UK THEMA NATIONAL GROUP – Minutes
CILIP Building, 7 Ridgmount St, London WC1E 7AE
Tuesday 2nd December 2014, 2pm

Present
Graham Bell, EDItEUR
Richard Davies, Elsevier
Venus Clark, Waterstones
Alex Ingram, EDItEUR
Gabrielle Wallington, Waterstones
Alfred Willmann, Penguin Random House
Howard Willows, Nielsen (Chair)

Apologies
Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC
Kat Coveyduck, Virtusales
Sharat Gaur, Amazon
Karina Luke, BIC
Alan Trewartha, Harper Collins

1. Introductions & Apologies
HW welcomed the increased attendance at this meeting. As no BIC representative was present, AI offered to take the minutes for this meeting.

2. Review Actions of Previous Meeting
At the previous meeting, the Group discussed whether BIC should set up an email listserv (along the lines of the widely used ONIX_IMPLEMENT listserv) and invite all members of the Group to subscribe before the next meeting. BIC was to discuss this and report back to the Group. It was decided that such a listserv would be more useful as a global resource, and should not be limited to the UK Group. GB volunteered to set this listserv up.

ACTION: GB to set up THEMA_IMPLEMENT listserv and notify UK Group, TISC and all other National Groups.

It was noted that the BIC Bite, An Introduction to Thema, was released on 12th November alongside 4 other BIC Bites: An Introduction ISNIs, An Introduction to ONIX, EU VAT and Migrating from ONIX 2 to 3. These BIC Bites are all available on the BIC website. GB noted that the Thema BIC Bite may need updating now that Thema v1.1 has been released.

3. Report of Thema Activity
HW informed the Group that the Technical Sub-Committee responsible for the review of Thema completed its task and submitted proposals to the Thema International Steering Committee (TISC) at Frankfurt Book Fair in October 2014, which was duly ratified and was subject to a final review. Following this review, the new release of Thema v1.1 was published at the end of November 2014. A copy of the EDItEUR press release had been circulated to this Group. GB confirmed that Thema v1.1 has been published in various formats (spreadsheet, XML, JSON, though not yet in Word or PDF) and the online search tool has been updated to reflect v1.1. Please note that a complete listing of v1.1 is available only in English at present; National Groups are charged with updating translations.
The Group were informed that the Executive Briefing document has now been updated; however the Mapping from BIC to Thema (reverse mapping not yet compiled) and the User Guidelines (Basic Instructions) are still to be updated to reflect v1.1 changes. HW suggested that the Group might want to consider titles for the worked examples in the User Guidelines – either key titles for the UK market (to reinforce consistency) or titles that illustrated a particular feature of Thema (for clarity).

**ACTION:** ALL to consider suitable titles for worked examples and submit any proposals to HW & GB.

HW and GB summarised the key changes in v1.1, drawing attention to the expansion of the Fiction section, Science and Technology codes, and the Children’s & Teenage section – as reported at the previous meeting.

AW acknowledged the improvements of Thema v1.1 but challenged the Group on the issue of motivating the adoption of Thema throughout the industry, arguing that publishers are carrying all the burden at the moment (seeking to provide Thema alongside BIC) but would not do so indefinitely if recipients did not want or use Thema, let alone demand it.

AI suggested the international aspect of Thema is probably the most compelling feature, alongside the greater depth and range of expression that Thema, especially v1.1, provides. GB noted the need for a range of arguments. It is essential that Thema continues to be seen as better (or at least no worse than) any commonly used scheme in any country that may use it; that users realise that the full value of the scheme can only be achieved through direct application (mappings are limited); that it remains a manageable size.

GB also observed that in the UK and other BIC-using countries, Thema can be regarded as BICv3 – and that the same overheads, inertia and issues would have been seen even if it were simply a new release of BIC.

It was agreed that a key development would be for an instance of Thema being transmitted right through the information supply chain, from publisher to retailer. On this point, it was reported from more than one source that a major online retailer has been making enquiries about switching from BIC to Thema during 2015.

