

Executive Director's Report to Members: April 2011

Report to the EDItEUR Members – London Book Fair 2011

1 2011 Membership

We are delighted to welcome a number of new members in 2011.

Foremost among our welcomes is that to Centraal Boekhuis of the Netherlands, who have become a Charter Member of EDItEUR and taken a seat on the Board.

We also welcome the following new full members of EDItEUR:

- BPM Consult (Switzerland)
- Copyright Clearance Center (US)
- De Gruyter (Germany)
- EDINA (UK)
- El Kotob (Egypt)
- HarperCollins
- Japan Publishing Organization for Information Infrastructure Development (Japan)
- Kinokuniya (Japan)
- Kualii (US)
- National Technical Committee for Publication Distribution Standardization of China (China)
- Pearson
- Random House
- STL (UK)
- VirtuSales (UK)

We are delighted to be able to report such a successful recruitment year – the results of a significant effort on the part of all at EDItEUR to increase our membership. We have once again decided not to increase our membership fees for 2011; we encourage all our members to encourage others to become members since this is a major contributor to enabling us to maintain our current low membership rates while increasing our activities all the time.

2 Standards development

2.1 ONIX for Books

Since Frankfurt 2010, our major task has been the completion of draft International Best Practice Guidelines for ONIX for Books 3.0. As the book market, and particularly the ebook market, becomes more global, differences between national markets become less and less sustainable. This doesn't mean that it should not still be possible to support specific requirements in individual national markets – but it does imply that where exactly the same requirement exists in different markets, it should be met in the same way.

Graham Bell has been working on a very comprehensive guide and a working draft has now been published on the EDItEUR website (<http://www.editeur.org/93/Release-3.0-Downloads/#Best%20practice>). The document is available for public comment until May 27th and we encourage all members who are ONIX for Books users to review the guidelines against their own practice; we anticipate that the publication of the first edition of the guide will follow by the end of June 2011.

The guide will be subject to periodic update, particularly to add specific use case examples and enhanced guidance on the basis of growing experience with ONIX for Books 3.0. It may also be expanded by direct incorporation of material from the separate Application Notes on Sets and Series, Digital Products, Block Updates, and Territories and Terms of Supply.

Codelist Issue 12 (for ONIX for Books 2.1 and 3.0) was published at the end of October and Codelist Issue 13 was published in March. Codelist issue 14 is currently timetabled for July. Issues 12 and 13 included additions required to support use of ONIX for Books in Japan and in the Arab world, and a few codes added during preparation of the Best Practice Guidelines, as well as to meet requests provided by various National Groups. The increased frequency of publication reflects the agreement that we will improve the timeliness of Codelists, to ensure that we reflect rapidly changing market conditions.

We are now beginning to see increasing activity on ONIX for Books 3.0. It seems to have been a long time coming – and has been a cause of some frustration; many of the criticisms that I hear levelled at ONIX are about the absence of features in ONIX for Books 2.1 – features which invariably turn out to have been included in ONIX for Books 3.0, and indeed were the reason for creating and developing 3.0 in the first place.

It is of course entirely understandable that many are struggling to justify the investment required to update – but it is the only way in which they can manage many of the metadata communication issues that they are increasingly recognising. It is though salutary for us to recognise just how major an undertaking it has proved to introduce a completely new release of ONIX for Books. It was a long time in the making, but may take even longer to implement worldwide – not least because the existing implementation is so widespread and involves so many different players.

At the same time, we should give proper recognition to the work done a decade ago in developing ONIX for Books 2.0 and 2.1. The robustness of the modelling is well illustrated by the fact that it has proved possible to implement ONIX for Books 2.1 in the Japanese market (the JPO's initial choice) without any significant structural issues becoming apparent.

Encouragingly, in Egypt El Kotob has prepared guidance on the use of ONIX for Books 3.0 in the Arab-speaking world. We are confident that the robustness of the standard will prove equally valuable in China, where we have now signed MOUs with the National Technical Committee for Publication Distribution Standardization of China, and where work on implementing a national ONIX-based metadata strategy is gathering pace.

