

# Book Industry Communication

39-41 North Road · London N7 9DP  
Telephone/fax 020 7607 9021 · mail@bic.org.uk

---



## **Minutes of the meeting of the BIC Product Metadata Group held on Wednesday 19 May 2010 at The British Library, London NW1**

Present:

- Peter Kilborn, BIC (Chair)
- Jan Ashton, British Library
- Graham Bell, HarperCollins Publishers
- Alexander Greene, Little, Brown Group
- Chris Harvey, Virtusales
- Alan Hopkinson, Middlesex University
- Liz Moran, CUP
- Evelyn Nicholas, Bowker
- Julian Sowa, Nielsen Registration Services
- Russell Taylor, Virtusales
- Gabrielle Wallington, Waterstone's
- Keith Walters, Bibliographic Data Services
- Sam Watson, Nielsen BookData
- Terry Willan, Talis Information
- Howard Willows, Nielsen BookData
- Jiyeon Wood, OUP

### **1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The minutes of the last meeting on Tuesday 8 December were approved. There were no matters arising.

### **2. ONIX**

ONIX for Books: Progress on implementation of ONIX 3.0 had been slower than expected, with just four publishers having so far supplied test files (two of them largely or exclusively for e-books). A number of publishers and systems suppliers had deferred this project until next year. Howard Willows reported Nielsen would be fully ready to receive ONIX 3.0 files by the end of June: though unable to confirm timings, both Bowker and BDS were also actively engaged in finalising development.

Other digital developments were cited as reasons for the slow uptake. Although version 3.0 was considered essential for supplying adequate e-book metadata, its inability to define the relationship between an e-book and the physical product on which it was based was seen as a serious shortcoming. This would be taken up by the UK ONIX group.

Matters arising from the international steering committee meeting: The meeting at the London Book Fair had been poorly attended because of travel constraints; and a telephone conference was planned in June for that reason. David Martin had put forward a paper making proposals for how ONIX might accommodate records for 'digital releases' (as distinct from digital products) appropriately identified with a 'release identifier' (as distinct from the ISBN which is a product identifier). This was to address the longstanding and seemingly intractable problem where some publishers insist on assigning a single ISBN to all digital formats for a specific title. This proposal had found little favour with either the US or UK groups, which felt that this would tend to discourage publishers from supplying essential product-level metadata and would require an unacceptable level of systems development; and the proposal had been set to one side for the time being.

Francis Cave had progressed plans for adopting a new validation language called Schematron which would enable additional validation of conditional as well as mandatory fields by providing warnings and error messages.

UK guidelines: These guidelines for publishers using ONIX 3.0, which were intended to represent the shared requirements of Nielsen, Bowker and BDS, were nearing completion. The last stage was a consultation between David Martin and Howard Willows about best practice for supplying territorial rights information. The feeling of the group was that it would not be necessary to develop a parallel document for versions 2.n.

Other ONIX developments: No report was available.

### **3. Metadata for digital content**

ISBN: BIC had published its Code of Practice for the Identification of e-books and Digital Content in December, recommending publishers to adopt a pragmatic policy to the assignment of ISBNs to their digital products. However, there continued to be a divide between those publishers with less sophisticated systems whose purposes were served by a single ISBN for their .e-pub source files and those – resellers and intermediaries as well as publishers - who needed to transact individual manifestations in systems. Julian Sowa reported that the board meeting of the International ISBN Agency at the London Book Fair had intended to discuss a number of proposals for addressing digital products created by vendors from a publisher's generic digital release. However, due to travel problems, this meeting had been rescheduled for June, but it remained the Agency's position that each digital product should have its own ISBN. It was reported that Google had agreed to use ISBNs for their Google Editions programme and, whilst preferring to use publisher-generated numbers, would also be assigning their own through an arrangement with Bowker. It was likely that the assignment of ISBNs by intermediaries would lead to some duplication of ISBNs and possible resulting confusion.

ACAP: No report was available.

Orphan works: These works where no rightsholder could be traced had become a significant issue for digital publishing. The EU project ARROW (Accessible

Registries of Rights Information and Orphan Works towards Europeana), which was intended to link various European national databases which held information about rightsholders, was entering a pilot phase in the UK, Germany, France and Spain; and was scheduled to conclude in February 2011. Measures proposed by the UK government in the Digital Economy Bill to resolve orphan works issues had been excluded when it was enacted.

There was still no outcome from the litigation around the Google settlement, in which orphan works were a key issue.

#### **4. Reports on other current metadata activity**

Accreditation: Peter Kilborn reported that the existing framework of the BIC Product Data Excellence Awards was being overhauled in July. Bronze, Silver and Gold levels were being replaced by a BIC Basic award and BIC Excellence and BIC Excellence Plus awards for ONIX users. This would be announced in the next few days.

