BIC SAN & GLN TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP MEETING - Minutes
CILIP Building, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE
Wednesday 11th February 2015, 10am

Present
Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC
Diana Dalasini, Nielsen
Simon Edwards, Consultant (Chair)
Karina Luke, BIC
Peter Morley, Publishing Technology
Simon Parker, Batch
Barry Richardson, Nielsen

Apologies
Gareth Bradley, Hachette
Noah Genner, Booknet Canada
Len Vlahos, BISG

1. Introductions & Apologies
The Group were welcomed to this inaugural meeting of the SAN & GLN Task & Finish Working Group and introduced themselves for the purpose of the minutes. SE noted that the relevant documentation, including the Project Brief and Terms of Reference (ToR), was circulated to the Group prior to this meeting.

KL noted that there may be many people within the book industry who do not know what SANs or GLNs are.

[SAN or standard address number is used to denote a delivery address for booksellers. This enables booksellers to place electronic orders, quote their SAN and their trading partners can deliver stock to the right address. GLN is Global Location Number which is used for a similar purpose to the SAN especially by supermarkets. Note that in the USA, SANs are also used to identify publishers and distributors.]

SP commented that this is where the problem lies, since the solutions to SAN/GLN issues are frequently varied across the industry which in turn creates its own set of issues. DD noted that organisations may not be aware that an industry-wide standard even exists. SP noted that there has been a rise in the use of EDI which is escalating the current issues with SANs and GLNs. SE agreed, noting that it is very good that EDI has been adopted more widely but SANs/GLNs need to be updated to work alongside it. He also noted that Canada and the US tends to use SANs instead of GLNs in EDI and suggested LV and NG’s attendance at this Group’s meetings would be highly beneficial to everyone involved.

SE suggested that, should anyone have further ideas for organisations to approach to join this Group, then they should contact AB directly with contact details. The Group suggested
that BIC should contact Matthew Hogg (MH) at MDL to see if a list of SAN users can be
drawn up so that this Group can target some of them to join this Group. It was also
suggested that Adam Miles of Pearson, a representative from Bowker (US) and a
representative from Bookpoint should be approached too.
ACTION: ALL to contact AB with details of any organisations to approach to join this Group.
ACTION: AB to email MH to see if he can collate a list of suitable SAN users for this Group.
ACTION: AB to contact Pearson, Bowker and Bookpoint to ask them to join this Group.

2. Confirmation of Project Leader and Deputy
The Group noted that Simon Edwards was put forward as the Project Leader for this Group
in the Project Brief. They agreed this should be the case. Peter Morley volunteered to be the
Deputy Project Leader and this was agreed.

3. With reference to the Project Brief, purpose of this Task & Finish Working Group
KL reminded the group of the purpose of this Working Group. SE informed the Group that
there may be actions from the previous preliminary meetings held last year that may need
to be addressed during this project. He also noted that any changes that come about from
this Group’s work will need to be implemented in the US by Bowker. It is important
therefore that this group engages with Bowker US throughout the duration of this project.

a) Review of deliverables, dates and schedules of Project
SE noted that one of the deliverables for this project will be updating the rules for SAN
and GLN as used in the book trade. With regards to the rules, the Group expressed their
concern that changing the details of a SAN may also require the corresponding GLN to
be altered too; which would involve being a member of GS1. SP commented that two
separate identifiers should not be required in EDI and suggested that either one or the
other should be used. This would involve amending the EDI guidelines. He also noted
that some organisations already use/provide only one type of identifier. KL questioned
why two identifiers are in existence, to which SE replied that SAN existed for a long time
before GLN but only in the book industry, and GLN came into existence due to
supermarkets’ creating their own method of identifying products and locations (and
these did not include books). BR commented that GLN is a more flexible standard.

PM noted that Publishing Technology has previously experienced some discrepancies in
practices between GS1 Ireland and GS1 UK. He noted that one of the benefits of this
SAN Review could include the facility to look up any unrecognised SANs online. DD
noted that Nielsen are often not kept abreast of organisations’ address changes as this
often necessitates a new SAN and therefore a cost.