A first international directory of ONIX for Books users and services – essentially a list of companies that have implemented ONIX within their line of business, or which provide ONIX-related services – has been published on our website (<http://www.editeur.org/111/users-and-services-directory.html>). At present, it contains only about 65 entries, reflecting only a small proportion of the known ONIX

users: it is expected that initial publication of the list will lead to more companies wishing to be added. Please add your details if you have not already done so.

2.2 ONIX for Books and the library sector

In my previous report, I wrote about the work on mapping ONIX to MARC (and vice versa) that had been undertaken by OCLC (for more detail, see <http://www.editeur.org/96/ONIX-and-MARC21/>).

There has been no significant new development in this direction, but it is clear from conversations that there is increasing interest in breaking through the barrier between the commercial metadata and library cataloguing communities. We should be aided in this in our work with the Linked Heritage project (see more below in this report).

2.3 ICEDIS Working Groups

The ICEDIS Committee agreed at its meeting in Frankfurt in October 2010 to take responsibility as the governance committee for all EDItEUR standards in the library supply chain. The issue of standards governance is tackled in more detail in Section 3 of this report.

In what follows, I will report on current activity in ICEDIS. ICEDIS organises itself into working groups, the following of which are currently active (in accordance with the ICEDIS roadmap, recently reaffirmed by a full meeting of ICEDIS at the end of the UKSG conference in Harrogate):

2.3.1 Claims & Claims Responses

Improved claims handling for print and online resources. This Group aims to offer ways to improve claims handling for serial resources, recognizing that considerable volumes of claim and response messages are still exchanged through the supply chain on paper. The primary focus has been on exploring the underlying business cases and developing a new message suite for claims, claim responses and claim cancellations. Structurally, the new messages are modelled on the EDItX transactional standards maintained by EDItEUR, while code lists were derived and enhanced from earlier EDIFACT messaging and, crucially, the business needs and practices of WG participants.

Parallel efforts have explored best practice in this area, as well as ways of pre-empting some claims altogether, via earlier communication of journal schedules and release dates. Scope has initially been restricted to claiming for print resources and to traffic between agents and publishers. But the intention in later work (see below) is to investigate practices surrounding claims for online resources and to enable other, upstream players such as libraries to utilize the same formats in communication with publishers, agents and distributors.

Status: Message documentation and XML schemas have been delivered, according to the Group's specifications. Group members are now moving to pilot exchanges and implementation.

2.3.2 Claiming for Online Resources

Investigating how online resources are claimed and if appropriate, extending claims messaging to cater for these cases. Claiming for online (as well as print) resources was part of the initial remit of the Claims & Claims Responses Working Group. But to manage the scope and achievability of the initial mandate, that Group decided in the initial phase to focus on print resources. Also, subsequent discussions highlighted the rather different situations and workflows involved in claiming for online resources, where speed is frequently of the essence and different technical (as well as order fulfilment) issues need to be addressed. ICEDIS has asked that an appropriate group be convened

that can investigate this area more thoroughly. The group is asked to propose (a) whether or not standard messaging would be useful in this context and (b) if the answer is “yes”, how best to extend the existing formats to address these new use cases.

Status: Seeking to convene interested parties and hold an initial brainstorm. Involvement from content hosting agencies and library users would be particularly useful in moving this forward.

2.3.3 “Ebooks Plus” in ONIX for Serials

Enhancing the existing ONIX for Serials standard to manage emerging products and services, such as ebook collections and other non-journal products available on subscription. Against a background of evolving product offerings in the library market, ICEDIS asked this Group to review the suitability of ONIX for Serials for other, non-journal products frequently encountered. Specific examples include collections of ebooks and subscription access to online databases and other resources. Working closely with EDItEUR consultants, the Group validated the working assumption that real business cases exist and that enhancements to the standards would meet current and emerging business needs. In turn, EDItEUR proposed a series of changes – most terminological rather than structural – to allow the core ONIX for Serials formats to cater for these other subscription offerings. Alongside the SPS (Serial Products & Subscriptions), SOH (Serial Online Holdings) and SRN (Serial Release Notifications) formats, the Group also examined the closely related ICEDIS Publishers Price List – itself a specialized version of SPS – and agreed corresponding changes.

