

ICEDIS Meeting: Frankfurt, 10th October 2011

MINUTES

Attendees

Hideaki Asai	Kinokuniya
Graham Bell	EDItEUR
Mark Bide	EDItEUR
Francis Cave	EDItEUR
Don Chvatal	Ringgold
Tim Devenport	EDItEUR
Nico Dickhoff	Swets
Dan Heffernan	Advantage Computing Systems
Annette Hooß	Harrassowitz
John Keston-Hole	Publishing Technology
Kathy Law	MPS Technologies
Frank Mapes	EBSCO
Alan Medd	Turpin Distribution
Tiia Nieminen	LM Information Delivery
Kengo Sakamoto	Maruzen
Ramon Schrama	Swets; co-chair
Shilo de Vries	Taylor & Francis
Anthony Watkinson	University College London
Keith Whiter	Elsevier; co-chair
Nick Woods	EDItEUR

Apologies

Lesley Boyle	Cambridge University Press
Anurag Jalota	Oxford Journals
Andrew Wright	Oxford Journals

1. Welcome. Minutes & actions from previous meeting (Harrogate, April 2011).

Co-chair Keith Whiter (Elsevier) opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

The minutes of the April 2011 meeting in Harrogate were approved and the actions were discussed. All actions were closed or were covered later in this meeting. Specific comments were made as follows:

- ICEDIS Publishers Price List: TD advised that technical work on this is complete.
- Quotations and the Payment/Reconciliation cycle: TD confirmed that a background document had been prepared and two brainstorm calls held: this remains a work in progress.

2. Update on SPS, SRN and Coverage Statement – all moving to version 1.0

A note had been distributed before the meeting on this topic. The SPS and SRN formats and the ONIX for Serials Coverage Statement have all been piloted or are actually being used by a number of parties at this moment. But none of them have the official status signaled by version 1.0 status. It was therefore suggested to change the version numbers of these messages to 1.0 This will hopefully trigger more parties to actually use these messages.

It was also suggested that the ICEDIS Publishers Price List message should be renamed to ONIX-PC (ONIX for Price Catalog) and that it will co-exist next to the already existing ONIX SPS message. Any development or improvement involving pricing will be added to the ONIX-PC message rather than to ONIX SPS. This will ensure that in case of change only one message needs to be adapted and that the messages will not diverge into separate developments. New implementers will be encouraged to use ONIX-PC.

Both proposals were accepted during the meeting.

Action: TD to make the necessary nomenclature and version changes.

3. Working Group updates:

Tim Devenport gave brief updates on the status of the different working groups. A more detailed version can be found in the working group update document that was distributed together with the agenda of this meeting (20110918 ICEDIS Working Groups.pdf).

3.1 *E-books plus in ONIX for Serials & other standards*

This related to extending several ONIX messages to be able to include e-books and other resources available on subscription. This work is complete and the extensions have been made to the published messages.

3.2 *Claims & claims responses for print resources*

The print claims standard is now published, together with a set of sample files to illustrate how the standard should be interpreted.

Swets is involved in implementation and piloting with Elsevier and Oxford Journals. LM has also created test files and is testing with Oxford Journals and Elsevier. Tiia Nieminen (LM) mentioned an issue with proof of payment, which Oxford Journals says needs to be included as invoice details are missing: TD thought that this possibility was already covered in the message code values but will investigate offline and advise TN accordingly. Annette Hooß stated that Harrassowitz is analyzing the replies received from publishers but she did not know the status of internal development work.

3.3 *Claims for online resources*

As at the Harrogate meeting, TD advised that it has been difficult to drum up interest in this subject and there has been little or no progress to date. ICEDIS members have not yet indicated that it needs a higher priority, though delegates are invited to contact TD if they would like to get involved or believe the work to be more urgent.

3.4 *Preservation applications and ONIX-PH*

No representatives of this working group (including members such as EDINA, Portico, LOCKSS and the British and Dutch National Libraries) were present at the meeting but TD reported on their behalf. This working group deals with information of on holdings of preserved e-resources and the status of preservation activities for these holdings. Schema and documentation exist and a draft version of a new format ONIX-PH (ONIX for Preservation Holdings) will be published within the next month or so.

3.5 *Structured addresses & Institutional Identifiers*

TD reported on the two strands of this activity. Incorporating institutional identifiers is relatively straightforward to achieve, owing to the extensible structure of ONIX standards and their related code lists. A structured name and address model proposal (expressed in XML) was well received by the working group but they proposed that it be made simpler than it originally was. A slimmed-down subset has been created, whilst EDItEUR will also continue to maintain the superset model to facilitate future extensions. Several companies have mapped their own structures to the ICEDIS proposal, and this work continues. Don Chvatal (Ringgold) asked whether the model is referenced on the EDItEUR website: TD replied that, as an early draft, it has not yet been published, but we are quite prepared to share it privately.