The element set required for ONIX-level accreditation for those using version 3.0 had now been published on the BIC web site.

Price and availability: Alexander Greene highlighted problems around the accuracy of price and availability metadata provided by publishers, distributors and wholesalers; and this was confirmed by other members of the group. There appeared to be deficiencies in the quality of EDI feeds in particular; and it was agreed that best practice should be properly codified in this area, with a view to a possible accreditation scheme in the future. A separate meeting would be convened shortly to address these issues.

BIC standard subject categories: The steering committee had met recently and agreed to proceed with a minor revision during the course of the year. This would be the first revision since 2006 and would be limited in its scope in order to minimise disruption and make the new release as easy as possible to implement. It was proposed that the new release would be strictly limited to the addition of new categories where required, and the modification of existing headings to reflect current terminology or usage. No existing categories would be deleted, and there would be no relocations, no new sections and no restructuring. BIC members had been asked to finalise proposals for additional codes by the end of July; and it was hoped to publish the revised scheme before the end of the year.

This was to be seen against the growing pressure for convergence between the BIC and BISAC schemes arising from the increasing globalisation of digital publishing. There was no immediate prospect, however, of a single English-language scheme; and consequently it was imperative that reliable and officially approved mappings in both directions were available. BISAC had embarked on a mapping from BIC to BISAC but results seen to date were not thought sufficiently sophisticated.

It was hoped to persuade publishers in North America as well as in the UK of the need to assign both BIC and BISAC codes to their titles, provided that mappings and

tools were available. Graham Bell had expressed willingness to develop the BIC assignment tool also to accommodate BISAC codes.

The steering committee had also discussed the possibility of a 'heat rating' for the level of sexual content in romantic fiction and, although this was not being progressed at present, it was likely that this and similar content warnings would need to be encoded in the future. There had also been discussion about the definition of 'young adult' fiction and it had been concluded that this was more about themes and content than age suitability alone.

BIC e4libraries subject headings: There was still no clear pattern of adoption, though some misgivings had been expressed about the children's headings. BIC was working with Bromley Libraries on a case study of their implementation and it was hoped that joint seminars with NAG would take place during the year to promote the scheme more widely.

International Standard Text Code: Julian Sowa reported that an update of the user manual had been published, but that there had been delays to the public search facility – now scheduled for the end of June. Assignment of numbers had not progressed fast; this was thought to be partly because of systems development bottlenecks. BIC and Nielsen were planning a free joint seminar on the afternoon of Friday 2 July at Pearson to promote the benefits of ISTC and Michael Holdsworth's publication for BIC and BISG *ISTC: A Work in Progress*, which had been published at the beginning of the year.

In answer to a question, Julian Sowa stated that there was no intention to charge for ISTC assignment in the foreseeable future.

Bibliographic standards group: Terry Willan reported that a meeting had been held in January and had largely comprised proposals for changes in MARC21 to support the new RDA cataloguing rules, which would be published in June. The June meeting had received proposals for including ISTC (and the International Standard Name Identifier) in MARC and more elements at work and expression level.

Terry Willan said that the RDA rules, which would be free to libraries until the end of August, were not likely to be adopted immediately: the Library of Congress was assessing the costs of adoption, and the British Library had not made any decision. In this changing environment, there were growing concerns about MARC's continuing suitability.

British Library Digital Library project: Jan Ashton reported that ingested content was now held at the BL's two sites and in the National Library of Wales; and this would shortly be extended to the other legal deposit libraries. A pilot project was under way to evaluate access to this content. Most of the content currently held comprised serial publications, but web archives, sound recordings, newspapers and moving images would be the next priorities.

## **5. ISO Identifier Standards**

ISNI (International Standard Name Identifier): There had been a positive vote for the Draft International Standard in March, but the next steps were likely to be delayed by issues around the establishment of a registration authority.

DOI (Digital Object Identifier): The AFNOR appeal against the Draft International Standard had failed and the vote on the DIS which concluded in March had been in favour. A draft FDIS was now being finalised.

RFID in libraries tag standardisation: Alan Hopkinson reported that the vote on the Final Draft International Standard for ISO 28560 had been delayed by editorial changes but would be out for voting by the end of June. The content of the three parts of the standard remained stable; and BIC's publication of a draft UK profile for 28560-2 which had the support of all the major RFID and LMS suppliers was unaffected. The BIC/CILIP RFID in Libraries Group had turned its attention to communication between RFID and library management systems and was planning to draft a set of web services replicating the functionality of 3M's proprietary SIP.2 protocol.

Peter Kilborn reported that a proposal had been provisionally agreed with GS1 Global for a standard for tag content in trade applications; but that confirmation of this was still awaited.

## **6. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 17 November, once again at the British Library at 2.00 pm.