Status: Enhanced versions of the SPS, SOH, SRN and ICEDIS Publishers Price List standards will be published in Spring 2011, together with revisions to the underlying XML schemas and code lists.

2.3.4 ICEDIS Publishers Price List

Wider rollout of a comprehensive format designed to convey complex price catalogue information for print, online, single and packaged products. This standard format was produced at the request of ICEDIS to cater for a wide range of price catalogue exchanges. It is a specialized version of the ONIX SPS format. The Publishers Price List saw its first live implementations in early 2010, followed by pilot exchanges – conveying 2011 pricing information – in the summer of 2010. Other implementers have now joined the initial publisher/agent partnerships and EDItEUR is in the process of validating sample files to ensure consistent interpretation and, thus, easier take-up by receiving parties.

Status: After initial implementations in 2010, the focus is now on wider rollout across the industry, as well as incorporation of several enhancements from the 2010 pilots.

2.3.5 Preservation Applications and ONIX for Serials SOH Format

Potential enhancements to the SOH format to support specified business needs encountered by players in the Preservation of e-resources. EDINA (Edinburgh, UK) approached EDItEUR on behalf of partners involved in the PEPRS Project <http://edina.ac.uk/projects/peprs/> – an initiative to Pilot an E-journal Preservation Registration Service. This led to a request to investigate the suitability of the ONIX SOH format for exchanging information about serial and other online resources that are subject to preservation activities. The broad-based Group established has specified and agreed a series of specific business use cases and information flows for which standard communications would be valuable. EDItEUR has proposed enhancements to the SOH format that would be required to support such uses. Other possible uses – including extensions to cover preserved *print* resources and elaboration to cover article- rather than issue or release-based messaging – have been noted but excluded from initial scope.

Status: In the process of agreeing a draft to be published spring 2011 for subsequent pilot implementation. Given the specialized nature of the requirements, the standard will be identified and maintained as a separate message, provisionally ONIX for Preservation Holdings (ONIX-PH).

2.3.6 Structured Addresses & Organizational Identifiers

Increasing automation in processing customer details and aiding customer recognition by the use of more structured address formats and wider adoption of established organizational identifiers. This WG was asked to look at two complementary approaches to improving the quality and usability of customer information exchanged between supply chain partners. One strand seeks to rectify a known limitation in existing ICEDIS messaging, whereby customer addresses are currently exchanged as a fixed-length free-form string. Substituting this by a much more structured format is seen as a key milestone in ICEDIS' eventual migration to its next generation of standards. The other strand involves encouraging wider use of existing and emerging standard identifiers – such as the Ringgold identifier and the NISO Institutional Identifier I². Two initial meetings of the Group in mid-2010 focussed on identifying and confirming the likely business benefits that could result. Group members volunteered samples of their internal address formats for comparison. EDItEUR has now produced a detailed analysis of the existing formats (including those in the legacy ICEDIS formats) and has proposed a structured name and address model for review. Although raised at this stage in a “serials” context, this work is seen as being of importance to all of EDItEUR's XML standards.

Status: The Group is currently reviewing the proposed name and address model against their own practices and likely future requirements.

2.4 ONIX for Licensing Terms

2.4.1 ONIX for Publication Licenses

Although we have seen false dawns before in the push to get ONIX-PL implemented, there are some encouraging new straws in the wind which suggest that the long delayed advent of a supply chain in which licence information can be effectively shared between publishers and libraries in a structured and machine-readable form is finally going to arrive.

