BIC ACQUISITIONS & DIVESTMENTS TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP – Minutes
Bowker Offices, 5th Floor, 3 Dorset Rise, London EC4Y 8EN
Wednesday 3rd December 2014, 10am

Present
Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC
Ruth Jones, Ingram Content
Karina Luke, BIC (Chair)
Mark Majurey, Taylor & Francis Group
Barry Richardson, Nielsen
Parmjit Singh, Publishers Licensing Society
Jack Tipping, Bowker UK
Gabrielle Wallington, Waterstones (Deputy)

Apologies
Gareth Jarrett, Taylor & Francis Group
David Seymour, Taylor & Francis Group

1. Introductions and apologies
KL welcomed everyone to the Group, and noted that she will be the temporary Chair for this inaugural meeting. She also noted that BISG and Booknet Canada are interested in this project and will be kept well informed of its progress. She commented that they hope to be involved in future meetings, providing they are scheduled in the afternoon (due to the time difference).

ACTION: AB to schedule all future meetings in afternoon slots.

2. Election of Project Leader and Deputy
KL outlined the role of the Project Leader and what it involves. She noted that this role is largely concerned with ensuring that the project deliverables are achieved within the timeframe specified. MM noted the scale of this task and the vast amount of organisations it will involve, and suggested that a consultant could be employed to take on this role. The Group suggested that this project may progress at a quicker pace with a consultant in charge and agreed to put a tender out for the role.

ACTION: KL to write a role description and put it out by tender.

The Group agreed that KL should be the Deputy Chair after a consultant has been put in place as the Chair. GW volunteered to be the Deputy Chair until that time.

3. Purpose of this Task & Finish Working Group

3.1 Review of dates and schedule of Project
KL ran through the Project Brief with the Group, discussing the purpose of this project. She noted that this project is scheduled to last 12 months and that the timeline is intrinsic so that each sector of the industry knows what is coming before and after their input. BR noted that the initial meeting was delayed by 2 months and all the dates on the Project Brief should be shifted accordingly.

ACTION: KL to amend the dates in the ‘Outline Project Plan’ section of the Project Brief to reflect this inaugural meeting’s date.
2.2 Project Scope

KL discussed the scope of this Project as per the Project Brief, noting that this Group intends to involve as many organisations from as many sectors of the book industry as possible so that it is as well-informed as can be. BR questioned how this will be achieved. RJ noted that information should be collected outside of meetings by members of this Group and, as such, input does not rely solely on organisations attending the T&FWG’s meetings.

The Group addressed the types of organisation that are to be included in this project’s scope. MM questioned what ‘Service Providers’ includes. He was informed that this term covers all Systems Providers and the Group agreed this should be reworded in the Project Brief.

**ACTION:** KL to amend the Project Brief to read “Systems Providers” instead of “Service Providers”.

KL commented that it is a good idea to involve librarians and printers in this Project scope to see if they have their own set of issues with acquisitions or divestments; though they may not have any.

GW suggested that this Group should review the Best Practice Guidelines for the physical supply chain as well as the digital supply chain. The UK Serials Group was also referenced, and it was noted that their documentation can be found on their website.

The Group questioned whether the Publishing Licensing Society (PLS) might also have its own set of issues. PS noted that, when authors buy or sell their titles, they don’t always tell suppliers when it’s out of print. JT agreed, noting that there are thousands of old titles that are assigned a new ISBN but nothing is done with the old ISBN. MM noted that some vendors don’t issue withdrawals for their titles and this causes huge issues for everyone involved. He also noted that some organisations don’t want to use withdrawals for their titles because the reviews and/or stats will be deleted alongside the withdrawn ISBN. He noted that these need to be mapped and suggested that Graham Bell of EDItEUR should attend one of this Group’s future meetings to discuss how Acquisitions and Divestments can be communicated in ONIX. MM informed the Group that this can already be done in ONIX but that the appropriate code is not used. He noted that an issue could arise when organisations begin to receive this new information in feeds since they may not interpret it correctly. The Group agreed that they will set out guidelines on how to use ONIX effectively for acquisitions and divestments.

**ACTION:** AB to liaise with Graham Bell about attending a future meeting.

PS questioned whether this project is primarily concerned with books or solely concerned with books; and not magazines or journals. The Group agreed that their primary concern is the book industry – since this is BIC’s remit – but that this Group could investigate other media once the project has been completed, should it be deemed necessary.

GW commented that another big issue is organisations going into administration since their titles are effectively abandoned and no one can contact them for any queries.

**The book industry’s supply chain organisation**
- 2.3 Outline Project Deliverables and / or Desired Outcomes
KL informed the Group that a new project progress update document has been created to help Project Leaders of any Task & Finish Working Groups (T&FWGs) to track the progress of their project on a monthly basis. She noted that these documents, will be available on the BIC website for all BIC members to view progress made against any BIC Project going forward.

