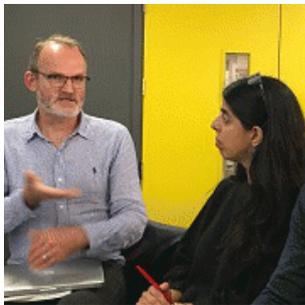


## Improving discoverability of inclusive and diverse books on the menu at BIC Breakfast

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*The latest BIC Breakfast, sponsored by PRH and held at the Poetry Caf&#233; in London yesterday, looked at changing Thema codes to boost discoverability of inclusive and diverse books*

Andrew Isabirye, a Data Scientist at PRH, revealed the work that the company has been doing to address this issue by investigating how the Thema codes could be extended to help booksellers, librarians, schools and readers to identify books covering topics such as sexuality, ethnicity, social mobility, gender and disability.

Working with Chris Saynor of EDItEUR, the 13 new codes PRH has suggested have been submitted to Thema for approval. If adopted, they could significantly help people looking for diverse books to find them. Saynor pointed to the great subtlety of the Thema system which, for instance, already allows for the identification of the original language of translated works and place qualifiers that can be used to show where a book is set or where the author was born. It can also provide different descriptions to different segments of the market via ONIX, so that trade buyers can access relevant information that may not be of interest to consumers, and vice versa.

In particular, Thema offers the opportunity to describe the themes of a book. Saynor provided some examples of how it would be possible to enhance a book's discoverability using Thema coding to classify topics and characters in detail, well beyond the basic genre classifications. This might mean, for instance, coding a YA fiction book for LGBT; death and bereavement; friends and friendship issues; relating to Latin/Hispanic American people, while a children's picture storybook might additionally be coded for Judaism; Islam; Ramadam; Rosh Hasanah.

Meera Ghanshamdas, manager of Tales on Moon Lane's sister shop in Lewisham, Moon Lane Ink CIC, agreed that the extra flexibility offered by Thema was a key tool

in the bookseller's armoury. Over three-quarters of school age children in Lewisham come from a BAME background, and it is one of the most deprived areas in London. Their aim is to stock books that represent the diversity of their customers in 'non-issue-based books', something that enhanced Thema coding can only improve.

*Pictured (l-r): Chris Saynor, Meera Ghanshamdas and Andrew Isabirye*

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