BIC PRICE & AVAILABILITY TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP MEETING - Minutes
The Publishers Association, 29b Montague Street, London WC1B 5BW
Wednesday 28th January 2015, 2pm.

Present
Vickie Clegg, Penguin Random House
(delegates of Colleen Jeffery)
Liam Diggins, Ingram Content Group
Katy Gibson, BIC
Matthew Hogg, Macmillan (Deputy Chair)
Steve Lenton, Orion Books
Alison Lewis, Ingram Content Group
Karina Luke, BIC
John Moffatt, Nielsen
Stephen Sharrock, Simon & Schuster
Peter Skone, Penguin Random House
Jack Tipping, Bowker
Gabrielle Wallington, Waterstones (Chair)
Keith Walters, BDS
Alma Weber, Penguin Random House

On Conference call from Bertrams:
Angela Belham
George Bogdanovich
John Garrould

Apologies
Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC
Julia Garman, Ingram Coutts
Colleen Jeffery, Penguin Random House
Steve Laycock, Ingram Coutts
Karen Osterley, Pearson
Andy Williams, Macmillan / Palgrave

1. Introductions and apologies
The Group introduced themselves for the purpose of the minutes and the representatives calling in from Bertrams via conference call were welcomed and thanked by GW for their time. Apologies were given and it was noted that Alison Lewis of Ingram has resigned from the Price & Availability Task & Finish Working Group in favour of the Print On Demand & Short Run Task & Finish Working Group. Regretfully, no one else from Ingram will be able to attend the Group in her place due to other commitments.

2. Review of minutes and follow-up on actions from the last meeting
GW passed around copies of the detailed TRADACOM code list spreadsheet and noted that it would be circulated electronically after the meeting.

GW noted that there has not been any success as of yet in other retailers joining the Group. GW noted that she hoped during the meeting the Group would arrive at a consensus surrounding the codes to take back to representatives’ respective companies and commented that there would be an emphasis on agreeing on the meaning of order acceptance codes. Any amendments, additions or deprecations are to be added to the spreadsheet following the meeting’s discussions for clarification.
ACTION: GW to circulate electronic copy of spreadsheet to the Group, including Bertrams, for annotation.

3. Continued Discussion on the Best Practice Guidelines for the use of TRADACOMS

GW noted how a “Grouping” column had been added to the spreadsheet, with data inputs including “negative”, “uncertain”, “positive with brief delay” and positive with further delay. The Group continued their discussion over TRADACOM codes, using the spreadsheet as a point of discussion:

AB – Publication abandoned prior to publication.

The Group agreed again that this code is acceptable as both an order acknowledgement and as a price and availability code and that there were no further points for discussion here.

Verdict: Endorsed as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

AD – Apply direct (item not available to trade)

[Previous Discussion: It was noted that this code means that the publisher will only sell their title directly to customers, and definitely not to trade customers. The Group considered whether to reword the definition for this code, e.g. direct customers only, but GW suggested that this code is used so infrequently and only by independent publishers that it may not be worthwhile.]

GW asked if there were any strong views surrounding this code. Bertrams noted that they used the code as a negative acknowledgement and was in use in both input and output.

Verdict: Endorsed as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

AS – Already supplied (should be accompanied by delivery date)

[Previous Discussion: KW noted that BDS receive this answer code occasionally to signify that an order has been duplicated. JM noted that this code should not be deprecated if it is in use.]

The Group expressed uncertainty surrounding this code. It was noted that the code would not be used as a Price & Availability code but could be used for a duplicated order. KW asked how the code may be used in a library context. The Group suggested that a literal definition of the code could mean “order already received for this quantity and with this order number and therefore the order will not be fulfilled without further investigation”. The Group discussed whether this code is only used in relation to a repeat order of the same ISBN or whether the code is actually invoked when a request with both the same ISBN and the same purchase order number is repeated. The Group agreed that exactly what combination is needed requires clarification. Bertrams representatives agreed this particular code required further thought and clarification and raised the issue of how action codes may be useful in conjunction with the code here. GW noted how there are only two action codes available for use; 01 for order accepted and 02 for order cancelled. However, GW commented that the distribution centres, where the order is placed, tend to not acknowledge action codes. The
Group agreed that further recommendations from other points of view were needed to provide further clarification and thus a wider picture surrounding the use of the code needs gathering before any further recommendations are made.

