

IBIC

What is it and what problems will it solve?

Howard Willows, Nielsen Book
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Overview

- Explain what IBIC is and what it is NOT
 - Background and context
 - Why we need it – the problems IBIC aims to solve
 - Who is involved
- ▶ *The View from Spain - Jesús Peraita (DILVE)*
- Basic structure of the IBIC scheme
 - IBIC questions and challenges – and some answers
 - Timescales and how IBIC will proceed
 - Summary

What is IBIC?

- IBIC is simply an INTERNATIONAL book classification scheme, based upon the BIC Subject Category Scheme
- BIC is the dominant classification scheme in the UK book trade and in other English-language markets outside N America
- BIC also adopted in variant forms in Sweden, Italy and Spain
- And has attracted interest in other countries

IBIC is NOT...

- A new concept in semantic taxonomy
- A tagging scheme for online use only
- A structured thesaurus, like LoC Subject Headings
- It's just a conventional, straight-forward, non-specialist hierarchical book trade subject category scheme...
...particularly adapted for INTERNATIONAL use

Background

- BIC Scheme was launched in UK in 1998
- In 1995, BISG had launched BISAC Subject Headings, for use in N. America
- While many major book trade standards are genuinely and intentionally international,
- these classification schemes are territory specific

The current situation – legacy schemes

- Most current schemes were designed to describe, sort & locate physical products sold through in physical bookshops
- Typically, books published in a certain country would be sold in that country
- Exports limited by territorial rights and cost-efficiencies
- Numerous schemes set up to be national, market-specific
- How many?

Current schemes: recognised in ONIX

ECPA Christian Book Category

Bokgrupper

Läromedel

Suomalainen kirja-alan luokitus

SAB

JEL

BSQ

Varegrupper

Kaunokki

YSO

Förhandsbeskrivning

RVM

Genre-Code

DDC-Sachgruppen der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie

Thèmes Electre

Schlagwort-Normdatei (SWD)

Tabla de materias ISBN

Warengruppen-Systematik des deutschen Buchhandels

YSA

ANELE Materias

C-Code

Nederlandstalige Uniforme Rubrieksindeling (NUR)

Children's Book Marketing Categories (CBMC)

Why are national schemes insufficient?


- What's changed?
- The move from the physical to the digital – erosion of traditional geographical boundaries
- But ebooks and online trading HAVEN'T changed EVERYTHING
- Still consumers seeking publishers' products through retailers

Physical to Online – Local to Global



- The difference is the *global* reach available to all – publishers can sell to consumers anywhere
- as long as the consumers can find the product...

The interim solution: Mapping

- As new markets open up, publishers, aggregators and retailers develop MAPPINGS between different schemes
 - to make products from one market accessible in another.
 - Users may have to map between several schemes.
 - Some have to map even when communicating within their own company.
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Case Study: France

- A US-based digital book services provider operating in France insists French publishers provide BISAC codes
- A major international online retailer operating in France will accept BIC from French publishers
- French publishers not familiar with either BIC or BISAC – so develop mappings from two major French schemes (CLIL & Electre)

The Mapping Problem

Mapping works – up to a point, but...

- Competing versions (eg BIC <> BISAC) – different mappings of different quality = different outcomes
- Degrade data – loss of precision, loss of value, loss of control = loss of sales?
- Complex, need to be maintained, time-consuming

Mapping is not infinitely extensible

- Maintaining one or two mappings is manageable
- But with so many national schemes, as well as proprietary & subject-specialist schemes
- Situation described by Michael Tamblyn of Kobo as

MAP-O-RAMA

A Single Global Scheme?

- Interest in an international scheme sprang up in various places around the same time
- Scott Lubeck, then of BISG – a new global online taxonomy
- US focus on the consumer experience of the online environment
- More pragmatic momentum grew around the BIC scheme, rather than new conceptual approach

From BIC to IBIC

- SPAIN: need to adopt a recognised standard, chose BIC (with adaptations)
- ITALY: previously developed a variant of BIC called CCE, wanted to re-identify the scheme with BIC for wider use
- EGYPT: online bookseller wanting to connect the Arab book trade with the wider world, came to BIC
- ALL saw the advantages of moving from a national to an internationally recognised scheme –
- And so the IBIC project was launched (LBF 2011)

Who will benefit from international scheme?

