *Thema* v1.3 Review Working Party, and subsequently of the International Steering Committee, through ratification. The UK Group is well-represented in both.

6. Update on *Thema* Activity

- *Thema* international development and translations

GB noted that there have been modifications to the Spanish translation for Latin American Spanish. GB informed the Group that the meeting of the *Thema* International Steering Committee (ISC) at the Frankfurt Book Festival in October 2017 was the best attended yet, and was very positive and lively.

7. *Thema* promotion in UK

HW reported that the BIC ‘Implementing *Thema*’ training course which took place on Wednesday 18th October 2017 had sold out and will run again on Tuesday 17th April 2018 due to high demand. HW informed the Group that this course is aimed at anyone with an interest in *Thema*, whatever their background within the trade. Some familiarity with bibliographic subject classification (e.g. use of schemes such as BIC, BISAC or *Thema*) is assumed, but not considered essential. More information can be found on the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bics-implementing-thema-half-day-training-course-tickets-39087623133>

8. Reports of *Thema* progress from members

- HW – HW has given talks on *Thema* to Dorling Kindersley and Foyles. HW noted that there will be a BIC Breakfast on *Thema* in February 2018. SS noted that the exact date has yet to be set as BIC are still looking for a sponsor for the event.
Post meeting update: the date for 'Creative Classification using Thema' has been set for Wednesday 28 February 2018.
- GW – GW noted that she is liaising with Nielsen regarding mapping to *Thema*.
- FG – Bloomsbury are currently testing with *Thema*. FG emphasised the importance of training.
- JB – JB noted that HarperCollins have two new ebook vendors who require *Thema* codes.
- GB – GB noted that *Thema* v1.3 will be released in the first quarter of 2018.

9. Date of next meeting

Thursday 15th March 2018.