

ONIX for Books

International Steering Committee Minutes

*Wednesday 8th October 2014, 13:30–15:00 CEST (UTC+2),
Room Facette, Halle 3 via West, Messe Frankfurt*

Attendees:

Luc Audrain (Hachette Livre)	Hetty Liewerink (CB)
Alaina-Marie Bassett (BIC)	Anna Lionetti (AIE)
Mikolaj Baliszewski (Nat. Library Poland)	Giulia Marangoni (AIE)
Detlef Bauer (Libri)	Renek Mendruń (ISBN Poland)
Graham Bell (EDItEUR)	Merve Okçuoğlu (Turkish Publishers Assoc)
Maria Börman (Bokrondellen)	Diane Ouellet (BTLF)
Erik-Jan Bulthus (CB)	Jesús Peraita (FGEE / Dilve)
Michel Cervellin (BTLF)	Christer Perslöv (Bokrondellen)
Piera Costantini (Informazioni Editoriali)	Tine Philips (Meta4Books)
Laurent Dervieu (Electre) [chair]	Simonetta Pillon (Informazioni Editoriali)
Fride Fosseng (Bokbasen)	Marie Bilde Rasmussen (Gyldendal)
Bente Franck-Sætervoll (Bokbasen)	Ketil Stadskleiv (Bokbasen)
Noah Genner (BookNet Canada)	Aija Vahtola (Nat. Library Finland)
Hidaka Takashi (JPO) [remote]	Len Vlahos (BISG)
Ishikawa Hirohisa (JPO) [remote]	Howard Willows (Nielsen)
Alex Ingram (EDItEUR)	Jon Windus (Nielsen)
Uwe Janssen (KNV)	Nick Woods (EDItEUR) [minutes]
Kimata Yoichi (JPO) [remote]	

1. Laurent Dervieu (chair) welcomed delegates to this well-attended meeting.

Graham Bell noted that as an experiment, representatives from the Japanese ONIX group who were unable to attend in person were attending the meeting remotely via Skype, and that a recording would be made in case Skype audio quality was poor. This recording would be for the sole benefit of the Japanese ONIX group. There were no objections to this.

Attendees introduced themselves.

2. LD then asked whether there were any queries arising from the minutes of the last meeting held in April at the London Book Fair, and there were none. The minutes were approved without alteration.

Draft minutes of ONIX ISC meetings are circulated to attendees for initial comments, then posted publicly on the EDItEUR website. However, they remain 'draft' until formal approval at the next meeting

3. LD asked GB to introduce his report on current ONIX activity at EDItEUR.

A written paper had been circulated prior to the meeting. GB prefaced this with a personal comment that the period had been especially challenging because of the additional commitments of managing EDItEUR as a whole. He also introduced Alex Ingram, who has joined EDItEUR as Standards Editor to increase the resources devoted to standards work within EDItEUR. AI introduced himself and outlined his prior experience as a bookseller with Waterstones and Apple.

GB then noted the highlights of activities in the period from April to September 2014.

- Codelists have continued to be revised on the established schedule. Issue 25 was ratified by the previous ISC meeting in London, and was released mid- April. Issue 26 proposals were circulated to the national groups at the beginning of June and released in mid-July.

Issues 25 and 26 introduced codes for a couple of new product forms including dedicated audiobook reader hardware, and subject codes for listing Common Core curriculum alignments for US education. There were also new price codes for rental period extensions and conversion from rental to purchase, and for expressing pre-order embargo dates. Within Issue 26, the meaning of the DGO edition type code was also clarified – it means *digital original* (a work published first in a digital version) and does not necessarily imply *digital exclusive*. Digital originals begin life as digital exclusives, but a printed equivalent may be (or may have been) published later.

Issue 27 proposals were circulated to the national groups prior to the meeting of the ISC and will be covered in the next agenda item. Suggestions for Issue 28 – due for publication in January 2015 – should be sent from national groups to EDItEUR by mid-November.

- The ONIX training programme progresses well. Several courses have been delivered in London via BIC, as well as in-house to a couple of EDItEUR members. Planning has begun for next year's training with BISG and BookNet Canada (early March). There is an opportunity to deliver ONIX training in Paris (in French) in cooperation with new EDItEUR member CLIL which is an approved professional training provider in France, and this is being explored. GB also noted that the idea of basic-level online training is also being investigated, though if this is progressed, it will be some time before anything is ready for use.

GB recently provided presentation material on migrating from ONIX 2.1 to ONIX 3.0 to the national groups. This was developed initially for BIC and BISG members – Alaina Bassett noted the BIC session had been run on three occasions and sold out, and Len Vlahos kindly extended an invitation to any ISC members to listen to the webcast version of the presentation on 14th October (5pm UTC) via Webex. LD noted that Chris Saynor of Giant Chair delivered a short version of this presentation at the CONTEC conference. GB emphasised that this material is better delivered in groups' own languages, and if any national groups want to translate for their own markets, they should do so.

