

BIC UK *THEMA* NATIONAL GROUP – Meeting Notes

Location: GoToMeeting / Conference Call

Date and time: Wednesday 30th September 2020, 2pm

Meeting notes taken by: Alaina-Marie Bassett

Present

Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC

Graham Bell, EDItEUR

John Bell, HarperCollins Publishers

Katherine Berners, Ingram

Fiona Green, Bloomsbury Publishing

Salla Harjula, DK (delegate)

Adam Hewson, Kew Bookshop (AHN) (guest)

Chris Hudson, Cambridge University Press

Juana María Ruiz Martínez, Amazon (JRM)

Elizabeth O’Connell, PRH (guest)

Chris Saynor, EDItEUR

Karina Urquhart, BIC

Gabrielle Wallington, Waterstones (Deputy)

Vanessa Wan, Nielsen

Howard Willows, Nielsen (Chair)

Apologies

Ingrid Harrold, DK

Andrew Henty, Virtusales (AHY)

Kit Thwaite, Penguin Random House (PRH)

1. Introductions and apologies

- Group welcomed. Apologies delivered.
- Welcomed: JRM as new Group member; AHN and EOC as guests.
- Resigned: Nabihah Evans, Amazon.

2. Competition Law – Conduct Reminder

<https://www.bic.org.uk/149/BIC-Competition-Law-Policy/>

3. Follow-up on actions from the previous meeting

- Notes from previous meeting approved.
- Diversity and inclusion worked examples paper to be completed by CS in October 2020.

ACTIONS	OWNER	DUE DATE
ONGOING: Liaise with Amazon, Apple, Gardners, Ingram, Kobo and Waterstones regarding the supply of a <i>Thema</i> endorsement.	KU	ONGOING
ONGOING: Complete the diversity and inclusion worked examples paper following the publication of <i>Thema</i> v1.4.	CS	ONGOING
ONGOING: Follow up with The Booksellers Association regarding <i>Thema</i> promotion.	AMB	ONGOING
ONGOING: Provide examples of how UK publishers, booksellers and wholesalers use <i>Thema</i> to CS.	ALL	ASAP

4. Forthcoming *Thema* International Steering Committee (ISC) meeting, October 2020

- *Thema* ISC meeting to be held virtually on 14th October 2020; proposed National Extensions to be validated at this meeting.
- Suggestions for *Thema* v1.5 to be collated at ISC meeting and timetable for its development – on 2-year cycle so projected release in October 2021.
- Volunteers for *Thema* v1.5 Working Group to be welcomed in March 2021.
- Feedback from this Group is feed directly into the *Thema* ISC.

5. Update on *Thema* activity

- Update on mappings from/to *Thema* v1.4
 - Nielsen Book mappings (BIC 2.1 > *Thema* v1.4 and *Thema* 1.4 > BIC 2.1) completed and presented in an improved way; available on both the Nielsen and EDItEUR websites, free of charge.
 - BISAC 2019 > *Thema* v1.4 mapping completed and available on the BISG and EDItEUR websites, free of charge; reverse mapping available from Nielsen Book under commercial agreement.

- Update on proposals for UK National Extensions
 - No UK National Extensions have been proposed at this time.

- Summary of other National Extension proposals
 - Historical, place qualifiers proposed by Belgium and The Netherlands.
 - Time period qualifiers proposed by Belgium.
 - Educational purpose qualifiers proposed by Belgium (who liaised with both Flemish- and Dutch-speaking educational publishers) and Finland.
 - No contentious additions noted.

- Update on diversity and inclusion worked examples
 - Previously published diversity and inclusion documentation updated and significantly extended following publication of *Thema* v1.4. Extensive examples document in production; draft completed and under review.
 - Examples included for range of titles including Fiction, Teenage books, Children’s books, Non-Fiction, etc.

- Ongoing international translation activity and issues
 - Partial translations of v1.4 (excluding notes) available in Finnish, Flemish and Swedish; full translation available from Germany and Norway (in two languages).
 - Japanese, Italian, French and Spanish translations in progress.

- Proposals for *Thema* search terms / UK synonyms
 - Updated UK synonyms spreadsheet link circulated to this Group, 18th September 2020.
 - Additional alternative search terms being compiled by EDItEUR, primarily for the *Thema* online browser.
 - Will consider and add suitable synonyms as and when they are put forward.
 - Recent synonyms proposed by other National Groups or inserted by EDItEUR include: wellbeing, wellness, uberisation, misogynoir, etc.

