

**BIC PRINT ON DEMAND & SHORT RUN TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP – Minutes**

Ricoh UK Ltd, The Broadgate Tower, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 20 Primrose Street, London EC2A 2EW

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015, 11am

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**Present**

Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC  
 Roger Christiansen, Ricoh Europe (Deputy)  
 Tim Cruickshank, Cambridge University Press  
 Alison Lewis, Ingram Content Group  
 Karina Luke, BIC  
 Kate McFarlan, Clays  
 Alan Rakes, Hachette UK  
 Jean Roberts, Printondemand-worldwide (Chair)  
 Gabrielle Wallington, Waterstones  
 Linzi Webb, Wiley (dialled in)  
 Alma Weber, Penguin Random House (dialled in)  
 Andy Williams, Palgrave Macmillan

**Apologies**

Andrew Bromley, Ingram Content Group  
 Andy Cork, Printondemand-worldwide  
 Nancy Roberts, Cambridge University Press  
 Claire Walker, Harper Collins  
 Mark Walker, Macmillan

**1. Introduction & apologies**

The Group were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves for the purpose of the minutes. JR read out the apologies.

**2. Review minutes and follow-up on actions from the last meeting**

The minutes from the last meeting were approved with minor corrections to the following section in Item 2: Cambridge University Press' Virtual Stock.

**ACTION:** AB to amend the previous set of minutes and recirculate before the next meeting.

- Macmillan's feedback on workflow diagram  
 AB informed the Group that MW has now provided feedback on this Group's workflow diagram and no amendments are needed.
- Top suppliers  
 It was noted that the list supplied by AR is not compiled of suppliers but rather vendors; as such the following are the Top 5 suppliers for Hachette are as follows:
  - Amazon
  - Gardners
  - Bertrams
  - Waterstones
  - Hachette UK Distribution (3<sup>rd</sup> party clients / subsidiaries / agents)

Since the last meeting, MW has compiled a list of Macmillan's Top 10 which are as follows:

- Amazon
- Bertrams

- Books Etc.
- Coutts
- Gardners
- The Publishers themselves
- Waterstones
- Legal Depository
- Blackwell
- Direct to Consumer

JR noted that the strawman document for retailer requirements will be discussed under Item 4 of this meeting's agenda.

- Publishers Storing-Up Orders

At the last meeting of this Group, GW agreed to liaise with her colleagues at Waterstones to ascertain whether it is possible to find out, from Waterstones' records, which publishers are storing up orders for ASR. GW reported that she has not been able to liaise with her contacts as yet but will do so before the next meeting of this Group.

**ACTION:** GW agreed to liaise with her colleagues at Waterstones to ascertain whether it is possible to find out which publishers are storing up orders for ASR.

JR was actioned to liaise (or assign someone to liaise) with the Academic Publishers Group for their views on the accumulation of ASR orders. At this meeting, she noted that the draft Best Practice Guidelines document will be circulated widely and will therefore be reviewed by the Academic Publishers Group; so they will have an opportunity to provide feedback.

### 3. Review the draft Best Practice Guideline document

JR reported that this draft document has been produced and was circulated to this Group on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015. KL reminded the Group that this circulated document was the first draft of the Best Practice Guidelines and is therefore likely to go through a number of amendments before it is considered finalised. She thanked JR for producing the draft document. JR noted that the design of the document will need to be addressed, for the time being, she has solely been concerned with the content. Once this document has been completed it will be disseminated widely for feedback.

JR commented that writing the document has exposed some areas which require further information – which will be filled in using the feedback that is received from the document's dissemination. KL agreed, noting that both the BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee and the BIC Metadata Sub-Committee will want to review the document, before it goes out to the wider BIC membership for review. JR suggested that some areas should be researched more thoroughly before the document is disseminated to the wider BIC membership.

JR noted that this document will eventually be circulated to the wider book industry however this Group does not have representation from certain types of organisation, i.e. independent booksellers, small publishers (including academic and children's publishers) and library retailers. She

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questioned whether the introduction in the document should make mention of this fact or else list the type of organisations that *are* represented on this Group. She suggested that this Group could liaise with other member organisations, such as IPG and The Booksellers Association, to gain the viewpoint of other organisations.

KL suggested that the members of this Group could publically endorse the Best Practice Guideline documentation, noting that doing so could encourage adoption. GW suggested that both the endorsements and additional information from other organisations types should be discussed nearer to the completion of the document. AL agreed and noted that some children's publishers are not as advanced as other publishing organisations; though he noted that they should be approached for their viewpoint nonetheless. KL suggested that a list should be produced detailing the areas / gaps that need to be addressed. JR noted that the draft document also acknowledges some issues that are out of scope for this Project, such as returns. She commented that these issues have been mentioned in the document to highlight this Group's awareness of them but a discussion about how to resolve the issues is not addressed.

**ACTION:** JR to compile a list of the exposed areas / gaps that need to be addressed in this document before the next meeting of this Group.