KL commented that choosing the GLN as the only identifier would have huge
ramifications in the US as they only use SAN. She suggested discussing this matter with
BISG, Booknet Canada and Bowker US.
The Group agreed that consideration of the pricing of SANs / GLNs should be added to the deliverables of this Group.

**ACTION:** KL to add Pricing of SAN/GLN to the deliverables for this Project Brief.

**ACTION:** KL to discuss the impact of one identifier with BISG, Booknet Canada and Bowker US.

BR commented that this Group needs to ascertain what The Booksellers Association (BA) tells its new members regarding SAN / GLN usage. SE noted that GLN is used as the BA membership number but questioned whether they are told what to do if their GLN needs to change. BR suggested that perhaps the BA might consider announcing its new members (complete with their GLN) to its membership. SP agreed that this would be helpful, and suggested that it would be additionally helpful if a list of GLNs of all members were to be made available to BA members. DD noted that it would be possible for Nielsen to produce a list of prefixes to give to organisations. BR commented that an issue might come about if some of the listed organisations are no longer trading and/or have left the BA. The Group finally agreed that this list may not be reliable and should not be published but that the group might have sight of the list to judge its condition.

**ACTION:** DD to produce a list of prefixes for consideration by this Working Group only.

The Group discussed the marketing plan for this project, noting that the Physical Supply Chain Committee commissioned this work but, as yet, no retailers have joined the working group. SP suggested that, once this Group has further information to provide them with, retailers will be invited to become involved at a later stage in the project’s life. KL agreed, noting that retailers will be able to review draft documents, and any other draft outputs produced, and that this would be a more efficient use of their time and resources. SE commented that the involvement of more distributors would be advantageous and it would be useful to ascertain exactly how they use the SANs / GLNs they receive from retailers in EDI.

SP noted that accounts can be set up at Batch without the organisation providing a GLN. Previously, the Group had suggested that not charging for SANs / GLNs may be a solution but BR noted that this practice will incur set-up charges for the other organisations involved. SP agreed but noted that paying for an identifier is a barrier to their usage in smaller organisations which may become more apparent during the promotion of SAN / GLN.

DD noted that Nielsen’s Registration Agencies have previously looked into the ways in which GLNs are allocated, with a view to making them available online. She noted that the process is complex and admin heavy. She also noted that data cleansing would need to be carried out since a number of duplications may exist.
The Group went on to discuss the scope of this Project and the timing involved. They noted that the Group was set up later than intended and as such will finish later than intended. They agreed that a year is a realistic time-frame for the project. It was agreed by all that the deadline for all deliverables to be finished should be end of January 2016.

b) Reminder of Terms of Reference for BIC Task & Finish Working Groups

KL drew the attention of the Group to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for Task & Finish Working Groups. She noted that members of this Group need to be in attendance for all meetings, and noted that any member of the Group who cannot attend a meeting should send a delegate in their place. The Group agreed that this should be the case. SE noted that the remaining meetings were planned to be by conference call so this should make attendance easier.

4. Agree first actions and owners, with reference to Project brief

SP commented that location information is important, noting that it facilitates the digital movement of data for both physical and digital products. He noted that organisations need to be identified digitally so that they can be traded with. He suggested that location information may need to be in the form of a global identifier, noting that – in some cases – a physical address isn’t necessary, i.e. with the distribution of digital products. He suggested that IP addresses might possibly be used in this instance. BR agreed but noted that a registration/physical address will still be required.

KL noted that part of the actions for this project will involve defining what SAN and GLN actually are and what they should (and should not) be used for. SP questioned whether either identifier is fit for purpose. He noted that due to costs, SAN would not be fit for purpose if a customer, for example, has 100 branches (and so 100 locations); these would need to be set up as sub-locations or would need to be assigned 100 separate SANs. He noted that if SANs became free of charge, this would no longer be an issue. SE informed the Group that the above scenario would also be a problem when using GLNs, since an organisation is only allowed 5 GLNs (i.e. for 5 branches or accounts) under BIC’s GLN prefix after which the organisation is expected to join GS1 and obtain their own prefix and so pay for additional GLNs via a membership fee.