Action: TD to share proposal with DC and any other interested parties and progress this work more generally.

3.6 *Extending auto processing standards to the next tier of business partners*

This activity is currently underway and TD has created a simple spreadsheet template to capture target organizations and potential contacts. Seven ICEDIS companies have so far responded with suggestions and TD will collate them. The next stage envisaged will then be to approach and questionnaire the target companies on their attitudes toward

increasing standards use, readiness to participate and any perceived barriers. ICEDIS members who have not yet contributed suggestions are urged to do so.

Action: All to send suggestions to TD no later than two weeks from the publication of these minutes, if you have not yet done so.

3.7 Quotations and price/payment reconciliation.

A working group has been convened and TD wrote a short background discussion paper to stimulate discussion. Two calls have so far been held and the work is ongoing. Although the topics are of course related, the working group felt that Quotations should be discussed separately and in parallel with Price/Payment Reconciliation.

3.8 Early publication of draft standards

Mark Bide asked for the group's opinion on the publication of early draft Working Group documents. The consensus was that they should be published as early as possible, albeit clearly marked with their draft status. Anthony Watkinson agreed, noting that it is difficult to discuss and popularize the work if there is nothing concrete to point to. Francis Cave cited Oasis as an example of good practice in terms of clear document versioning and designation.

4. Price message implementation: achievements and lessons learned

During the past year a number of ICEDIS agents and publishers (together with EDItEUR) worked hard to get the price message up and running. Three publishers (Elsevier, Wiley Blackwell, Taylor & Francis) were able to distribute their prices in the new ICEDIS Publishers Price List format and a number of agents (notably LM, Swets, Harrassowitz, Lehmanns) have been able to upload these.

AH asked about the possibility of having sample messages. She also mentioned that, although publishers can and will have different pricing models, more consistent and simpler approaches would be welcomed by agencies and their customers. Nico Dickhoff (Swets) identified various types of problems he has faced: he has noticed, for example, that message structures or "dialects" are clearly evident between the different sending publishers – necessitating a publisher-neutral interface format to which he has to convert before uploading data to Swets' systems. And TD repeated his plea that all sending organizations verify outgoing files against the XML schema provided, to prevent unnecessary problems with file structure.

Various items were mentioned as "lessons to be learned", including these:

- Sample messages or files would be useful reference documents for both senders and receivers.
- Better quality assurance is needed on outgoing files: use the XML schema!
- The overall process went reasonably well in the working group, including the agreement on partnering arrangements between agents and publishers.
- Reliable and stable product identifiers would be of great assistance in acting as unique keys for the upload process.
- Additional assistance from EDItEUR might well be useful, but we need clarity (see next) on what form that assistance might take.

MB identified three types of assistance that EDItEUR might be able to offer to implementers:

- Additional or improved documentation, including sample files.
- Focused training to implementers' staff. Such sessions could be set up if parent organizations were prepared to pay for the travel costs involved.
- Consultancy. This could be considered, but anything other than initial consultation would have to be on a paying basis, owing to resource limitations within EDItEUR.

Action: MB asked that delegates look at the recent EDItEUR Executive Director's Report for descriptions of approaches that have been successfully used for ONIX for Books, and consider whether these might be avenues to explore.

5. ICEDIS priorities through 2012

Priority setting was approached in a new way in this meeting. A list of likely topics was first created in the meeting and then delegates voted specifically on this list.

For implementation and rollout efforts, the Print Claims and Price Catalog messages came out top.

For analysis and message development, the top three items were:

- (1) New Orders, including Structured Addresses;
- (2) Price/Payment Reconciliation
- (3) Quotation Requests & Responses.

The remaining items (online claims, preservation holdings) did not receive sufficient priority to warrant further work in this group. MB noted, though, that there was sufficient interest within the preservation holdings working group to allow pilots to progress without any significant drain on EDItEUR resources.

Work on contacting the next tier of players to extend the use of standards can go on in parallel with these efforts.

Action: TD to plan and progress the priority work streams.

6. Update: standards implemented by the membership and plans for 2012

An overview showing the standards or messages implemented by each ICEDIS member organization was distributed together with the agenda of this meeting (20110918 Standards Supported by ICEDIS Members.pdf). The latest update was in September 2011 and no amendments were mentioned during the meeting. Delegates were asked to forward any necessary changes to TD, since this overview is publicly available on the website.

