



**BIC Task & Finish Working Groups**  
Project Briefing Document Template

## **BIC Project Brief**

### **The Purpose of the BIC Project Brief**

The BIC Project Brief is required to enable necessary projects, or pieces of work to progress from being a good BIC Committee idea to a formal request for work that is submitted to the appropriate Task and Finish Group. The BIC Project Brief must be agreed upon and signed off initially by all members of the BIC Committee and then then the dedicated Task & Finish working Group once established.

This document will eventually be expanded into a Project Initiation Document (PID), (to be created by the Task & Finish Group) which will contain the detailed project plan.

The BIC Project Brief should generally be short and provide an overview of the proposed project or piece of work.

The finalised, signed off document will be made visible to all BIC members, who will be free to provide comment or feedback on the intended project or work.



**BIC Task & Finish Working Groups**  
Project Briefing Document

Acquisitions and Divestments

**Document Status: FINAL**  
**Project Name: Acquisitions and Divestments Best Practice**  
**Version Number: 1.0**  
**Created by: Karina Luke**  
**Final version published: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

Proposal of Project and Project Brief Signed off by:  
**BIC Digital Supply Chain Committee**  
**BIC Metadata sub-Committee**  
**BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee**  
**Executive Director of BIC**

#### **Document History**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>	<b>Document Status</b>	<b>Date published</b>
0.1	Initial draft	Pending approval from committees	
0.2	Updated following feedback from the committees	Pending approval from the committees	9 <sup>th</sup> Jun 2014
1.0	Final changes made	Published	9 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2014

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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to identify, agree and communicate a set of best practice guidelines for all organisations in the book industry to adhere to when publishers acquire and/or relinquish imprints/publishers/title lists. Given the nature of acquisitions, it is recognized that it will not always be possible to execute the best practice guidelines /actions in advance, however, the guidelines will cover all areas of the supply chain impacted by acquisitions of this nature. They will provide a clear schedule of events, communications and tasks that need to happen, by whom, and in what order. As such it is intended that the guidelines will not be issued solely with publishers in mind, but will also include best practice for data aggregators, retailers, service providers, distributors and so on, with clarity on where responsibility lies within the supply chain as a whole.

## 2. PROJECT DEFINITION

### 2.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project aims to clarify and communicate widely a definitive set of best practice guidelines and step by step instructions, with a timeline for the sequence of events, to the industry in order to remove any inefficiencies, confusion and/or inconsistencies that currently exist in this area.

### 2.2 PROJECT SCOPE

The project will focus initially on digital products, with a clear remit to ensure whatever is agreed in that area is transferrable to the physical products.

Organisations involved and to be considered in the scope include:

- Publishers
- Vendors (on-line and bricks and mortar)
- Data Aggregators
- Distributors (physical and digital)
- Service providers
- Wholesalers
- Libraries
- Shippers
- Printers
- Link resolvers

Given the global nature of digital products, the project needs to maintain a global perspective and as such BIC will reach out to the likes of BISG, EDItEUR etc to ensure an international approach. These organisations to be identified in the first meeting of the Task and Finish Working Group.

Cases to be considered should include (but not necessarily be limited to) the following:

- Changes in e-book (or p-book) *distributor* for whatever reason
- Communication of previous direct retailer agreements that must be transferred or terminated

- Changes that might be necessary to the e-book master files themselves (e.g re-badging and re-digitisation etc)
- Changes to arrangements for digital preservation (eg via digital legal deposit or Keepers-like arrangements)
- Arrangements for maintenance of DRM-controlled access or authentication for previous purchasers (eg for books with online components)
- Transfer of control over any identifiers (ISBNs, DOIs) assigned to the e-books
- Notifications required to maintain supply chain integrity (that mostly apply to the physical space too)
- Sales reporting arrangements and updates to various discovery mechanisms / metadata repositories.

### **2.3 OUTLINE PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND/OR DESIRED OUTCOMES**

The main project deliverables are:

- Project Initiation Document providing a detailed project plan for each of the stages listed below in section 7.
- Regular status reports from the Working Group to:
  - The Digital Supply Chain Committee, prior to each Digital Supply Chain Committee meeting.
  - The Metadata sub-committee, prior to each Metadata sub-committee meeting.
  - The Physical Supply Chain Committee, prior to each Physical Supply Chain Committee meeting.
  - BIC's Executive Director
- A set of best practice guidelines, with an accompanying timeline.
- Pilot group to test guidelines and offer feedback prior to launching
- Marketing plan to publicize the agreed guidelines

### **2.4 CONSTRAINTS**

The project is dependent upon volunteers from the BIC membership and so needs to work to an agreed timeline that is realistic.

Input from other international organisations such as BISG, EDItEUR etc. needs to be sought and incorporated.

It is expected that the bulk of the work will not be done by BIC consultants due to funding restrictions, which means a heavy reliance on the BIC team and BIC member volunteers.

### **2.5 INTERFACES**

This project (though initiated by the Digital Supply Chain Committee), will also be of great interest to the following committees:

BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee

BIC Metadata sub-Committee

And to other industry bodies such as (but not limited to):

EDItEUR  
BISG  
IPG  
Nielsen  
Bowker  
BA  
PA

### **3. OUTLINE BUSINESS/INDUSTRY CASE**

Now more than ever there is a need to formalize guidance on best practice with regards acquisitions and divestments, particularly with regard to digital products. Mistakes in data regarding who owns what product/publisher/imprint etc. can potentially prove costly and lead to reporting, ordering and distribution errors etc.

