What availability means (and why it doesn’t mean what you might think!)

Gabrielle Wallington
Bibliographic Manager
Waterstone’s Booksellers

feel every word
BIC Price & Availability Working Party

• Founded in July 2010

• Original aim was to identify areas where an industry-wide approach to price and availability would be of benefit

• Consists of representatives of BIC, EDItEUR, Nielsen, Bowker, PubEasy, Bertrams, most of the major publishing groups and Waterstone’s

• Current work is focussed on producing agreed definitions of availability codes and drafting best practice guidelines
It’s obvious that accurate availability information is vital so what’s the problem?

• Complexity
• Lack of clarity about how codes should be used
• Lack of consistency about how codes are used
• Lack of best practice guidelines
• Lack of a standard that specifically addresses P&A
• Volume of updates
Result – Misery!

• We are letting customers down by offering them things they can’t have and not offering them things they can have

• No one trusts the information so everyone has to check it

• This leads to more contact with customers, which is expensive and time-consuming

• Automation of feeds, in theory a good thing, can lead to a high volume of unnecessary, low value or confusing updates

• Meaning that there’s no time or resource to tackle the underlying problems
Which aren’t as intractable as they look …

• Looking at the whole picture
• Cutting through the complexity
• Clarifying the definitions of codes
• Establishing best practice guidelines
• Establishing a standard and an accreditation scheme
Result – Happiness!

• Retailers can be confident that they are showing/telling customers accurate information
• Reduction in the number of unfulfilled orders
• Reduction in customer contact
• Seamless transition from old edition to new maximises sales
• Reduction in volume reduces traffic which eases timeliness problems and improves accuracy
Next steps

• Can I help?
• Can you help?
• Best practice guidelines on the way
• Other issues?

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