



Press Release

24th February 2022

London, UK

BIC announces date for BIC Standard Subject Categories scheme end of life

Book Industry Communication (BIC) today announced its plan to make obsolete the outdated BIC Standard Subject Categories scheme (BSSC) by the end of February 2024, as it scales up efforts to encourage the UK book industry to fully adopt *Thema* (the international, multi-lingual subject category scheme for the global book trade) in its place.

Originally conceived in the mid-1990s, the BSSC scheme has been used successfully by publishers and retailers for around 25 years. However, the current version (2.1) was last updated in November 2010 and has not been altered in any material way since, meaning that the concepts, detailed headings, and notes are now 11 years out of date. In February 2017, BIC purposefully froze the development of the BSSC scheme and has endorsed *Thema* as its superior replacement ever since.

In support of its decision, BIC highlights the benefits of formally making the BSSC scheme obsolete, the most significant being:

- Elimination of costs in the UK industry that are associated with support for two parallel schemes
- Enabling the industry to move away from using some outdated BSSC scheme concepts and headings that social change has made inappropriate
- Removal of the time and resource involved in mapping from/to BSSC codes to/from *Thema* and other national classification codes
- Elimination of classification ‘approximations’ and the ‘category drift’ that comes with use of such mappings
- Actively encouraging a greater adoption of the *Thema* standard across the industry.

Karina Urquhart, BIC’s Executive Director noted *“With the support of its members, this move by BIC signals a clear lead from the UK book trade in not just supporting, but firmly promoting Thema as the single global, cross-cultural, multi-lingual subject classification scheme for both the domestic, and the international book trade. It is hoped this may encourage other countries to consider the same approach, where other national schemes still exist.”*

BIC appreciates the significance and likely impact of this announcement. The February 2024 deadline – some seven years after BIC endorsed *Thema* as the preferred scheme for the UK trade – is intended to provide sufficient notice to the industry, and allows stakeholders time to make the necessary changes to their systems and workflows.



The UK Book Industry’s Supply Chain Organisation

February 2024 will see the removal of the BSSC scheme online code browser at https://ns.editeur.org/bic_categories and all related documentation from the BIC website. It will also see appropriate adjustments made to the BIC Product Data Excellence Accreditation award with regards to BSSC codes: *Thema* has already been made mandatory at all levels of award for the revised scheme (starting July 2022).

In light of this announcement, and to support the industry through this transition, BIC has launched a new webinar series: “*BIC Brunches: The Thema Sessions*” with [EDiTEUR](#) (the organisation responsible for maintaining the *Thema* standard) starting in March 2022 and continuing throughout the transition period to February 2024. The first of these sessions have been scheduled as follows:

BIC Brunch - *Thema* (1 of 6): Fiction, 17th Mar 2022

Tickets [here](#)

BIC Brunch - *Thema* (2 of 6): Diversity, 26th May 2022

Tickets [here](#)

BIC Brunch - *Thema* (3 of 6): Children and Education, 28th Jul 2022

Tickets [here](#)

BIC Brunch - *Thema* (4 of 6): Non-Fiction: Popular (e.g., Health, Travel, Cookery etc.), 29th Sep 2022

Tickets [here](#)

BIC Brunch - *Thema* (5 of 6): Non-Fiction: Academic (e.g., Medicine, Law etc.), 17th Nov 2022

Tickets [here](#)

BIC Brunch - *Thema* (6 of 6): Comics and Manga, 26th Jan 2023

Tickets [here](#)

In addition, there will be a Brunch covering the release of version 1.5 of *Thema* on 28th April.

BIC will also be scheduling more *Thema* training sessions in 2022–24, and further announcements and updates will be released in the run up to the final deadline. Join the BIC mailing list: <https://www.bic.org.uk/188/Join-our-mailing-lists/> to ensure you are kept up to date with the latest information. For any questions regarding this change, please contact info@bic.org.uk.

End of press release

About BIC: BIC is a not-for-profit members organisation working at the heart of the UK book industry to promote supply chain efficiency in all sectors of the book world through e-commerce, best practice, training, events, and the application of standards. BIC helps organisations become more efficient, save money, become less wasteful and ultimately greener. Holding a unique position of trust, BIC facilitates UK and international industry-wide collaboration, reaching agreement on



The UK Book Industry's Supply Chain Organisation

dependable standards and best practice in the supply chain. Find out more at www.bic.org.uk and follow via @bic1uk

Note to editors: more information via info@bic.org.uk



The UK Book Industry's Supply Chain Organisation