- 2.5 Interfaces
GW suggested adding the Price & Availability T&FWG to the list of interested BIC Committees and Groups. KL agreed suggesting that this Group should feature as a permanent item on this Group’s agenda.
**ACTION:** AB to include an update from the Price & Availability T&FWG on this Group’s next meeting agenda.

- 5. Acceptance Criteria
It was noted that post-transition checks need to be added to this list of requirements. MM agreed, noting that there will always be some party that does not adhere to the guidelines.
**ACTION:** KL to add ‘Post-transition checks’ into this section of the Project Brief.

- 6. Risks
MM informed the Group that the biggest issue to tackle with regards to risks is rights. He noted that, if people do not understand where the rights to a title lie then its capital / sales will go astray. GW agreed, commenting that it is essential to know both how and where a title can and cannot be bought. PS agreed. She noted that the onus is on the publisher – it is their responsibility to update their records appropriately. MM noted that the PLS do not disseminate their database to the whole of the book industry and are not expected to do so. KL questioned whether a flowchart / grid should be produced to detail who owns what publishing list. The Group discussed this but did not think it is necessary.

- 11. Customers & Users
MM noted that it may be difficult to speak with certain organisations. RJ noted that she will be able to talk to her contact at Apple. KL requested permission to sit in on that part of RJ’s meeting with Apple. RJ suggested that she will first discuss this Group with Apple and then arrange a separate three-way call that KL can be a part of.
**ACTION:** RJ to discuss this Group with Apple and arrange a call with Apple and KL asap.

MM suggested speaking to ExLibris also. KL noted that she can do this since their office is in the same building as BIC.
**ACTION:** KL to add ExLibris to the list of ‘Customers and Users’, and liaise with them about this Group for their input.

- The Group agreed that all the other sections of the Project Brief are correct and do not need amending.
3.2 Reminder of Terms of Reference for BIC Task & Finish Working Groups
KL noted that the Terms of Reference document was circulated to the Group prior to the meeting. She asked for any questions or comments about this document. There were none.

4. Agree first actions and owners, with reference to the Project Brief
KL noted that the first action should be a project plan, i.e.: the key areas that need to be addressed and when each task should be completed by. She noted that a list of interviewees should be compiled with key contacts for each organisation listed in the documentation. It was agreed that the most important people to contact were those actually doing the work – not those that oversee it. GW agreed, noting that the overseers will be involved, if necessary, by the person performing the job and will be kept informed by this person also. MM suggested that KL should convene with GJ and DS at the Taylor & Francis Group office to discuss their issues. He also suggested that this should be done for PLS too, to discuss their separate set of acquisitions and divestment issues. The following were also suggested as potential interviewees: Sarah Lambert of Hachette, Subroto Mozumdar and Karen Osterley of Pearson, and David Eagle of NBN International. GW suggested that this Group should ask all interviewees who else they think should be contacted for an interview.
ACTION: KL to compile a list of interviewees with key contacts. The Project Plan should be put together by the consultant that is assigned to this project.

KL also suggested putting out a consultant tender as an immediate action. The Group suggested a number of consultants that were known to them for this role. MM noted that this project tender should go out as soon as possible so that interviews can take place asap. He suggested that, until someone has been hired for this role, very little can be done on this project. KL suggested that the consultant should be paid for the project; not by the hour / day. MM agreed, noting that this should be a part of the tendering process since we do not, yet, know the full scale of the project at hand.

5. Feedback from the Price & Availability Task & Finish Working Group
Two TRADACOMS codes were highlighted for the attention of this Group by the Price & Availability Task & Finish Working Group: NN – we do not supply this item, and PN – publisher no longer in business. GW noted that this initial meeting may not be the time to discuss this matter. She also commented that these codes could be addressed at the same time that as when this Group discusses ONIX codes. She noted, however, that the issue with NN is that wholesalers use it as a way of expressing that they do not supply the item but will try to supply it nonetheless. These codes will be addressed at a subsequent meeting of this Group.

6. A.O.B.
It was suggested that members of this Group should contact KL with the details of any potential consultants for the Project Leader role.

KL raised the issue of representation on this Group. RJ noted that she is the only vendor but commented that she can advise on systems too. GW suggested that OverDrive should be approached to join the Group; which both GW and RJ volunteered to do. BR noted that more publishers should be represented on this Group and suggested Elsevier though MM noted that
Elsevier’s UK and US divisions are very much segregated from one another. RJ suggested that Noel Ferrin of Penguin Random House should be approached. GW suggested that more retailers should be present too including WHSmiths and Blackwells. She suggested that a recent conversation with her contact at WHSmiths had left her with the impression that WHSmiths may be interested in this Group and suggested that BIC approach Richard Green. Kate Stilborn and Gareth Hardy were suggested as contacts for Blackwells. BR also suggested approaching Yankee Book Peddler (YBP) but KL noted that they are not BIC Members and would need to sign up before taking part in this Group. MM suggested speaking to Len Vlahos of BISG before contacting YBP since they are BISG members. **ACTION:** KL to approach the above mentioned organisations before the next meeting.

7. **Date of next meeting**  
   Thursday 19th February 2015.