- PUBLISHERS – single message, more direct communication to more recipients
- AGGREGATORS – less data conversion for different markets
- RETAILERS – receive & process product information from a wider range of suppliers
- CONSUMERS – access to the whole world of publishing
- IBIC contributes to a clearer, simpler Information Supply Chain, even as the number of players increases

Future growth

- Think beyond Europe and established markets
- Emerging markets are catching up with standards and will want to trade as territorial rights give way to global exploitation of content
- Will want to use INTERNATIONAL standards

Who is involved in IBIC?

Nielsen (UK)

DILVE (Spain)

Informazioni Editoriali (Italy)

AIE (Italy)

MVB (Germany)

KNV (Germany)

Bokrondellen (Sweden)

BTJ (Sweden)

Elkotob.com (Egypt)

APEL (Portugal)

Centraal Boekhuis (Netherlands)

Biblio-Globus (Russia)

Den Norske Bokdatabasen (Norway)

Gyldendal & Vandkunsten, representing Danish Publishers Association

Observers/interest from: EDItEUR; FEP; Australian PA; Booknet Canada; Kirjavalitys (Finland); GiantChair-ONIXsuite

The View from Spain

Jesús Peraita, DILVE
IBIC Steering Committee

DILVE. The Spanish BIP repository

- www.dilve.es
 - Created in Oct 2006. ONIX-based
 - Managed by the Spanish Publishers' Association (FGEE)
 - 908 imprints / over 415 000 titles
- Publishers manage their catalogues "in the cloud"
 - Publishers own and maintain their metadata
- Rich metadata format transformation and distribution functionality
 - Controlled by each publisher

The Subject Coding Chaos in Spain

- Subset of *UDC – Universal Decimal Classification* (800 codes) mandatory for ISBN registration
- Additional non-compatible local coding schemes required by the supply chain:
 - El Corte Inglés, Casa del Libro, Carrefour, FNAC, Librerías Bertrand...
- Adopting a new unified scheme seen as complex and expensive → Decision delayed sine-die
- But..
 - In Spring 2010: eBooks distributors ***demand***ed the adoption of an international standard scheme

BIC milestones in Spain

- Sep 2010 BIC officially adopted
- May 2011 BIC (ES) v1.0 released
- Sep 2011 ISBN Agency accepts BIC in lieu of UDC
- Oct 2011 BIC (ES) v1.1 released
- Jan 2012 UDC - BIC mapping released
- Feb 2012 ISBN Agency requires BIC in lieu of UDC
- Apr 2012 All new publications marked using BIC. Backlist being adapted by publishers.

Benefits for the Spanish book chain

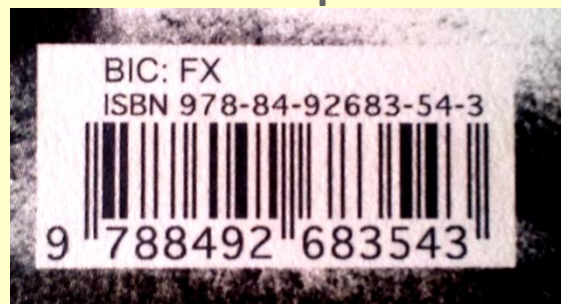
- Supply-chain oriented
 - Publisher controls book placement in bookstores
- One single scheme for all
 - Publishers had to use up to four or five schemes
- Simple, yet complete scheme
 - "Lean and mean" hierarchical structure
- Controlled by the sector
 - Direct links to BIC's Steering Committee
- International communication
 - Desirable for pBooks; essential for eBooks

The conversion process

- Conversions are always traumatic
- UDC used as a guideline
- UDC and IBIC: Different views of the world
- General 1-to-1 mapping impossible
 - Mapping requires case-by-case fine-tuning
 - Some loss of information is inevitable
- Sector-wide support and assistance are crucial

Present situation in Spain

- Jan-Feb 2012: customized UDC-BIC conversion lists sent to each publisher
- Free "Hot line" support service, via email and phone
- 215 000+ references in DILVE (55%) marked with BIC
- BIC code printed by many publishers above barcode



But... still little awareness about BIC (ES) outside Spain

BIC (ES) and IBIC

- Important to note that BIC (ES) is not IBIC
- But gives strong indication of what the Spanish facet or view of IBIC will be.
- The process Spain went through to create BIC (ES) is what other countries must do to participate in IBIC:
- Namely, to assess changes required in BIC to meet national requirements.

