

BIC PRICE & AVAILABILITY TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP MEETING – Minutes

The Publishers Association, 29b Montague Street, London WC1B 5BW

Wednesday 27th January 2016, 2pm

Present

Angela Belham, Bertrams (dialled in)
Judith Bennett, Oxford University Press
George Bogdanovic, Bertrams (dialled in)
Claire Dolan, Penguin Random House
Katya Dolgodvorova, Penguin Random House
Matthew Hogg, Macmillan (Deputy Chair)
Karina Luke, BIC
John Moffatt, Nielsen
Karen Osterley, Pearson
Stephen Sharrock, Simon & Schuster
Sophia Sophocleous, BIC
Jack Tipping, Bowker
Gabrielle Wallington, Waterstones (Chair)
Keith Walters, BDS

Apologies

Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC
Davinder Bedi, BDS
James Bensburg, Egmont
Vickie Clegg, Penguin Random House
Liam Diggins, Ingram Content Group
John Garrould, Bertrams
Julia Garman, Ingram Coutts
Steve Laycock, Ingram Coutts
John Leith, HarperCollins
Steve Lenton, Orion Books
Jim Neilson, HarperCollins Publishers
Peter Skone, Penguin Random House
Alma Weber, Penguin Random House

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Group introduced themselves for the purpose of the minutes and the apologies were delivered. It was noted that Andy Williams of Macmillan has now resigned from this Group.

2. Review of minutes and follow-up on actions from the last meeting

The minutes from the last meeting of this Group were approved with one correction pertaining to the definitions of codes IB and IP, as discussed under item 3 of this meeting's agenda.

GW noted that the TRADACOM Code List Best Practice document is still a work in progress due to a heavy workload. She noted that the Group will still go through it in today's meeting and that she will circulate the finished document to the Group next week. GW noted that she has some information on order acknowledgment codes which will be incorporated into the document.

The following actions from the last meeting were discussed:

- TRADACOMS draft Code List document
GW informed the Group that she had included suggested action codes into the TRADACOMS code list document.

- Report Codes and Transaction Codes

The Group were informed that AMB had informed Simon Edwards (SE), the Chair of the Technical Implementation Clinic, that looking into how report codes are impacted by the codes 3120, 3145, 3150 and 3170 is out of the scope of this project.

- Review and update EDIFACT codes

GW noted that she could not recall having received any information regarding EDIFACT codes from PS. She informed the Group that EDIFACT would be discussed further under item 4 on this meeting's agenda.

3. Discussion regarding the draft code list spreadsheet with a view to signing it off during the meeting - (Best Practice Guidelines for the use of TRADACOMS)

- IB / IP

GW stated that the Group would review anything outstanding from the last meeting. GW noted that although IB and IP seem to be straightforward, issues are raised. KW pointed out a discrepancy between definitions of the two in the minutes from the last meeting on 21st October 2015, which will be amended.

Post-Meeting Update: IB and IP will be discussed further at the next meeting of this Group in order to clarify the definitions of the two.

- NN

It was noted that NN can cause difficulties. GW noted that this is a positive action code with the negative definition 'we do not hold this item in stock'. GW noted that the issue was raised at the last meeting of the Technical Implementation Clinic. She stated that a negative definition should not have a positive action code.

KL speculated whether the wording should be different, using for example, the word 'supply' rather than 'stock' to read 'we do not supply this item'. GW speculated that Bertrams use NN. GB noted that NM should not be used as a positive action code either, stating that NQ would be better suited. It was noted that Gardners are set up to use NM instead of NQ.

- RE

GW noted that this issue has been resolved.

- RF

GW informed the Group that this issue has been delegated to the Acquisitions & Divestments Task & Finish Working Group (T&FWG). GW noted that this code is useful to use but must be used with caution when stating the length of time. She suggested that the Acquisitions and Divestments T&FWG will be able to help advise the Group on this. The next meeting of the Acquisitions and Divestments T&FG will be on 9th February 2016.

4. Review and update EDIFACT codes

GW commented that it is a shame that PS was unable to attend the meeting but stated that the Group should think of an approach to EDIFACT codes regardless and she can work on it in time for the next meeting of this Group.

GB stated that EDIFACT codes are used as an order response and that he is not aware of EDItEUR using them for price and availability. GB noted that EDIFACT codes are just the same as TRADACOM codes and GW stated that the only difference seems to be that EDIFACT codes are missing a price and availability column. GB noted that although EDItEUR do not use them, other organisations may. It was noted that Nielsen may use EDIFACT codes, though this was uncertain. JM agreed to seek clarification. GW stated that she will go over the EDIFACT codes together with the TRADACOMS as this work has already been done and it may be that this is applicable to EDIFACT as well.

ACTION: JM to clarify if Nielsen use EDIFACT codes.