GB concluded on v1.1 by pointing out that further releases, e.g. v1.2, may be required at some point but none are planned at this stage. In any case, v1.0 values are not invalidated by v1.1, and the same would be true of v1.2. It is possible that, at some future date, a significant requirement resulting in a loss of backwards compatibility would arise (i.e. v2.0) but no such event had been encountered or envisaged yet.

GB then reported on National Groups and translations. There are now 16 groups as well as the UK group: Denmark (new), China (new), German language group, Japan (new), Spain, Australia, Canada, French Canadian group, Italy, France, Polish (new), Spain, Sweden, US,
Norway, Egypt (Arab group). Details of these Groups can be found at: http://www.editeur.org/153/Maintenance-and-Support/

Translation work is proceeding as follows:

- **ger**: (complete translation of 1.0 online, additions for 1.1 underway)
- **nor**: (complete translation of 1.0 online, additions for 1.1 underway)
- **fre**: (complete translation of 1.0 online, additions for 1.1 underway)
- **swe**: (complete translation of 1.0 headings online [not scopenotes], additions for 1.1 underway)
- **ita**: (demo translation online, complete translation of 1.0 done, additions for 1.1 underway)
- **spa**: (complete, approved by FGEE, not yet online, additions for 1.1 underway. But only very basic partial translation online)
- **ara**: (almost complete translation of 1.0 online, additions for 1.1 underway)
- **jap**: (partial translation online, a little more than the first two levels, further work underway)
- **rus**: (demo translation, first level only)
- **dan**: (underway)
- **pol**: (underway)
- **chi**: (underway)

4. **Thema promotion in the UK**

In the absence of a representative from BIC, the Group noted the release of the BIC Bite on Thema, which was distributed at the open day, via the BIC mailing list and can now be found on the BIC website. An Introduction Thema is now included in the BIC Subject Classification training course, provided by HW for BIC. HW noted that next year’s training course will give equal billing to BIC Subject Classification and Thema. It was noted that this course was last run on 11th November.

**Post-Meeting Update:** The next training course will take place on 28th April 2015 and has been renamed as: Understanding BIC Subject Classification & An Introduction to Thema.

AI noted that this Group need to prepare a stronger level of communication about Thema in the run-up to any major retailer encouraging or even requiring the use of Thema. Proposals included: Training, BIC Breakfasts, Workshops, engaging with the PA and BA etc., engaging with The Bookseller, and IPG using GB’s blog, etc.

5. **Reports on Thema progress from members**

- HW – Nielsen have been supplying (mapped) Thema since summer, and now have 9 million records with Thema. This is being rolled out to MARC products and BDOL. There has been surprising interest from library community. (Public libraries often use their own schemes, possibly BIC; UKSLC has had limited adoption). Nielsen are involved in developing entirely
new systems which will accept, use and disseminate BIC, Thema and BISAC on an equal footing; this will go live with v1.1.

- AW – Random House has had major issues with their project to generate Thema from BIC, as codes were assigned in alphabetical order rather than reflecting the order of the BIC codes. This has been corrected and RH now expects to have Thema v1.1 on all active records by March/April 2015 (Penguin to follow later).

- GW – Waterstones new website is due to launch at the end of December 2014. Thema is unlikely to feature in Phase 1 but is hoped to be introduced in Phase 2, especially due to the opportunities of granularity and detail it provides; Waterstones buyers are keen on more detailed classification too. Thema is being received in feeds from Nielsen but has yet to be utilised.

- RD – Elsevier are looking to implement of v1.1 in mid-2015. RD reported limited awareness of Thema in the STM sector.

- GB – Germany continues to lead the way, with Thema rolled out in May 2015 to VLB national books in print system. Also Norway and Sweden have moved to direct classification of new titles since summer, with old titles converted via mapping. Japanese publishers are starting to use Thema in their forward book information system. In Canada, Indigo the leading bookstore chains are set to implement Thema in summer 2015.

6. **A.O.B.**
None.

7. **Date of next meeting**
March 2015 – date TBC.

**ACTION**: AB to arrange a Doodle poll for the next meeting.