Action: All to check the entries for their own organizations and send any necessary changes to TD.

7. Breakout sessions

For the first time, we organized two parallel breakout sessions in the ICEDIS meeting. This experiment went well: it seemed to create a good dynamic in the breakout groups and resulted in good and lively discussions. Those present at the meeting indicated that they liked this way of working so we shall probably repeat this in future. Suggestions for future topics are welcome!

From an initial list of four suggestions, we chose just two to explore further, bearing in mind the numbers of participants present. The two chosen themes were these:

- Price/Payment Reconciliation – “Rolling up our Sleeves” & Practical Suggestions
- Transmitting New Orders from Agents to Publishers.

The two breakouts were held in parallel, with the results of each then being presented back to the full meeting. Bullet-point summaries of each session are as follows:

7.1 *New Orders*

Issues with the existing situation were identified as follows:

- New orders are mixed in with renewals.
- Most new order handling is manual, largely because ...
- It is not possible to match the customer with those in the publisher’s database and
- There is no generally accepted, unique product identifier, which makes it difficult to unambiguously decide which product is being ordered.

Benefits of improved new-order handling were outlined as these:

- Automation of the process and elimination of many exceptions.
- Reductions in cost.
- Faster processing.
- Improved analysis and “view of customer” on the part of the publisher.
- Improved customer targeting for marketing/sales offers, up-selling, etc.

Tasks and challenges in achieving these improvements include these:

- There should be clear process differentiation between new and renewal orders.
- Structured addresses and/or organizational identifiers will be needed to assist in customer matching and identification.
- Resources will have to be identified for testing & implementation.
- Authority files should be investigated for various entities involved.
- Technology choices will be needed (e.g. XML vs. flat file, etc.), but creation of a data model/semantics should come first and should be independent of the technological method chosen.
- More discussion is needed around the issue of a product identifier.

7.2 *Price/Payment Reconciliation*

Issues with the existing situation were identified as follows:

- Agents’ product prices, and thus the payments they make, are based on the best information available to them, but may not necessarily be complete or correct.

- If there are discrepancies between agent and publisher prices then further payments or credits need to be made, in a worst case while the subscriptions concerned are not (yet) running.
- Delayed payments can lead to interruptions in cash flow, as resolution can be as late as mid-year.
- A discrepancy on one subscription can delay all the rest of the subscriptions in a batch.
- These “wrong” payments can lead to service interruption, with customers being contacted by publishers and, in their turn, customers complaining to agents.
- Payments/checks are sometimes returned without further explanation.
- The current process works but it is very slow and time consuming.
- Agents feel that publisher accounting and fulfillment departments often do not appear to communicate with one another.
- Subscriptions being transferred between agents are often not matched correctly.

Suggested process improvements included the following:

- Prompt acknowledgement: communicate mismatches immediately if there is a problem with a particular payment/order, with clear reasons why.
- Do not mix underpayments and overpayments from different order lines, since this obscures the underlying problem.
- Do not automatically extend or shorten subscription periods if the payment appears to be incorrect, since again this obscures the underlying problem.
- A structured mechanism for quotation request/response could be part of the solution, particularly for cases of customer-based pricing.
- There is an opportunity for better handling of subscription transfers between agents.
- Include end-user information and not just the organizational information, as this would not flag changes from direct supply to consolidation and vice versa.
- Accelerate and where possible automate the process, even though the pricing rules may be complex (different models, price tiers, custom pricing, etc.).

8. Related topics from NISO and elsewhere

Unfortunately Nettie Lagace (NISO representative) was stuck in another meeting and therefore was not able to give us an update on NISO initiatives.

Project Transfer (update by TD). The goal of Transfer is to reduce inconvenience to end customers when publications change owner or publisher. 36 major publishers have so far signed up to this voluntary Code of Practice and they share/communicate information on publications that are being transferred. A public alerting service on these changes is available. For more information please check <http://www.uksg.org/transfer>.

9. Updates on membership and on other EDItEUR initiatives

MB provided a short update on EDItEUR's activities, confirming among other things that there has been a 20% increase in membership over the past two years. A full version of Mark's report can be found at <http://www.editeur.org/2/About/#ED%20report>.

10. Any other business and dates/venues of next meetings

Action: TD to get all draft work onto the website, together with a clear status for each activity. This will give more clarity to all implementation partners.

Action: TD to set up a brainstorm conference call to discuss a possible product identifier.

The next meeting will be the first North American ICEDIS meeting in many years: Charleston, SC, 2nd November 2011.

Thereafter, the next meeting in Europe will be held during UKSG in 2012: Glasgow, 28th March 2012.