5. Review of Project Deliverables (how far the Project has come and what work still needs to be done)

KL asked how the EDIFACT review fits in with the project deliverables. GW noted that although the Group is quite behind, progress is being made. She noted that the project deliverables had been pushed back to January 2016. GW noted that the Group need to consider how to approach work on price. KL reminded the Group of the four main deliverables of the work on availability:

- Review and update TRADACOMS code list and their definitions
- Review and update EDIFACT codes
- Review and update best practice guidelines
- Review and update best practice guidelines for distributors

GW noted that she will complete the TRADACOMS Code List grid document and circulate this next week. She noted that she will try to circulate a document regarding EDIFACT codes at the same time or at least acknowledge whether TRADACOMS are different to EDIFACT. KL noted that the final draft availability document will be circulated to this Group, and then onto the Metadata Sub-Committee and the Physical Supply Chain Committee. GW suggested sending it on to the EDI Clinics as well and KL agreed.

ACTION: GW to complete TRADACOMS Code List grid document and circulate to the Group next week.

ACTION: ALL to review the above grid and provide feedback / sign off in readiness for the next meeting, so it can be distributed more widely for further comment (BIC Metadata committee, BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee, and the EDI Clinics).

ACTION: GW to investigate EDIFACT codes while working on the TRADACOMS Code List in order to see whether the work on TRADACOMS could also be applied to an EDIFACT Code List.

6. Pricing

GW noted that the Group must now consider how to tackle pricing. GW noted that the project should only work on UK prices noting that other prices are connected to complex issues regarding territories, for example.

MH noted that in his opinion, Discount Group Codes are not working, and suggested that in order to refine the BIC process of Discount Group Codes it should have more of a defined structure. KL asked for the Group's opinion on this and a general discussion followed. GW agreed that Discount Group Codes are difficult and stated that the problem for Waterstones is dealing with an in-house system that cannot work with direct metadata feeds. GW fully accepted that the Discount Code system is not perfect, as it was devised over a decade ago and may therefore need reviewing.

GW noted that the best thing to do is steer organisations towards uptake of ONIX 3 and *Thema*. KL stated that it would be worth identifying issues. GW noted that a supplier and a wholesaler would have different opinions and different needs to communicate with regards costs/payment.

GW asked MH for his opinion on Discount Group Codes and MH stated that whether the process works depends on the organisation and commented that use of the codes can be complicated, especially when communicated as a Vista message rather than ONIX. GW commented that the individuals who negotiate prices are publishers and those who work in sales and that they do not necessarily know how Discount Group Codes work.

KL asked about the accuracy of prices. GW noted that most issues are around timing. GW added that being the only retailer sitting on this Group is not helpful as other retail practices cannot be shared.

MH noted that there are not many organisations using discount code/terms codes matrices. He noted that some organisations do not take direct feeds and do not try to calculate a final price either. KL speculated about price/discount confidentiality when sending out data to aggregators and distributors. MH noted that there is no way to retain confidentiality when sending data to an aggregator and KL noted that this is one of the key purposes of Discount Group Codes – that they can retain confidentiality.

MH noted that there is a requirement to ensure best practice guidelines exist for organisations working with legacy systems. GW noted that the aim is not to add further discount codes but to clarify the scheme's use. GW noted that this topic could be a large aspect of the Metadata Supply Chain Map which the Metadata Sub-Committee are working on and suggested offering it to them to add.

KL summarised that issues raised so far with pricing would seem to include: accuracy / complex pricing; time frame for the (promotional) pricing; the Discount Group Codes scheme

and matrices which are out of sync. KL noted that in ONIX it is possible to set start and end dates for promotional codes.

KL noted that there are currently no industry guidelines regarding when to 'cleanse' the Discount Code data, (which consists of 22 pages of codes).

GW noted that the 'Amazon standard' of pricing will also be reviewed in order to gauge whether it is useful and easy to use and noted that it would be worth documenting how it is structured .. KO noted that she does not think that Pearson would want to use anything other than the existing Discount Code Scheme KL suggested creating a questionnaire for BIC members to gauge their use of Discount Group Codes. GW volunteered to provide KL with a list of organisations that send GW matrices and those that either use or do not use Discount Group Codes.

KL informed the Group that there are no guidelines for distributors which state they need to be sending or using a matrix in relation to Discount Group Codes. GW commented that she thought there were guidelines covering this but that an absence of such information may explain some of the complications she has been having.

ACTION: KL to create a questionnaire for BIC members relating to their use of BIC Discount Group Codes.

ACTION: GW to provide KL with a list of organisations that send matrices and those that do use Discount Group Codes.

7. Update on the work of the Print on Demand Task & Finish Working Group regarding the use of P&A availability codes for POD / ASR purposes

This item was not discussed in this meeting due to a shortage of time, but will be carried over to the next meeting.

ACTION: SS to add this item to the agenda for the next meeting

8. Feedback from the Industry Returns Initiative (IRI) Workshop

KL informed the Group that the IRI Workshop took place on 10th November 2015 and was well attended. She noted that encouragingly, not as many fundamental issues were raised as she had anticipated, and that some of the issues that were raised can in fact be resolved easily through education/training and revising the existing documentation and removing any ambiguity. KL noted that the next step will be to draft a project brief and get a final sign off from the Operational Board to go ahead with the Project.

9. A.O.B.

There was no other business to discuss.

10. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 27th April 2016.