**Verdict:** TBC as an Order Acknowledgement code only.

**ACTION:** KL/JM to discuss an update report of the use of code “AS” with Barry Richardson of Nielsen.

- **AU – Publisher’s address unknown**
  [Previous Discussion: The Group agreed that this code is fine to be used as an order acknowledgment or for price and availability, providing it is in use.]
  
  The Group discussed how perhaps this was not a suitable code for Price & Availability but was as an Order Acknowledgement but again questioned who was using the code and why. The Group discussed that this needed following up and potentially deprecating depending on who may use the code as there may be a niche use of it and thus it cannot be deprecated. KL suggested that the code may in fact be irrelevant but would ask Barry Richardson of Nielsen on this code as well as the above.
  
  **Verdict:** TBC as an Order Acknowledgment code only.

  **ACTION:** KL/JM to discuss with Barry Richardson where code “AU” may be used.

- **CS – Status uncertain (check with customer service)**
  [Previous Discussion: GW noted organisations need a way to say that the status of a book is unknown. The Group agreed that this code is necessary and JM noted that it is used frequently. GW noted that this code should be used as a last-case scenario but that, if it was removed, other codes would undoubtedly be misused to take its place. The Group agreed that this code should be used as both an order acknowledgement and an availability code.]
  
  The Group discussed again that this would trigger the recipient to contact customer services but the group questioned what information customer services could provide that would not be covered by the code. The Group wondered whether the order acknowledgement sent out with it was more critical than the code itself, for example, “not stocked, but ordered”. GW suggested that the accompanying use of an order action code may be helpful here. The Group discussed how the code may, essentially, indicate “needs chasing”. However, the Group agreed again that the code cannot be removed as this may consequently cause misuse of the other codes.
  
  **Verdict:** Endorsed as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

- **DQ – Discount query: available, but discount claimed in order is unacceptable (to be accompanied by discount terms which supplier is prepared to offer)**
  [Previous Discussion: GW noted that Waterstones don’t claim discounts, and JN noted that an order acknowledgement is not placed for a query of this nature.]
The Group agreed that this code was not an appropriate response and therefore required deprecating as discounts are managed separately. MH suggested use of the code PQ instead.

**Verdict:** Deprecate as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

- **FQ – Only obtainable abroad: do you wish to order and accept cost?**  
  [Previous Discussion: The Group commented that this code infers an additional cost. GW suggested that this description would be covered by using code “TO” instead.]
  
  The Group suggested the use of code “OA” instead, meaning “On order from Abroad”. GW noted how any codes which asked questions of their recipients should be deprecated.

**Verdict:** Deprecate as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

- **HK – Paperback out of print (hardback available)**  
  [Previous Discussion: The Group agreed that this code is a duplication of “OF”.

  The Group confirmed that this was to be deprecated as an Order Acknowledgement and that “OF” was to be used instead. Bertrams agreed and noted that this had been changed on their system and an alternative ISBN for another product would be provided as well as the code “OF”.

**Verdict:** Deprecate as an Order Acknowledgement only.

**Verdict:** Endorsed as a Price & Availability code.

- **IB – In stock (at wholesaler or bookseller)**  
  [Previous Discussion: The Group agreed that this code is a duplication of IP and is therefore unnecessary.]

  The Group continued to discuss whether IB/IP are synonymous. It was noted that the former indicates that the book is now unavailable but that the distributor (as sender of the code) is indicating that they do have copies of the book. Consequently, this may be a code useful for the wholesaler. If “IB” is to remain in use it must not be sent with accompanying positive order acknowledgement codes. AW noted how the use of “OP’ in place of “IB” is difficult as “OP” is more commonly used to indicate the end of the life of the product. Therefore, AW suggested that “IB” should, in effect, indicate “limited stock” i.e the product is out of print but may be in stock elsewhere and therefore available. It was also noted that the code should not be used as a Price & Availability code.

