BIC PHYSICAL SUPPLY CHAIN COMMITTEE MEETING - Minutes
CILIP Building, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE
Tuesday 3rd March 2015, 2pm

Present
Paul Almeroth, Woodland Media
Philip Amatt, Waterstones
Neil Castle, Turpin Distribution Services
Liam Diggins, Ingram Content Group
John Garrould, Bertrams
Matt Griffin, Little Brown
Katy Gibson, BIC
Sue Kelly, Publisher
Mike Levaggi, HarperCollins
Karina Luke, BIC
Kate McFarlan, Clays (Chair)
Kate Stilborn, Blackwells

Apologies
Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC
Russell Evans, Simon & Schuster
Matthew Hogg, Macmillan Distribution
Alison Lewis, Ingram Content Group
Stephen Long, Nielsen
Holy Milner, Penguin Random House (Deputy)
Simon Pallant, Gardners
Ken Rhodes, NBNi
Fraser Tanner, Batch

1. Introductions and apologies
KM welcomed the Committee to the meeting and apologies were delivered. Liam Diggins attended the meeting as the delegate of Alison Lewis of Ingram Content Group.
Post-meeting Update: Mark Lincoln of Cambridge University Press has now agreed to join this Committee and will attend meetings henceforth.

2. Review minutes and follow-up on actions from the last meeting
   - Representatives from WHSmith
     The Group noted again that it still needed more retailers on the Committee. KL and PA confirmed they’d tried to contact WH Smith but as yet had received no response. David Winscoll (WH Smith) was suggested as a possible candidate for this committee.
     **ACTION**: KL to contact Jenny Brownley again to see if it would be appropriate to invite David Winscoll to sit on the committee.

   - Printer direct deliveries
     MG informed the Group that Little, Brown Book Group is still currently looking into an automated process to resolve the issues some retailers have with printer directs. He noted that it is a semi-automated process requiring the use of VISTA. The reference number is added to the printer record and a unique reference number can also be added. MG, however, noted that whilst Clays and Little, Brown Book Group can trial such a system,
Hachette is looking to change its system in the next 2 to 5 years and therefore the trial may have a limited life. KL noted that it was worth trialling such a system to determine what might constitute a set of common standards. Such best practice guidelines could detail what information should be conveyed without dictating exactly how such information is delivered. The method/mode of delivery of the required information is a decision for individual organisations.

**ACTION:** KM to forward workflow diagram to BIC. This will be attached to this set of minutes and circulated.

3. **Watching Brief on Regulations: Any developments?**
   
   The Group noted there was nothing to report here.

4. **Updates for existing Task & Finish Working Groups (T&FWG)**

   - **Price & Availability**
     KL updated the Group on the work of the Price & Availability Task & Finish Working Group. Currently the Group is focusing its attention on the TRADACOM code list 54 and determining which codes are suitable as i) Price & Availability (P&A) codes and/or ii) Order Acknowledgement. The group is also looking at which codes may require deprecation either as a P&A code or Order Acknowledgement, or both. In order that the codes are used correctly and interpreted correctly by all, the Working Group is also tasked with adding full descriptions to each code, so that both senders and recipients are 100% clear on what each means and what the consequences are.

   - **Best Practice for Print on Demand (POD) & Short Run Printing**
     KL updated the Group on the POD & Short Run Task & Finish Working Group who had their inaugural meeting on the 11th February 2015. KL noted that the Group have assembled to produce a set of best practice guidelines on POD and Short Run printing and that Jean Roberts, of Printondemand-worldwide, will lead the Group. KL informed the Committee that the Group will look at producing definitions surrounding the internal and external industry expectations of what is meant by “Print on Demand”; from initial discussions it appeared there were very varied definitions here. The members of the Group agreed at the inaugural meeting to produce workflow diagrams demonstrating their internal practices surrounding POD and Short Run to try reach a degree of clarity surrounding the definitions of these terms to be discussed at the next meeting (26th March 2015).

   KM noted how valuable the work of this Group is considering the increased in use of POD and the consequent challenges encountered across the supply chain. KL noted that the Group are including the processes involved in invoicing POD books in the scope of the project. ML noted that this project has interdependency with the Price & Availability Task and Finish Working Group.
The Group agreed that clarity on turn around times and expectations of such, was critical as currently POD can sometimes prove to be a restriction to sales and may indicate to a customer the potential for an unreliable delivery timeframe, this may negatively influence a customer’s decision to purchase. MG commented, however, that the Group’s recommendations should not be prescriptive and should encourage publishers to improve delivery of POD stock. NC noted Turpin Distribution Services has developed a bespoke P&A feed to deliver information surrounding POD to increase transparency. KL asked whether this had proved effective but NC noted that it was difficult to tell. He noted that there was reluctance among clients to reveal when a product is manufactured as POD and KL asked the Group why this might be. The Group commented that this may be due to the perception that a POD book may be inferior in quality or the fear that production, and therefore delivery, of the book will take too long and negatively affect sales. There are also commercials specific to printer/publisher/distributor and publisher/retailer involved in POD workflows.

- **SAN & GLN**
  KL noted that this Group met on the 11th February 2015 and would use a monthly Project Update Report to share progress. Consultant Simon Edwards is leading the Group which will determine best practice guidelines on Standard Address Numbers (SANs).