#### Example Use Case:

The following is a simple use case which may, with variations, be affecting many publishers of digital products and their sales channels.

Publisher A owns digital products/imprint/list and these products are released to the supply chain to potentially many different channels. The ISBNs are related to the owning publisher (A).

Later, Publisher B buys some or all of these products and informs all the sales channels (that they know about) that they are now the new owner of the products.

Ebook sales of the items continue and in some cases payments continue to be made to Publisher A in error. Sometimes publisher B doesn't know that it is missing out on this revenue. This can go on for months because once ebooks have been released it can sometimes be difficult to know if a title is listed by a specific channel and so difficult to inform this channel of the change. Often Publisher A will receive the payments and then notify the sender that they are in error but this does not always lead to the payment reaching publisher B.

One possible problem is that Publisher B may issue a new ISBN for each product and this may not be linked accurately to the old ISBN as superseding it. Publisher B tries to inform all channels but may not know about some channels and these could continue to sell the existing product (and attempt to make payments to publisher A for months.)

Sometimes Publisher B will change or upgrade the product and then supply it to the same or new channels and find that the old product and the new are both listed and available for sale when in fact the old should be superseded by the new.

Part of the problem could be in the metadata with update files not being loaded in all cases and no check made that 100% updates have been implemented. Some sales channels may not be updating the metadata completely or not recognising a new ISBN as relating to an existing ISBN. With sales channels potentially managing thousands of digital products this error may not be noticed or corrected easily.



In addition there may be similar problems with Index resolvers, DOIs, and syndicated ebooks from wholesalers to retailers etc.

The print equivalent of this issue is necessarily time limited because physical stock eventually runs out and all stock for a single title usually comes from a single UK distributor or direct from the printer. Also the physical supply chain is more mature and distributors are well practised at changes of ownership. The metadata is amended on Nielsen, Bowker and at the wholesalers etc. and EDI systems can reply with a “not supplied by us” code in the order acknowledgement message. But with digital, the channels are newer and the product persists as a perfect copy.

The objective of this project is to examine the issues outlined in the above use case(s) and come up with a solution

#### **4. QUALITY EXPECTATIONS**

It is more important that the deliverables are accurate and fit for purpose, than that they are arrived at speedily. There is currently no known pressing time constraint on this project. Industry buy-in is essential and so before launching the guidelines it is suggested that a pilot group be set up in order to test draft guidelines. It is hoped that this pilot group would then become advocates of the new guidelines.

It is important that the guidelines state clearly what each organization in the supply chain is required to do and when, what happens before them, what happens after them etc. The guidelines are not to be publisher-only guidelines.

#### **5. ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA**

Before the final guidelines can be accepted, they must address the following requirements: They must:

- Clearly detail the responsibilities of each type of organization in the supply chain, with an accompanying timeline.
- Clearly state why the guidelines have been drawn up.
- Indicate where to go for more information, and what to do if something goes wrong, or is taking longer than indicated in the guidelines.
- Be shown to work (either by testing, or via a pilot group).

#### **6. RISKS**

Doing nothing to guide the book industry on best practice regarding acquisitions, means confusion (and frustration) will continue in this area. BIC may appear in a bad light if it does not address this area as it is clearly something it should be tackling asap.

Unraveling who does what in the supply chain regarding acquisitions at the moment, and then redefining exactly who should be doing what and when, may become a sensitive area.

Testing/pilot group will depend upon the availability of a publisher acquisition/divestment and the willingness of the publisher(s) to take part.

## 7. OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN

Below is a provisional project plan – exact and final timings to be agreed by the working group.

Activity	Deadline
Project Brief distributed to relevant BIC Committees and BISG etc	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2014
Project Brief signed off by relevant committees	August 2014
BIC call for Working Group volunteers from its membership	15 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2014
First Working Group meeting	Before end October 2014
Project Initiation Document compiled and signed off by Working Group	Before end December 2014
Draft guidelines	May 2015
Test/pilot	June 2015 –Sept 2015
Guidelines launched, incorporating feedback from pilot (as appropriate)	Sept 2015
Marketing	From Sept 2015 onwards
Training – incorporate guidelines into Metadata for Beginners Course (tbc)	From Sept 2015 onwards
Post-project review of guidelines	December 2015

## 8. BUDGET/COSTS

Other than covering the costs of meeting rooms, there is no allocated budget for this project. All work undertaken will be reliant on the BIC Team and volunteers from the BIC membership.

## 9. AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE

Executive Director of BIC

## 10. PROPOSED TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP LEADER/PROJECT MANAGER

To be agreed during first meeting of this group.

## 11. CUSTOMERS AND USERS

All of the BIC Membership, plus at least the following:

BISG	Kobo
Apple	Google
Overdrive	BookNet Canada
Ebrary	EBL
Proquest	EBSCO
Dawsonera	MyiLibrary
Vitalsource	Baker & Taylor

## **12. REPORTING**

Status reports (using the BIC Status Report template) are to be submitted to the chairs of the earlier mentioned committees at least one week before said committees meet.

Each report should include (but may not be limited to) the following:

- i) Costs to date v budget (if applicable)
- ii) Projected costs v budget (if applicable)
- iii) Progress of deliverables against agreed timeline
- iv) Engagement of Working Group

END