- JISC Collections has expressed about 50 of its licences in ONIX-PL and has developed software for allowing these licences to be compared side-by-side (as well as downloaded for incorporation into local ERMs).
- We have recently reopened conversations with the SERU Committee of NISO about an ONIX-PL expression of SERU (which was first drafted 2 years ago); there is renewed interest, and this will now be shared with the wider SERU community with the support of the SERU Committee chairs.
- We have discovered some individual efforts to implement OPLE and create licences, which have been taking place entirely below the radar (and about which we have found out entirely “by accident”). These are particularly encouraging, as they demonstrate a bottom up demand for ONIX-PL capabilities (and show that implementing ONIX-PL is not something restricted to EDItEUR's highly specialist and knowledgeable team).
- We have been undertaking a small project for one of our members to encode 4 different “open access” licences for journal articles in ONIX-PL, to enable them to provide better information to users at the point of use about the terms that apply to a particular article

- We are aware of (but are currently unable to publicise) a serious effort between two of our members that might see a very large number of licences encoded and shared in ONIX-PL.

2.4.2 ONIX for RROs

The ONIX for RROs Handbook developed by Copyright Clearance Center as a simple guide to implementing these two messaging standards has now been published on the EDItEUR website (<http://www.editeur.org/23/ONIX-for-RROs/#Handbook>). CCC has also become a member of EDItEUR this year. We are not formally aware of current progress with new implementations within the IFRRO community, but have some anecdotal evidence that other RROs are now implementing (and are awaiting the results of an IFRRO poll of its members).

2.4.3 ARROW

The ARROW project has now formally completed, with ARROW PLUS starting at the beginning of April (see more below). At the time of writing, we are waiting for formal clearance from ARROW for us to publish v1.0 of the ARROW messages (of which there are 14) as an EDItEUR standard (ONIX-RS: ONIX for Rights Information Services).

2.4.4 BISG Rights and Permissions Committee

Members may be aware that BISG has established two related but separate committees – one to develop a standardised approach to the semantics used in all types of rights and permissions communication; the other to establish and pilot specific messages for machine to machine communication between business partners where there is an obvious business case for automating communication. David Martin and I have been participating in the second of these committees.

It has taken somewhat longer than anticipated to get to the current position, where David has developed a strawman proposal for the committee on a standard message for the communication rights-related royalty payments (for business to business applications). We expect to publish this document on the website shortly. As well as input from the BISG committee, we have also been able to get some review support from two rights specialists in the UK, and BIC is planning to create a committee to review and input into the work of the BISG (a new departure for BIC, but one which again underlines the importance of rights and permissions communication).

2.4.5 ONIX-LT abstract model

Inspired by our work with ODRL (referred to in my last report), we are now close to completing work on an abstract model of rights and permissions which we can publish to make explicit the structures that all our ONIX-LT standards use for expressing the relevant structures. This work is particularly important in giving credibility to the ONIX-LT work outside sectors in which EDItEUR is known. As well as publishing our model, we will also be able to describe with precision a mapping to ODRL (which, unlike ONIX-LT, is designed to manage only “machine decidable” permissions).

This work is very important in the context of other global developments, but tends to have a low profile because its impact is not immediately tangible.

2.5 EDI

2.5.1 EDIFACT

There are no significant developments to report in this period.

2.5.2 EDItX

Although there have been some last minute delays in the process at BISG, we anticipate that we will publish the final version of the sales reporting message (developed in close collaboration with BISG) either late in April or early in May. A first major implementation – by Ingram – has already been reported.

As mentioned earlier, the ICEDIS Claims messages have been developed with structures derived from EDItX: previous XML messaging work for ICEDIS has been largely “informational” – and thus produced in ONIX style, whereas the Claims suite represent the first of the current generation of ICEDIS “transactional” standards. We plan to adopt a similar, EDItX-style approach as legacy ICEDIS transactional standards are re-engineered over the coming years.