- **Web Services Review Task & Finish Working Group**
  JG (the Project Lead) updated the Committee on the work of this Group which includes in its key deliverables a survey of usage as to which organisations use which web services. JG noted that the deliverables of this Group include a review and update of BIC standard guidelines to include guidelines on consumer direct fulfilment and distance selling (and messages used here). The Web Services User’s Guide and Beginner’s Guide will then be handed over to the BIC Training, Events and Communication Committee for promotion to a wider audience of BIC Members.

5. **Discussion about potential new Task & Finish Working Groups**

- **IRI Returns Messages**
  The Group discussed how some publishers are not using IRI Returns Messages. KM and KL suggested that an IRI Returns Message Workshop could be valuable instead of launching straight into a Task & Finish Working Group project. The workshop would be tasked with exploring what (if any) updates or changes need to be made to the standard and how wider adoption might be encouraged. The outputs of this workshop would serve to inform BIC if further work is needed on this item in the form of project. KL suggested that such a workshop could take place around May or June. KM noted that this workshop must involve both publishers and retailers in order to be effective and representative.

KS produced for the Group a hand-out presenting the issues Blackwells has had with the IRI standard concerning inaccurate Returns Rejections. With reference to the 15 month returns
policy, KS presented a worked example of what happens when several returns are applied for within this period. There appears to be a calculation issue as subsequent purchases are not taken into account. KS noted this was impacting negatively on Blackwells. PhA noted that it was worth investigating here whether this was due to a bug in the actual technology or a problem with the interpretation of IRI messages. The Group noted that because of this, the earlier proposed workshop will also need several attendees who are well acquainted with the technicalities and details of the standard. It was noted that this possible calculation issue with the IRI Returns standard is also on the agenda of the BIC Technical Implementation Clinic and is currently being approached there as an evidence gathering exercise. It was further noted that once these issues have been solved this needs communicating to the book industry via BIC. This would also be a good opportunity for BIC to further promote the standard.

**ACTION:** KL to establish if there would be interest across the industry in an IRI Returns Workshop and how wide and diverse this interest may be.

**ACTION:** KS to gather more evidence on the calculation issue.

- **Individual Book weights and dimensions**

  The Group noted that this item has now been moved to the agenda of the BIC PDEA Review Task & Finish Working Group for their attention.

6. **Pack Sizes Workshop**

KL informed the Group that this was cancelled as despite interest and attendees from publishers, no retailers had signed up for the event or expressed an interest.

PhA noted that a preferable focus for the workshop would be pack size data; looking at the timeframe when this data is delivered to retailers for their planning purposes and encouraging consistency of pack size over the lifecycle of a book. KL noted that the aim of the workshop as agreed by this committee, had been to present an opportunity and forum to explore all issues surrounding pack sizes, including pack size data and that its purpose was not necessarily to look to standardise pack sizes, but to discuss the costs and benefits. ML noted that pack sizes were very important to supermarkets and that if there are changes to pack sizes within the lifecycle of a book, the critical piece is how and when this data is communicated accurately and consistently.

KL asked the Group whether there is still a need for a pack sizes workshop to explore the issues involved. KM noted that an exploration with emphasis on the pack size data, and timings and flows of such data, involved when a change in physical size occurs could prove valuable. This shouldn’t focus on how and why the sizes of packs are changed. MG noted that it was worth breaking this exploration down into i) data received prior to the publication of the book and then ii) how it is updated over the lifecycle of the book and shared through the supply chain. However, he noted that very rarely is this data radically changed. NC noted that the vital data must be delivered accurately at the outset of the book’s lifecycle; this must be the bare minimum of bibliographic data and must be complete.
The Group discussed the problems when increasing pack sizes and the consequent impact this has on the number of pallets and weights involved in delivery of the stock. However, it was noted that most retailers purchase in singles rather than packs but that often orders of singles are mistakenly translated into packs for delivery.

KL asked whether best practice guidelines are needed and the Group agreed this would be beneficial. KL suggested that the supply of pack size information be included in the scope of the Product Data Accreditation Review Task and Finish Working Group, following further exploration and feedback from this group.

**ACTION:** ALL to confirm to KL if a workshop is needed (or not) for pack size data issues.

**ACTION:** ALL to consider what best practice with regards the provision of pack size information might be, i.e. with regards timing of first sending this data, revising data and so on.

7. **Updates on other BIC Committees’ activities**

   - **Digital**
     KL informed the Group that the Digital Committee’s Acquisitions and Divestments Task & Finish Working Group has produced a straw man proposal to establish best practice guidelines and is currently being circulated for feedback.

   - **Libraries**
     KL informed the Group that the e4Libraries Accreditation Review Task and Finish Working Group will meet for the final time on the 23rd March 2015 and that this project is scheduled to complete at the end of March 2015; this is dependent on final sign off on the deliverables by the Libraries Committee.

   KL also noted that the RFID & Privacy Task & Finish Working Group is continuing its work in light of current EU Mandates regarding RFID and Privacy in libraries. The overarching message of the Working Group to libraries is not to panic about these EU Mandates since the requirements of the mandates will be closely monitored and addressed by this Task and Finish Working Group. The aim of the Working Group is to help libraries understand how to adhere to the requirements of the mandates.

8. **A.O.B.**
   The Group did not have any other business to discuss.

9. **Date of next meeting**
   The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 2nd June 2015.