  Furthermore, in relation to “OP” it was suggested that there may be a new code needed for a stock recall i.e to indicate the product has been withdrawn for legal reasons. It was further noted that perhaps “IB” should be used if the sender is unaware of the publishing status of the product, but has the book in stock regardless. The Group also discussed whether both elements of “In print and In Stock” were needed for “IP” and general consensus suggested both were needed together for one code, and the codes could not be separated to represent each element.
Bertrams indicated that both codes were useful and that there would be situations where “IB” would be needed but that published guidance would need to accompany the code to prevent inappropriate use.

Bertrams representatives emphasised that order action codes should be kept and are needed. GW commented that consequently, following their apparent utility with this code and earlier codes, it appears that order action codes need to be factored into this Group’s considerations but that further advice is required in relation to these codes for clarification.

**Verdict:** TBC as an Order Acknowledgement code.
**ACTION:** GW to investigate best practice guidelines surrounding order action codes and consult EDI clinics over their use of these codes.
**ACTION:** ALL to consider when the codes “IB” and “IP” may be used in their respective companies to revisit these codes at next meeting.

- **IP – In print and in stock**
  Further to the discussion above in relation to “IB”, it was agreed that this code would remain.
  **Verdict:** Endorsed as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

- **MD – Manufactured on demand**
  [Previous Discussion: DB noted that this code can cause timescale queries to arise. GW suggested that this should be discussed in-house within organisations to decide on the lead-times and therefore which code to use.]
  The Group discussed the breadth of this code and noted that this was under consideration by the Print on Demand and Short Run Task & Finish Working Group.
  **Verdict:** TBC – reliant on outcomes from the POD Task and Finish Working Group.
  **ACTION:** GW to feed back following Print on Demand and Short Run Task & Finish Working Group discussions.

- **NK – Item not known (cannot be traced)**
  [Previously Discussed: The Group noted that this code is not relevant as a price and availability code but should be used as an order acknowledgement. KO commented that it is a duplicate of code 29. They agreed to delete the numeric code and keep code NK.]
  The Group discussed that an order action code could be very important in conjunction with this code. Essentially, this code is an admission of failure in tracking the product. PS noted that if the request was not a product of Random House then they would not provide a response. The Group discussed the timeframe at which point the requester would give up and it was noted this would be around six to eight weeks; further investigation as to the location of the product may be triggered by this code.
  **Verdict:** Endorsed, but only as an Order Acknowledgement code.

- **NN – We do not supply this item**
The Group discussed how this code could be used in conjunction with order acknowledgement code 02, or “NQ” with 01. It is a negative order acknowledgement. However, Bertrams representatives noted how they had not come across the code. It is used to denote that the ISBN is recognised but it is no longer in supply, therefore the order will not be supplied. It should prompt the recipient to look elsewhere. The Group suggested that the code may be used by Gardners. The Group discussed how “NN” and “NQ” may in fact be used interchangeably. JM noted that “NQ” is (wrongly) reused in the lifecycle of a book and should only be used prior to first publication only and that “RP” should be used later in the lifecycle. **Verdict:** TBC as an Order Acknowledgement code only.

- **NP – Not yet published**
  **Verdict:** Endorsed as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

- **NQ – Not stocked: do you wish us to order for you?**
  [Previous Discussion: The Group noted that, if a retailer receives this code, they cannot respond to it. They agreed that this code should not have a question in it and should be reworded: “Not stocked: will try to fulfil as a special order”, i.e. the supplier will attempt to order it. KO noted the similarity between this code and “TO”. KL noted that this code’s definition will need to be worded concisely to ensure its proper use.]
  The Group discussed using 01 or 02 with “NQ”; Bertrams suggested the latter would be possible if the customer is not allowed to order from US, but in this instance the Group were unsure as to whether NQ would be appropriate. The Group discussed the code may be synonymous with “OO” (On order from Publisher) but some people do prefer “Not Stocked” due to the consequences in terms of a special order or stocked item. Therefore the Group discussed that it would be useful to distinguish between “NQ” and “OO” and discussed the inclusion of “try” within the wording of the definition for “NQ”. That is to say there would be a follow up order but no promises are made. **Verdict:** Endorsed – if reworded – but only as an Order Acknowledgement.
  **ACTION:** Bertrams to look into where the code is used in practice.