2.5.3 Web services

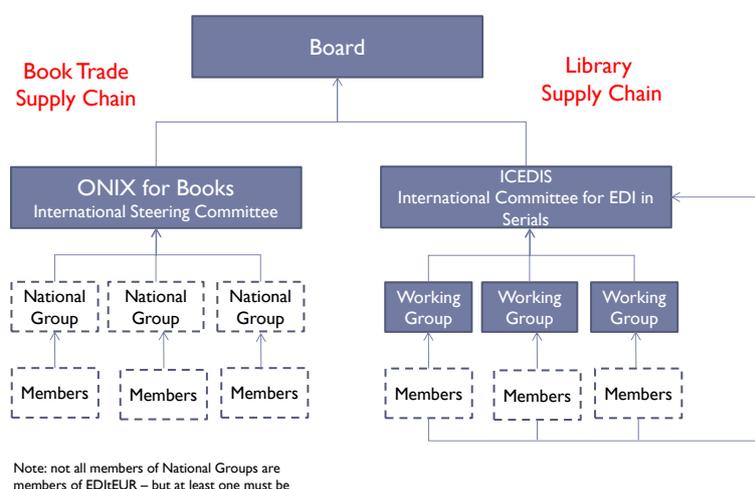
The work on international standards for Web services will continue when time permits.

2.6 Standards validation

There has been no significant development in the Schematron work, although members at the recent International ONIX for Books Steering Committee meeting at the London Book Fair continued to encourage its development and deployment in parallel with the International Best Practice Guidelines.

3 EDItEUR Standards Governance

The following diagram may help to provide a clear understanding of EDItEUR's primary governance structure:



In the area of the library supply chain, we have found ourselves occasionally overlapping with NISO (the US National Information Standards Organization, which is primarily focused on libraries and the library supply chain). We have recently signed an MOU with NISO to ensure the closest possible collaboration.

4 EDItEUR Major Project Work

4.1 WIPO Enabling Technologies Framework

At the London Book Fair, EDItEUR (led by Sarah Hilderley) launched its guidelines for publishers on best practice in creating accessibility for people with print impairment (those with impaired sight, with dyslexia or with motor disabilities which impede their use of normal printed material). These guidelines are focused primarily on the liberating impact of digital publishing – for example, the needs of people requiring “large print” editions can be substantially met by e-reading devices like the Kindle. These guidelines – which have been produced in collaboration with a large number of organisations and individuals around the world – are intended to help publishers to understand the nature of “accessible publishing” and how they can best contribute to making their publications available to the widest possible reading public. The Guidelines can be read and downloaded from <http://www.editeur.org/109/Enabling-Technologies-Framework/>.

This project, funded by the World Intellectual Property Organisation, is a collaboration between EDItEUR and the DAISY Consortium, a standards organisation which specialises in accessibility. The following description of the DAISY standard is drawn from the glossary provided as part of the guidelines and may be useful to members unfamiliar with DAISY:

DAISY (Digital Accessible Information Systems)

The specialist standard format developed by the DAISY Consortium for use in the creation of accessible versions for the print impaired; the DAISY Consortium is a not-for-profit organisation which represents libraries for people with print disabilities. The DAISY format allows the digital distribution of both text and audio formats and has much more sophisticated Navigational Information than has been typical in commercial e-books or audiobooks. Although effective use of the DAISY format has required specific reader software (which may be implemented either on a PC or on a specialist audio device), the new version of the **EPUB** specification, EPUB 3.0, represents a complete convergence with the DAISY delivery format. Any platform which is compliant with EPUB 3.0 should also be compliant with DAISY.

The significance of the reference to EPUB (see also below) will not be lost on members, and our collaboration with DAISY has been extremely fruitful.

Assuming that project funding is renewed, Sarah's task for the next two years is widespread dissemination of the guidelines – and further development of them as required by changing circumstances. There are also likely to be some extensions to ONIX code lists to better enable the description of accessible publications.

4.2 ARROW PLUS

This project (which is being managed on behalf of EDItEUR by Brian Green) is due to start on 1st April. ARROW PLUS is a continuation of the ARROW project, with extensions into countries which have a less sophisticated data infrastructure than those involved in piloting ARROW in the first round. Brian's primary role in the project is to develop business requirements documentation for Books in Print databases in 6 or 7 European countries; he started that work before the London Book Fair with an initial meeting in Ljubljana.