- The release of ONIX version 3.0.2 (a relatively minor update) in January went smoothly, and GB noted that some of the newly-introduced data elements had already been seen in real-world use.

The release had prompted some additions to the EDItEUR *Implementation and Best Practice Guide*, and BISG has also updated its *Best Practices for Product Metadata* (the April 2014 version published jointly with BookNet Canada is the latest – see [https://www.bisg.org/product-metadata-best-practices – and a further revision is in preparation](https://www.bisg.org/product-metadata-best-practices-and-a-further-revision-is-in-preparation)). GB asked that, if national groups produce their own best practice guidelines, they should *build upon* rather than aim to replace the EDItEUR global guideline. Let EDItEUR know when such documents are available – we are happy to host

them on the EDItEUR website (as we do for the German ONIX group) but we will also link to other sites to promote those best practices.

- Before concluding his activity report, GB introduced the subject of the ‘sunsetting’ of ONIX 2.1, noting that this had been the subject of considerable discussion during the last meeting of the ISC during the London Book Fair. During that meeting, the main decision about ‘sunset’ had been re-affirmed, but there was no consensus in London on the matter of ‘twilight support’ for a handful of ONIX 2.1-only codelists which had been requested by the US national group.

GB noted the main changes that would happen in three months time, which include the archiving of ONIX 2.1 documentation, a change in the tone of communication (including training and the mailing list) and the removal of various XML tools from the EDItEUR website. The removal of the XML DTD files for 2.1 will be the most obvious outward sign of sunset – this *will* cause failures in production systems at many companies who use ONIX 2.1, as online validations will cease working. While ONIX users cannot claim they were not warned, and we will continue to communicate about sunset for the next three months, it is inevitable that this will cause some significant problems for ONIX users who are not in regular contact with EDItEUR via any channel. Workarounds for the validation issue exist, and GB plans to release a paper in November documenting the steps that an organisation should take to avoid production system failures. [Essentially, the workaround is to use a local copy of the various XML DTD files.]

Luc Audrain asked whether national groups would receive this documentation. GB answered yes, and encouraged national groups to help communicate the workarounds to stakeholders. Jesús Peraita raised a concern that any such communication might invite demands to delay the sunset. Bente Franck-Sætervoll suggested this should be used as an opportunity to discover organisations who depended on ONIX but were not in communication. However, Noah Genner said that communication about this issue was vital to avoid surprises for stakeholders. LV asked about the volume of online validations. GB replied that downloads of the DTD files during online validations account for >90% of the bandwidth usage on the EDItEUR website, and there were 0.5 to 1 million downloads per month. GB listed a few organisations who had in the past been responsible for a very high number of downloads – including Amazon, Wiley, RR Donnelley. While these groups are now using local copies of the files, there are thousands of others who will be affected by removal of the online DTDs, and there will be hundreds or thousands of production failures on 1/1/2015. LV noted that from a customer service perspective, communication about how to avoid such failures is critical, and EDItEUR should guard itself against criticism by making the documentation widely available.

LV asked whether some kind of pop-up message was possible to warn people as they did validations, but GB replied that the validations are done by automated server-based software, not by human agency. LV asked whether EDItEUR could identify those large organisations making most use of the DTD files? GB noted that this was possible in the past (and considerable efforts had been made to reduce the use of the online files), but

it is not possible with the reporting facilities provided by the new hosting company EDItEUR now uses.

The remaining sunset issue is that of twilight support for the codelists. GB outlined the simple choice – should there be continued updates of the handful of codelists that are unique to ONIX 2.1 for a further year following sunset. We all recognise that 2.1 will be used for several more years, and neither sunset nor twilight affect this. The only question is whether codelists like List 7 and 78 should continue to be updated for a further year. LV noted that this request originally came from the US group, and also noted the specific circumstances that (in part) prompted the request – the ongoing integration within largest US trade publisher (Penguin-Random House) has made migration impossible in time for sunset. He also emphasised that the US group is taking the need to migrate very seriously, but that without some measure of twilight support, there is a danger that the US group will progress independently. But it is not solely a US problem. Detlef Bauer said that only two suppliers were sending ONIX 3.0 to Libri (CB and Springer), and it was noted that the UK is not far progressed in migrating either (though this might be misleading, because several major publishers are very close to ready). BFS noted that her opposition to any twilight support had softened, and that limited twilight support for 2015 was acceptable. Uwe Janssen noted that the forthcoming Issue 27 of the codelists would be the last prior to sunset, and that this message had not received any unfavourable comments from the German ONIX group. Despite the slow pace of migration in Germany, a year of twilight support for codelists updates would be enough. LA also agreed: although previously against any twilight support, he now agreed it should go ahead. Aija Vahtola, Diane Ouellet and others also agreed with the idea of limited twilight support.