BR suggested that SANs could be used as an organisation identifier, so that if an organisation moves, the SAN moves with it. He suggested that this would make SANs fit for purpose. PM noted that this would be similar to obtaining a business entity, such as a VAT registration number, and agreed that it would not need to be a physical location. However, SE noted that there is currently a cost implication in changing an address as someone at the SAN Agency has to make the change, which may make the process unviable. He noted that moving the whole system online would enable new SANs/GLNs and amendments to be processed very cheaply but that a suitable system would have to be developed. SP suggested that a solution could be developed very quickly but that previously issued ranges of numbers would have to be identified and the existing database tidied up and that there...
would be a cost to that. PW suggested producing a set of best practice guidelines for how to deal with each situation that might arise. SE noted that a set of guidelines had previously been produced for this purpose in February 2012: http://www.bic.org.uk/files/pdfs/120131%20san%20guidelines%20draft%204.pdf
He suggested that this document could be updated with the latest requirements. He noted that the previous SAN Group had discovered that the SAN agency was enforcing the rules incorrectly, and more strictly than intended.

**ACTION:** SE to revise the February 2012 document with feedback from this Group, once it has been discussed fully in the next meeting.

The Group agreed that the first action of this Project should be to look at International enforcement of SAN rules to see what the implications of those rules are in the US and Europe. BR noted that he has two contacts in Germany and volunteered to contact them to gain insight into their use of SANs. KL noted that the purpose of SAN isn’t 100% obvious from the writing of the 2012 guidelines, and noted this definition will need to be updated by this Group. It will need to be written in such a way that it is easily understood by someone who has no prior knowledge at all of anything SAN related.

**ACTION:** KL to obtain guidelines on SAN use in the US from BISG / Bowker.

**ACTION:** ALL to read the 2012 BIC Best Practice Guidelines for SAN, (in the above link), before the next meeting.

**ACTION:** BR to pursue his two contacts in Germany to see how they used SANs.

The Group agreed that Blackwell’s, Pearson and Waterstones should be approached to ask them if they will review the documents produced by this Group. They also agreed that, should any debate arise over these documents, these organisations will be asked to provide further assistance via a conference call or by attending future meetings.

**ACTION:** KL to contact Blackwell’s, Pearson and Waterstones to ask them if they will review the documents produced by this Group, once they are written.

**ACTION:** KL to approach BISG and Booknet Canada to see if they would be willing to discuss the issues/requirements for SAN / GLN in their region (preferably at one of this Group’s forthcoming meetings), and to ask LV to provide an update on SAN use in the US for the next meeting.

**ACTION:** KL to obtain a copy of the BIC - GS1 agreement and circulate to the Group.

**ACTION:** SE to forward his guidelines grid for SAN / GLN to AB, who will then circulate it to the Group.

BR noted that Bowker’s system involves setting up primary numbers at the beginning of each code that corresponds to the type of organisation that it belongs to but that this may not be achievable for all organisations, e.g. WHSmith may have their own prefix to denote their branches/warehouses. BR volunteered to put together a list of SAN and GLN prefixes that are currently in use, so that this Group has figures to work with. SP noted that Batch have their own GLN prefixes too. BR proposed that SANs should be available to everyone
and that GLNs should be automatically assigned for this SAN, to avoid duplication.  
**ACTION**: BR to put together a list of SAN and GLN prefixes that are in use which will be circulated to the Group.

5. **A.O.B.**

None.

6. **Date of the next meeting**

KL questioned whether it might be feasible for this Group to hold its second meeting at London Book Fair (LBF) – or a day previous to or subsequent to this event – so that Booknet Canada and BISG, who usually come to LBF, could attend. The Group noted that this could be a busy time and agreed that an afternoon slot for the next conference call would enable LV and NG to attend.  
**ACTION**: AB to ensure all future meetings of this Group are arranged in the afternoon.

The next meeting of this Group will be a conference call on Tuesday 24th March 2015.