



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

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## **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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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

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## Next steps

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

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