KM asked the Group whether it is necessary to include the historical aspects of POD in this document, which she noted results in a fairly apologetic paragraph about the connotations of the term 'POD'. The Group agreed that the historical connotations do not need to be labelled separately within the document but do need to be mentioned. RC suggested that this information is necessary to dispel organisations' current views about POD. AW agreed, noting that a change of perception is needed to facilitate the Best Practice's adoption. GW noted that the discussion should be balanced, concentrating on the positives of this Project and looking to the future. JR suggested that the historical aspects included in the introduction could be reduced to a few lines of text. The Group agreed that this text should be shrunk to one paragraph.

**ACTION:** JR to reduce the amount of text surrounding the historical aspects of POD in the introduction of the draft Best Practice Guideline document and recirculate to the Group before the next meeting.

KL drew the Group's attention to page 2 of the draft document and asked whether this Group is comfortable listing specific organisations within the Best Practice document. The Group agreed that there is no reason to list the organisations and they can therefore be removed. JR also suggested that the word "concern" within this document should be amended to "consistency".

**ACTION:** JR to remove the list of organisations on page 2 of the Best Practice document and amend the wording accordingly.

AW suggested that a short paragraph about quality could be useful to persuade MDs about the necessity of this Best Practice's adoption. He noted that the audience of this document will be wide but the emphasis may differ from organisation to organisation. GW agreed that this Group should not assume that every organisation is aware of the issues related to POD within the book industry. She suggested that this is precisely why the introduction is so important to set the scene appropriately.

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The Group were informed that Graham Bell (GB) of EDItEUR has reviewed the definition for Virtual Stock since the last meeting of this Group and in response he has created a grid which defines each of the following: ASR (short run), print to order (short run), print to retailer order, consumer direct fulfilment, print at retailer, ASR (long run) and traditional print to order (long run). Copies of this grid were circulated during the meeting. KL suggested that this grid could prove to be a useful appendix to the Best Practice Guideline document, providing it is correct / has not misinterpreted what this Group was trying to say. JR agreed, suggesting that the grid should be reviewed alongside the draft documentation. KL noted that GB's grid is a useful indicator with regards to how someone from outside this project has interpreted the Virtual Stock definition.

KM noted that the grid implies a focus on print technology / manufacturing rather than the workflow itself, and this needs to be amended since it is misleading. AW suggested that the definition for Virtual Stock in the grid should end at "short runs"; noting that it is the responsibility of the organisation to choose how to do Virtual Stock. He asked whether the grid refers to bulk stock holding rather than conventional stock holding, noting that the latter is changing. KL suggested that references to lithographic printing should also be removed from the grid. JR agreed, noting that lithographic printing should also be removed in the Best Practice document's 1.1. She also suggested that "conventional stock" should be amended to "physical stock", noting that bulk stock can differ in quantity from organisation to organisation.

GW asked whether Virtual Stock is used to "respond to demand" or "anticipate demand". TC noted that it is a combination of the two. KL suggested that the document should be amended to read "usually placed on actual demand". She suggested that Virtual Stock and physical stock should be listed for comparative purposes.

KM questioned whether this grid should include information about ASR and whether the definition of it should contain what it isn't too. KL noted that Virtual Stock has been defined in this way. GW noted that, from Waterstones' point of view, ASR titles are metaphorically invisible since the manufacturing process and workflow is behind the scenes. KL suggested that ASR should therefore be removed from the grid. AW disagreed, noting that this Group needs to make it clear that organisations are misusing ASR due to its historical connotations. AL suggested keeping the ASR parts of the grid but placing them under a separate header. RC commented that ASR will need to be defined clearly in order to avoid confusion.

The Group suggested that "print at retailer" is not the right term to be included in this grid, though it is along the right lines. JR noted that they are described as "retailer vendors" in the draft Best Practice document. AL noted that the definition is correct but the above mentioned wording will need to be amended. AW went on to note that "channel sales" is omitted from the grid and needs to be added in; that is, the direct order between retailer and printer. He suggested "retailer direct".

KL suggested removing the final sentence that is situated beneath the grid. JR disagreed, suggesting that it instead needs to be edited. KL noted that the reference to "digital printing" will need to be removed in the editing process. AL volunteered to refine the document after this meeting and

circulate the amended version to the Group, prior to the next meeting, for comment. The Group agreed that GB's interpretation of the document has helped to refine the work being done.

**ACTION:** AL to amend GB's grid and circulate the amended version to this Group before the next meeting.

Regarding the Best Practice Guideline document, GW noted that MOD (Manufactured on Demand) is both an availability and answer code in TRADACOMS. She commented that it should therefore have three bullet points beneath where it is listed, with a list of codes under each bullet, and agreed to amend the document accordingly. She also noted that Publisher Status codes need to be clarified too.

**ACTION:** GW to clarify availability codes, answer codes and Publisher Status codes within the Best Practice Guideline document and recirculate to the Group before the next meeting.

KM asked whether this Group has decided to state that Virtual Stock should never be firm sale, noting that some organisations do have firm sale Virtual Stock. AW noted that this Group has not decided this to be the case but rather is suggesting that it should not be a forgone conclusion that Virtual Stock is firm sale – since this is not always the case. He noted that this should not be the default assumption. GW noted that the Price & Availability (P&A) Task & Finish Working Group (T&FWG) will also need to discuss this assumption and terms codes. JR commented that distant selling is also an issue to be looked into. KL noted that BIC cannot advise organisations about what they should do commercially, BIC should instead raise awareness about what they should be considering before making their business decisions. KM agreed.