- **NS – Not sold separately**
  [Previous Discussion: GW and JM noted that this code is in use. It was noted that the titles will all have individual ISBNs so the retailer needs to know that they cannot be ordered separately.]
  The Group agreed this was straight forward and that there may be a related product involved. Therefore, the product requested will not be ordered but the recipient can then reply with an alternative product and its ISBN. **Verdict:** Endorsed as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.
- **OA – On order from abroad**
  [Previous Discussion: GW noted that there is not timescale for this code. SLA commented that it is useful as an order acknowledgement but not as an availability code. He noted that this code informs the retailer to expect a longer timescale than usual. GW suggested adding a mandatory timeframe to this code, and SS agreed noting that it should perform the same way as an order date (regardless of where the order is supplied from).]  
  The Group agreed this was not suitable as a Price & Availability code but it was as an order acknowledgement.  
  **Verdict:** Endorsed as an Order Acknowledgement code only.

- **OB – Temporarily out of stock (at wholesaler or bookseller)**
  [Previous Discussion: The Group noted that this code is similar to “OA”. JM volunteered to look into how this code is used and by whom, if anyone at all. GW noted that she will think about how these codes should be grouped together, in time for the next meeting.]  
  The Group discussed that this was defined as “Normally stocked, temporarily unavailable” and that this was different to “Temporarily Unavailable” which could indicate a longer period of unavailability. The Group discussed that this code was very useful for wholesalers and thus would be useful as an Order Acknowledgement from a wholesaler and supplier of record.  
  **Verdict:** TBC as an Order Acknowledgment code.

- **OF – This format out of print (other manifestations available)**
  [Previous Discussion: The Group agreed to keep this code but noted that they do not know how organisations respond to it. They noted that it is necessary because it tells the retailer that other formats are available.]  
  The Group discussed that this was suitable as a Price & Availability code. Defined, it means the title of the ISBN is “OP”, out of print, but the content is available in a different format. However, it may not be suitable as an Order Acknowledgement. GW noted that to avoid confusion, it was worth sticking to the physical chain and the Group would deal with the digital chain further down the line. The Group went on to discuss the provision of alternative ISBNs but it was noted that the TRADACOM system only allowed for the input of one ISBN and that this had to be an alternative print ISBN; there is no opportunity to provide any further ISBNs.  
  **Verdict:** Endorsed as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.  
  **ACTION:** ALL to investigate whether more than one ISBN can be inputted into TRADACOM in practice.

- **OO – On order from publisher**
  [Previous Discussion: The Group agreed that this code may be a duplication of another and suggested that they would look into how it is used before making a decision.]
The Group discussed the overlap with “NQ” here but noted that “OO” may be useful as a positive order acknowledgement, that it to say it is in stock and on its way. Consequently, it would be useful as an Order Acknowledgement code but not as a Price & Availability code. **Verdict:** Endorsed as an Order Acknowledgement code only.

- **OP – Out of print**
  [Previous Discussion: The Group noted that this code should mean “irrevocably out of print”.
  The Group discussed the breadth of this code, especially with the arrival of Print on Demand; products and content once made OP, reappear and are being reissued. At the moment the code effectively means “gone for good” and “irrevocably” out of print. The difficulty arises here where publishers are looking at backlists and publishing content which they still hold the rights to, including digital rights. Therefore, some content is returning with the original, (what was, OP) ISBN. Consequently, there may need to be alternative definition here, or even a separate code. The Group suggested this may fall into the remit of the Print on Demand & Short Run Task & Finish Working Group. The Group finished the discussion by emphasising that the issue may be in the use of “irrevocably” as with new technologies this now appears outdated and no longer appropriate. Thus more clarity is required surrounding the definition of codes referring to “Out of Print” and “Out of Stock”. It was suggested that the ambiguous “UC” may actually be used by the publisher, meaning “Unavailable, and may or may not, become available again”.
  **Verdict:** Endorsed – if reworded, as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.
  **ACTION:** Print on Demand & Short Run Task & Finish Working Group to consider the relevance of TRADACOM code “OP”.

