

ISTC

– a ‘work’ in progress

a supply chain perspective

Michael Holdsworth

recap 1

- the International Standard **Text** Code
- now an ISO (21047)
- an identifier for creative textual works
 - prose, poetry, lyrics, screenplays, scripts
- these are abstract entities
 - independent of binding-format-wrapper
- not a supply-chain identifier for products



recap 2

- on one creative textual work
 - with a single ISTC
- we hang
 - many ‘manifestations’
 - or products
 - each with an ISBN



recap 3 – manifestations

- ISBN 1 hardback
- ISBN 2 paperback
- ISBN 3 film tie-in paperback
- ISBN 4 large print
- ISBN 5 library binding
- ISBN 6 downloadable PDF eBook
- ISBN 7 Kindle eBook
- ISBN 8 Sony eBook
- ISBN 9 unabridged downloadable audiobook
- ISBN 10 unabridged CD audiobook



recap 4 – structure

- governed by Registration Agencies
- like ISBN – Nielsen (UK), Bowker (USA)
- largely dependent on ONIX4B 3 compliance
- a work has its own ONIX4ISTC metadata set
- ISTC is a descriptive attribute of a product (not the other way round)
 - ISBNs have ISTCs as a field within their ONIX
 - ISBNs may have more than one related ISTC



recap 5 – no owner or publisher



- the magic of hexadecimals...
 - 4,096 available registration agencies
 - each can register up to 4,294,967,296 annually
 - annual capacity 17,592,186,044,416 works
- anyone (with some authority) can register

only publishers have the knowledge

- they already collocate
 - manually in their bibliographic databases
 - using a home-made ‘title’ identifier
 - linking ‘related titles’; ‘title relationships’

but

- limited use for sales ledgers and reporting
- limited connectivity with royalty systems
- weak or absent rights metadata
- self-evidently, only their own stuff



ISTC adoption requirements

- focus on publishers
- promotion by the Agencies
 - who have a lot to gain
- the role of rights registries
- support from BIC/BISG & AAP/PA
 - this sort of seminar
 - benefit statements
- User Manual and best-practice
- clarity on structures, relationships, hierarchies



the big issue: how many ISTCs?

- brainy, flexible, versatile
- complex
 - or does it really matter for back-list?
 - granularity and ‘good-enough’
- keeping it simple
- baby-steps and quick wins



how many ISTCs?

- creative works ('texts', 'titles') must be either **original** works or **derived** works
- checks at registration will avoid duplicates
- **derived** works need a **source** work, and require specifying



derived works and interpretations

abridged

annotated

compilation

critical

excerpt

expurgated

non-text added or revised

revised

translated

adaptation

unspecified



wrap: next steps

- stakeholders – publishers
- stakeholders – booksellers
- stakeholders – rights and collection societies
- stakeholders – rights registries
- stakeholders – industry software vendors
- stakeholders – the ISTC Registration Agencies



publishers: what ISTC is not

- not a 'rights' identifier
 - upstream as a contract identifier
 - aggregation for royalties
- not a 'job' or 'project' identifier
 - in production
 - finance, budgetary ledgers
- not a 'title family' identifier
 - workbooks, teachers books
 - enhanced e-book, companion



publishers: top-down

- focus on the supply chain
 - discovery and collocation
 - front-list and e-books
- a modest additional marketing routine
 - by marketers/ biblio wranglers
 - at AI, ONIX stage
- keep it simple, greatest benefit
 - defer over-complex hierarchies
 - book-only (fragments and chapters later maybe)
- work with the RAs



other stakeholders: bottom up

- booksellers, retail and wholesale
 - participate and pilot
 - ROI and use-cases
- rights societies and registries
 - BRR and ARROW
 - articulate and communicate
 - common needs, but ? extensions
- software vendors
 - ISTC and service modules
 - integration



Morton's Fork for the RAs

- the importance of critical mass
- ISBN in 1970
- wholesale back-filling (or rights registries?)
- publishers and 'ownership'
- algorithms and accuracy

- selected publishers? selected programmes?



“The pressing need for a standard tool for linking different printed and digital manifestations to a common title makes the ISTC potentially the most important standard for our industry since the ISBN”





www.istc-international.org

thank you

michael@michaelholdsworth.com