ACTIONS	OWNER	DUE DATE
Provide feedback on the proposed National Extensions to CS, GB, HW and KU; prior to <i>Thema</i> ISC meeting.	ALL	07/10/2020
Provide further suggestions for UK synonyms to CS and GB.	ALL	ASAP

6. Promotion and adoption of *Thema* for/by booksellers

- Feedback on BIC Bite provided by AHN: supportive of *Thema* and its relevance to booksellers.

- *Thema* can better a bookseller’s business.
- Booksellers largely classify titles (for physical shelving purposes) by looking at the product in-store; however, when looking to order a product for a customer online, Nielsen Book’s data, including subject classification data, is used (directly via BDOL or indirectly via wholesaler’s systems used in-store).
- COVID-19 and growth of online sales reconfirm the need for good product metadata including subject classification data.
- AHN used BIC codes in past; had limited use and awareness of *Thema* until recently. Observations: it’s harder to obtain *Thema* (especially qualifiers) from Nielsen Book than BIC codes; more work needs to be done to increase industry knowledge about *Thema* amongst booksellers; only one code is listed on booksellers’ EPOS systems for each title. Despite this, he had become convinced of *Thema*’s advantages
- HW explained that *Thema* was included in BDOL as an ‘add-on’ rather than as a fully indexed scheme designed for use in searches; this will be addressed as part of Nielsen’s drive to position *Thema* as its primary subject scheme. BDOL is geared towards ease of use and clarity of display, and inevitably cannot make full use of all the underlying product metadata in Nielsen’s systems (such as may be available in ONIX3 output).
- Mappings are of use to booksellers however AHN reported that mapping from BIC > Thema was a challenging process on his EPOS system.
- HW observed that AHN’s feedback demonstrates the fact that effective classification depends not just on the scheme itself, but also on the *application* of that scheme, and presentation of the data in the systems used by wholesalers and retailers. It also shows the *demand* from booksellers for this data, and acknowledges the advantages of *Thema*.

ACTIONS	OWNER	DUE DATE
Encourage fellow bookshops to implement <i>Thema</i> and read the documentation available on the EDItEUR and BIC websites.	AHN	ONGOING
Liaise with colleagues regarding Nielsen Book Data online; with a view to sharing AHN’s feedback and fitting <i>Thema</i> into the platform.	HW	ASAP

7. *Thema* promotion in UK

- BIC *Thema*: Essentials training course to run online, [26th October 2020](#).
- *Thema* for Booksellers [BIC Bite](#) – published July 2020.
- *Thema* is compulsory for all 3 tiers of award on the refreshed BIC Product Data Excellence Award (PDEA) Accreditation Scheme.
- EDItEUR has published an illustrated introduction to [Thema v1.4 for booksellers](#); this document is more detailed than the BIC Bite, above.
- EDItEUR did presentation diversity and inclusion in relation to *Thema* for Booknet Canada; [recording](#).

8. Reports of *Thema* progress from members

- Nielsen Book: revising system to be fully v1.4 compliant; v1.4 mappings completed.
- Nielsen Book stats: approximately 40% of UK ONIX feeds now contain/provide *Thema*.
- Amazon: using v1.3 presently; in process of implementing v1.4 across various regions.
- Bloomsbury: looking to implement *Thema* (version TBC) in 3 months’ time, particularly for the academic division.

- Cambridge University Press: experiencing issues with legacy adoption.
- DK: currently using 1.3, will transition to v1.4 at same time as PRH (see below) – in Q4; IH will attend next meeting; the Group thanked SH for her participation on this Group.
- EDItEUR: suggest new *Thema* codes via this Group or direct to EDItEUR; suggestions will be made available via a new Google document following forthcoming *Thema* ISC meeting, as they are added.
- HarperCollins: Still using v1.3; acquired Egmont Publishing – systems merged in July 2020; using BIC > *Thema* mapping for Egmont titles; positive recommendation for mapping as a result; trained 134 individuals (in-house) to use *Thema* during COVID-19 period.
- Ingram: fully supporting v1.4; over 1.8 million have at least 1 *Thema* code, if not more.
- PRH: starting to implement *Thema* v1.4; to be completed in Q4.
- Waterstones: supportive of *Thema*; looking to implement in 2021.

ACTIONS	OWNER	DUE DATE
Send worked example for benefits of using <i>Thema</i> vs BIC to CS.	FG	ASAP

9. A.O.B.

None.

10. Date of next meeting

- Thursday 17th December 2020.