EJB noted that since use of 2.1 had ceased around 18 months ago in the Netherlands this was not an issue for the Netherlands group: Renek Mendruć, Marie Bilde Rasmussen and others agreed, because 2.1 was not widely used in their countries. Merve Okçuoğlu also noted that Turkish use of ONIX was focussed on ONIX 3.0 only, and AI (on behalf of the Japanese group) said that the 2.1 to 3.0 migration in Japan was essentially complete.

GB said that a change in attitude was noticeable in the US following BEA (May), and that twilight support was not seen as an ‘excuse to delay’. Across the group, there was now a clear consensus in favour of limited twilight support for codelists updates.

The question turned to how the continuation of codelist support should be communicated. Howard Willows suggested that any announcement should be clear and unambiguous. Simonetta Pillon also supported the idea of clear communication. JP suggested – and most representatives including Tine Philips, AV, DO supported – a low-key announcement limited to a note in the normal documentation accompanying each codelist release, with UJ emphasising we should not do anything that could be interpreted as encouragement to delay.

LD asked whether the codelists for 2.1 and 3.0 could be separated. GB answered yes, but was unsure what that gained, and this was not pursued.

- GB noted that a few proposed developments had not ‘made the cut’ for ONIX 3.0.2 but remain in play for some future 3.0.3:

- renaming of the <Conference> composite and the enclosed data elements to ‘event’, extending its use case to art exhibitions, sporting events *etc*
- marketing material limited to a subset of countries
- e-book DRM details within multi-component products
- the potential for hybrid open access monographs (a reality in the serials world, but in theory could happen in books too)

GB felt that none of these merited development of a 3.0.3 early in 2015, but the position should be reviewed at the next ISC meeting.

- Finally in his report, GB outlined a few other ongoing ONIX-related projects. Over the next few months, he will chair a BISG working group considering how to express ONIX data using the schema.org vocabulary, so that bibliographic data can be embedded within web pages. LD asked whether this would encompass all ONIX data elements? GB replied that BISG is looking first to identify which subset of the ONIX data elements would make sense in contexts where schema.org markup is used, then will suggest practical mappings and may go on to suggest extensions to the schema.org vocabulary. This is not just an activity for BISG. LV notes he will accept help from the group.

JP asked about EDUPUB (which Bill Kasdorf had presented at CONTEC), and suggested there may be additions to ONIX that would be helpful in describing various educational products. GB agreed, and stated that some exploratory discussions had been opened with educational publishers in the UK, and invited any ISC members with experience with educational metadata to get in contact.

4. LD introduced the previously-circulated paper on proposals for Codelists Issue 27, and invited comments.

The only comment related to the Trade category proposal for ‘e-book shorts’. These are difficult to define, and Hetty Liewerink noted that the Trade category data element is not often used. This had also been noted in prior discussions with the US national group, who suggested Product form detail would be better. However, GB pointed out that the definition of Trade category says it is “somewhat related to, but not properly an attribute of, product form” – and this sounds perfect for ‘shorts’, where the emphasis is on how shorts are merchandised and promoted as a category, rather than on the form of the product itself. A Trade category code for US textbooks had been added only a few issues ago.

Issue 27 was approved for publication.

Anna Lionetti suggested a possible addition of grant number information (particularly for open access publishing). This will be considered for Issue 28.

5. LD asked whether there was any other business.
 - NG mentioned BISG / BNC best practice guide for the inclusion of unstructured keywords (<https://www.bisg.org/best-practices-keywords-metadata>). This free download adds detail and many examples to the basic advice in the EDItEUR *Implementation and Best Practice Guide*, and is not specific to North America.
 - AI passed on a note from the Japanese group (who had been listening via Skype) that it had been discussing how far publishing rights can be inferred from the sales rights information in ONIX, and GB suggested anyone interested in this should contact him

(while at the same time noting that given the reluctance of publishers to implement work identifiers such as the ISTC, it is hard to identify exactly what those rights apply to).

- DB raised a point about whether extensive print-specific information such as print orders, collation and binding instructions *etc* should be added to ONIX. His view was that there are alternative standards for such data, and GB recommended JDF (CIP4) and XBits as two standards that should be investigated for such requirements. However, the possibility of including some limited *POD*-specific information is under consideration.

There was no other business.

6. LD asked Nick Woods to confirm the date of the next face-to-face meeting of the ONIX International Steering Committee. It will be held in Conference Room 1 within the Olympia Conference Centre at 1:30pm on Wednesday 15th April.

Note that the venue for the London Book Fair is not the same as in recent years. It will be held in Olympia, and the Olympia Conference Centre is adjacent to (but not within) the main Fair venue.

Graham Bell / Nick Woods
EDItEUR
9th October 2014