- **OR – Out of print: (to be) replaced by new edition**
  [Previous Discussion: The Group noted that a new manifestation may not yet have an ISBN and therefore could not be labelled with “OF”. The Group agreed that this code should be used as both an order acknowledgement and an availability code, though they noted that a specification needs to be added to the wording to make it mandatory to update this feed once the ISBN becomes available.]
  The Group discussed that this was a useful code as both a Price & Availability code and as an Order Acknowledgement, especially in academic publishing with the reissuing of new editions of textbooks. The recipient will consequently require the new ISBN of the new edition.
  **Verdict:** Endorsed as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.
  **ACTION:** GW to consider how this code can be distinguished to “OF” and clarify the distinction.

- **PC – Order in process at bookseller: awaiting customer action**
  [Previous Discussion: The Group agreed this code has no use.]
The Group again agreed this should be deprecated and JT suggested use of “AB” instead.  
**Verdict:** Deprecate as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

- **PK – Hardback out of print (paperback available)**  
The Group agreed that this code is a duplication of “OF”.  
**Verdict:** Deprecate as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

- **PN – Publisher no longer in business**  
[Previous Discussion: The Group agreed that this code should be used as an order acknowledgement but not an availability code. GW suggested this code should also be discussed by Acquisitions & Divestments Task & Finish Working Group.]  
The Group noted that this had been discussed by the Acquisitions & Divestments Task & Finish Working Group and that no further discussion was needed here. Code will remain as a negative order acknowledgement.  
**Verdict:** Endorsed, but only as an Order Acknowledgement code.

- **PQ – Price query: available but query whether price is acceptable (used when actual price exceeds price stated in order by more than an agreed margin)**  
[Previous Discussion: The Group agreed that price queries have no place in availability codes.]  
Bertrams suggested this code be kept and in use as a positive order acknowledgement, as “positive, with brief delay”.  
**Verdict:** Endorsed but only as an Order Acknowledgement code.

- **PR – Order in process at bookseller**  
**Verdict:** Deprecate as both an Order Acknowledgement and as a Price and Availability code.

- **RE – Awaiting reissue with new cover**  
[Previous Discussion: The Group agreed that this code is above and beyond the detail needed in both an order acknowledgement and availability code.]  
The group discussed again whether this code contained more detail than needed. However, it may be useful to retailers to indicate to remove stock with the previous cover in anticipation of the new cover. Some of the Group expressed that it would be useful to have information that the publisher is awaiting a reissue with a new cover. For example, the image on a website may not align with actual cover customer purchases- this may cause issues. The Group noted it was useful as a Price & Availability code. The Group discussed the important distinction between a reissue (where there are content and/or jacket changes which requires a new ISBN if there is new material included) and a reprint (an exact copy of the original content). KL suggested difficulties where there may be a reprint with a new cover: this is not a reissue, but where there is renewed interest hype around the book through re-promotion. VC noted that the code “RE” is critical and one of the most complicated codes in use. Therefore, further investigation is needed here surrounding the definition of “RE”.

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Verdict: TBC as both an Order Acknowledgement and Price & Availability code.
ACTION: ALL to undertake further investigation as to how this code is used and whether deprecating the code would cause more problems.
ACTION: GW to consider further debates/issues surrounding “RE”.
ACTION: Group to feedback findings here, starting with “RE” at the next meeting.

4. A.O.B.
The Group did not have Any Other Business to discuss.

5. Date of the next meeting
To be held in mid-March after 6 weeks from this meeting but not in week commencing 14th March. The Group discussed here that it would be useful to contact some smaller publishers, perhaps through IPG to hear of their suggestions as well as more retailers.

ACTION: KG/AB to send out a Doodle Poll to arrange this meeting.