



UKSLC Implementation Guidelines

Draft 2.0 30/04/2013 Simon Edwards

This draft report complements the UKSLC subject headings scheme and provides some tips on implementation of the scheme.

If you have any additional input which you think should be included in this report please notify simon.edwards@dial.pipex.com

Background

BIC published the UKSLC subject code scheme for libraries in 2013. This scheme is based on BIC subject headings and the draft scheme which was known as e4libraries. The original e4libraries scheme was designed specifically for libraries and was quite widely adopted. The new UKSLC scheme contains some important changes specifically to keep it in line with BIC and to enable further automation of data flows.

BIC Advice

BIC's advice is for all libraries who need a subject code scheme to implement UKSLC loading multiple UKSLC codes into library databases, OPACs etc. and using the primary code as the spine label (optionally alongside a dewey classification number). Data aggregators and library stock suppliers and any other senders of this data would be well advised to go through a testing process as the following points are relevant:

1. Your customer must formally accept the new code scheme. It would be potentially expensive if books were refused because the classification was not as per contract.
2. Some data mapping may be used which automatically translates one scheme into another. Any change in the scheme might cause the mapping to fail. Note that UKSLC is not a simple upgrade but should be viewed as a new scheme for systems and testing purposes
3. Simply notifying a recipient and then changing from e4I to UKSLC is likely to be problematic as the recipient may be unaware of the nature of the changes and the new scheme.
4. Far better would be sending details of the full scheme, the document which describes the changes from e4I to UKSLC and test files of UKSLC in the appropriate format so the recipient can satisfy internal processes and ensure adequate testing.

The recommendation is to notify customers, send them information about the changes and consider sending both sets of data in the single feed so that the customer can cut over from the old to the new at a time to suit them. Alternatively full testing could be carried out and then the new feed could go live.



Receiving UKSLC

It is anticipated that most libraries will receive the UKSLC codes within a MARC21 or perhaps a UKMARC data feed from either their data aggregator or from their library stock supplier. Both these formats are capable of containing the UKSLC codes.

UKMARC:

It is agreed that the UKMARC feed will utilise tag number 668 for the UKSLC code. Note that this tag may be in use already for the e4libraries code. It is advisable for most libraries to obtain both the old e4l codes and the new UKSLC codes within the same feed and then test the loading and usage of the new UKSLC codes before switching over from e4l to UKSLC. This can be done because each 668 tag should have a description detailing whether it contains e4l or UKSLC. The e4l codes contain “eflch” and the UKSLC codes contain “ukslc”. Example:

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=668 00$aGRA$bGraphic novels$weflch  
=668 00$aCRM$bCrime$wukslc  
=668 00$aGRA$bGraphic novels$wukslc  
=668 00$aTRA$bFiction in Translation$wukslc
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Further as you can see from the example given above, the 668 tag has \$ identifiers e.g. \$a containing the three character code from the appropriate scheme and \$b containing the description of the code (e.g. GRA = Graphic Novel). \$w shows which scheme is being supplied (eflch or ukslc).

Note that both e4libraries and UKSLC are schemes which allow multiple subject codes, so a book can be both crime, graphic novel and a translation. The idea is to put CRM (Crime) on the spine label and all three codes on the OPAC. Users searching for the book will be able to find it under any of these subject headings.

MARC21

MARC21 is capable of containing both e4libraries and UKSLC codes. In MARC21 the E4L codes are in tag 072 and the text is in tag 655 (for Fiction) and 650 (for Non-Fiction). Again the descriptors “eflch” and “ukslc” are used. These should be in the subfield marked \$2. These fields are repeatable so again MARC21 can contain multiple subject codes for one title.

On the Shelf

Librarians are used to coping with changes in classification schemes and spine labels over time.



The aim is always to keep signage as clear as possible for patrons but small changes such as CRI to CRM are contained in the new UKSLC scheme. This only applies if the library has already implemented e4libraries. The choice of what to do about this type of change is always the same – either interfile the books taking both CRI and CRM as crime and implementing the new UKSLC scheme alongside the old scheme until the churn on the books (disposal) eliminates the old scheme from the library. The alternative is to re-label all the affected books to the new scheme. This decision depends on the number of books involved. Generally most patrons are more than capable of coping with two codes and library staff will quickly get used to the parallel schemes when re-shelving.

Subjective Classification

Note that all subject codes are to an extent the outcome of a subjective classification decision by a person or computer. Some codes are applied by the publishers and this code persists in BIC and in e4I and UKSLC. Others are mapped by data aggregators and library stock suppliers from other codes. Librarians should always have the final say as to the code used and the spine label deployed. If the library obtains stock from more than one supplier and bibliographic data including subject codes from more than one supplier then they should be aware of the possibility of books being given different codes depending on the source of the codes. Librarians should just be aware of this situation and decide which codes to use. Generally it is simpler if libraries obtain this data from a single consistent source.

Other points

If libraries are undertaking data analysis by subject code, the change from e4I to UKSLC will need to be understood and codes and analysis routines amended to cope with the changes. This could apply to LMS analysis tools, and services such as SmartSM or Nielsen BookScan. The same concern applies to any other library activities which use subject codes especially any which involve mapping between codes schemes, supplier selection or automated servicing rules using subject codes.