In the terminology section for Automated Stock Replenishment (ASR) and Short run, KM suggested removing the whole paragraph which begins "Many publishers retain short stocks..." and replace it with a list of considerations to take into account instead. KL also suggested that "traditional printing" should be renamed as "bulk stock holding".

### 2.1

The Group went on to discuss the Best Practice workflow (section 2 of the guideline documentation) for Virtual Stock Metadata. GW suggested that a note about timeliness should be included in this statement, and the fact that the data should be sent to Nielsen / data aggregators before it is sent to retailers. She suggested that the reference should begin as follows: "Metadata should be made available to...". KM noted that this information would need to be received before an order can be placed and questioned if its addition is therefore necessary in the Best Practice guidelines. KL suggested that a grid could be produced to show what metadata is needed by publishers, printers, vendors, etc. This grid could be included in the documentation for this Project. KL noted that some required fields are not included in the BIC Basic requirements for metadata. GW agreed, suggesting that the grid should have two columns – one for BIC Basic and the other for metadata that will be beneficial to recipient organisations. AW noted that this grid would educate organisations about Best Practice but it is not to do with Virtual Stock implicitly.

### 2.2

Regarding the 'Types of Metadata: Retailer Requirements' section, GW noted that some

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organisations do have separate terms codes for Virtual Stock and this Group should not discourage this practice. She suggested removing the middle bullet for this reason, which begins: “VS does not need dedicated terms codes...”. KL noted that, under the considerations paragraph in this section, it is unclear whether the MOD / POD status relates to ONIX or TRADACOMS answer codes. GW commented that, when negotiating terms codes, neither the sender nor the recipient discusses POD on either side. It was agreed that both the ‘delivery’ and ‘ASR status’ bullet points should be removed from this section.

TC asked whether lack of consolidation is a problem to organisations. He noted that physical and Virtual Stock orders are not consolidated, and therefore arrive separately from one another. GW noted that this practice would confuse Waterstones. AW noted that Palgrave Macmillan’s books all go through the same distribution centre so this would not be an issue for them. He noted that consolidation is outlined in the publisher’s terms. GW noted that including the order number in any unconsolidated orders should alleviate any confusion; which Cambridge University Press already does. GW noted that discount codes (in the final bullet point under considerations) only apply to individual ISBNs at product-level and not at group-level. She noted that the codes are already in existence and should therefore be provided in the metadata.

The Group agreed to delete the second ‘recommendation’ bullet point. They also agreed to the paragraph which begins: “If a publisher...”. It was noted that the third bullet point - (3) Possible turnaround times (or agreed in contract/via business usage) – is a reiteration of what has been said elsewhere in the document.

### 2.3

The Group discussed the Printer Best Practice workflow, noting that some of the information included in this section has more to do with product information than metadata. JR agreed but noted that this information is needed before an order can be placed. KM noted that this information would only need to be supplied once, i.e. not every time an order is placed for each title. AL agreed that there should be an initial set-up process. JR noted that the orders will then sit within the distribution centre.

### 2.4

AR commented that the first paragraph of this section is not needed since its purpose was solely to illustrate the lack of communication between printers and distribution centres; since both receive different, conflicting information which affects the fluidity of the workflow. JR asked AR which fields are most important to Hachette and should therefore be mandatory. AR noted that this information is included in the document but noted that Hachette do not dictate orders / merge orders. He suggested that this practice should be compared with Macmillan’s to ensure the document is balanced / not idiosyncratic to Hachette. It was noted that Print on Demand Worldwide and Ingram Content Group are able to provide track numbers for their orders.

**ACTION:** MW to provide feedback on Section 2.4 of the Best Practice Guideline document, relating to Macmillan’s practices.

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The Group agreed to review and amend the remainder of the document before the next meeting, via email. They agreed that a deadline for this document's review should be set. The Review Deadline is therefore: **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015**.

**ACTION:** JR to circulate the amended version of this document to the Group as soon as possible after this meeting.

**ACTION: ALL to provide feedback on the Best Practice Guideline document before Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015.**

**4. Strawman document for retailer requirements**

Due to lack of time, the Group agreed to discuss this item at the next meeting. GW noted that, as a retailer, she may be the best person to produce the draft strawman document.

*Post-Meeting Update: GW has now agreed to create the draft strawman document for retailer requirements before the next meeting of this Group.*

**5. A.O.B.**

The Group agreed that a review of this Project's deliverables should be added to the agenda for the next meeting of this Group.

**ACTION:** AB to add Review of Project Deliverables to the agenda for the next meeting of this Group.

**6. Date of next meeting**

The Group agreed that the next meeting should not be arranged for this Group until all comments from this Group have been received on the Best Practice Guideline document.

**ACTION:** JR / KL to let AB know when a meeting for this Group should be arranged.

**ACTION:** AB to send out a Doodle Poll, once a meeting is required.