Use of BIC as basis for international scheme

- BIC uses a combination of Subject Categories and Qualifiers indicating Geographical, Language, Time Period aspects etc
- BIC scheme has UK / English language bias
- Particular areas: ELT, History, Law, Religion, Educational
- but mainly Qualifiers

Structure of IBIC: key features

- Retain the Categories + Qualifiers structure of BIC
- Retain hierarchical codes; all headings translated as appropriate
- **A single set of *shared* Categories (possibly fewer than BIC), with Qualifiers that are open to national variation / expansion (to accommodate different emphases & requirements)**

Structure of IBIC: key features

- Scheme is detailed enough and relevant for national use, without becoming too large
- Users in each country see their own expanded Qualifiers; rolled up to top level for recipients in other countries
- While all see same Categories (translated as appropriate)

IBIC Questions and Challenges

If there are too many schemes already, isn't IBIC just adding to the problem?

- Ideally, IBIC would replace national general-purpose book trade schemes – reducing the overall number
- But can co-exist with national schemes – either for period of transition or long term
- Short term gain is participants only have to maintain ONE mapping (between own and IBIC) if trading partners accept IBIC

Users strongly attached to national schemes – how will they be persuaded to abandon them for IBIC?

- They don't have to, but:
- Create sense of ownership – IBIC is not someone else's standard – it is owned & shared by participants
- National Representatives on Steering Committee have responsibility to consult widely in their markets
- An open standard, freely disseminated

Do we even need a Subject Category scheme in the online environment?

Consumers may have access to:

- Proprietary browse categories
 - Personal recommendations
 - ‘People who bought this, bought that’
 - Tagging, tag clouds, “folksonomies”
 - Full text searching
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- YES we do – more than ever

- Subject classification gives CONTEXT to online searching
- Used in conjunction with the other tools which are otherwise erratic & unreliable
- The main purposes of Subject Classification
 - Key access point, along with title and author, for search & discovery
 - To enhance product information between trading partners, to inform purchasing
 - To provide a common language for sales reporting, identify trends

- *ALL THESE REQUIREMENTS STILL APPLY IN ONLINE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT*
- Even more important
 - as products and formats proliferate
 - as the trade is increasingly multinational, multi-lingual
 - and as book buying is increasingly unmediated by experts (booksellers)

Will IBIC be the definitive scheme for global use?

- Maybe, maybe not – but it's the only runner at present
- An entirely new scheme may emerge, but has been talked about for a long time without any tangible sign
- In any case, any new scheme must take account of IBIC, ensure compatibility, ease of migration etc
- IBIC participants will be well-placed for any future change

Won't it: Be too hard? Take too long? Cost too much?

- There is much we don't know about the eventual effective implementation of this project
- The difficulty will depend on the compatibility of a given legacy scheme with IBIC and, as ever, on the quality of the data
- Participants recognise that benefits outweigh the cost and effort
- Sooner we start, sooner we finish

Timescales & How IBIC will proceed

- Steering Committee met yesterday
- Recognised need to move to new phase:
 - Set up national working parties; submit proposals end June
 - New countries welcome but will close phase 1 entrants soon
 - Put Committee & procedures on more formal basis
 - Ensuring development is open but moderated
 - Look at issues of governance, funding
- Initial Draft for circulation and comment by FBF October 2012

IBIC: Summary

- Improve international communication of product information
- Shared Categories, accommodating national variants in Qualifiers
- Designed for online, suitable for bricks & mortar
- Can replace or co-exist with national schemes – no more MAP-O-RAMA
- Steering Committee in place; deadlines for progress
- Initial Draft for FBF in October
- Will only work for you if you get involved – and soon



Thank
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