4.3 Linked Heritage

This project, which also started on 1st April (although with a kick off meeting towards the end of the month), is aimed at improving the metadata and content resources of Europeana (the European Digital Library). EDItEUR's role, which will be spearheaded by Graham Bell, is to lead a work stream on bridging the gap between Europeana and commercial publishing, specifically in getting more and higher quality publishers' metadata into Europeana. This will involve (inter alia) mapping ONIX to the Europeana metadata standard, and also in making simpler ONIX formats available to European publishers with less sophisticated technical capabilities.

5 Other standards activities

5.1 International ISBN Agency

The issue of ISBN and ebooks rumbles on. Following the report commissioned by the International Agency in the summer of 2010 (on which I reported to members in October), BISG commissioned its own study, which had much the same findings. The BISG Identifiers Committee continues to meet regularly (with input from both EDItEUR and the International Agency) seeking consensus on a way forward. As a result of recent conversations, I am more optimistic about the development of that consensus, although it is taking too long (and in the meantime, we continue to see divergence of practice).

There will be no "quick fix" to this problem – divergent practices are too widespread, and often determined by system architectures – but as a global industry we need to agree on the end point towards which we are pressing, in order to provide the necessary strategic arrow. In a significant first step, the International ISBN Agency has issued enhanced guidance on the whole question of the application of ISBNs to e-books; these have had a broadly positive reception and we are optimistic that they will form the basis for a future consensus.

Stella Griffiths and Graham Bell attended the 11th CERALC (Centro Regional para el Fomento del Libro en América Latina y el Caribe) conference of Latin American ISBN agencies in Quito, Ecuador. This brought together representatives of 13 ISBN agencies from the region, with staff from CERALC and the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

There was broad agreement with the principles of the IIA's stance on ISBN identification of e-books, namely that separate publications should each have separate ISBNs and that this would be determined by both the file format and usage rights available. However, because of the very immature nature of the e-book market in some of these countries, there was a good opportunity for the ISBN agencies to provide clear guidance to publishers to ensure that identification can be applied consistently from the outset.

Agencies from Argentina and Colombia showed particular interest in ONIX for Books, and there were tentative discussions around the possibility of establishing a forum for further ONIX discussion: this could take the form of an ONIX 'national group' for Latin America, most likely facilitated by CERALC. However, such discussion is at a very early stage, and no Latin American organisation is currently an EDItEUR member.

5.2 RFID

The RFID in Libraries standard, ISO 28560 parts 1-3, was finally approved in February 2011. EDItEUR provided considerable input to the ISO Working Group and co-funded RFID consultant Paul Chartier to edit the crucial Part 2 of the standard. EDItEUR continues to play a major role in the revision of the EPC Global standard for trade RFID in order to allow non-publishers to assign RFID tags. This is crucial for the book trade where wholesalers or retailers are likely to assign RFID tags to books.

5.3 ISNI

The International ISNI Agency has now been incorporated as a not-for-profit UK based company, and OCLC has been selected as technical partner (to create and administer the database). The initial database is now being created, with a target of having assigned over three million ISNIs to creators by July 2011. The target date for launching operations is now October 2011; organisations in more than 10 countries have expressed interest in creating a Registration Agency.

5.4 EPUB and IDPF

Members will be aware that the IDPF have recently published a candidate release of EPUB 3.0 for public comment; the final stable version of the standard is expected to be published in the early summer.

EDItEUR's engagement with the standards revision process (led by Graham Bell) has been restricted to issues of direct relevance to our mission – metadata and identification. On the metadata front, the new standard allows metadata following any declared schema to be embedded in an EPUB file – or for a metadata record to be referenced from within the EPUB file using a resolvable identifier. We will be providing guidelines on the appropriate way to use ONIX in this application before the end of the year.

One Use Case that has already been identified by at least two of our members is the capability of communicating ebook permissions information within the supply chain (in other words, to allow a publisher to communicate to a retailer or other intermediary the terms under which a particular ebook can be distributed). This type of permissions information is easily conveyed in ONIX for Books 3.0, although on the basis of such anecdotal evidence as I have, that capability may not be widely known or understood.

6 Media standards convergence

Outside my work for EDItEUR, I continue to consult particularly on issues relating to automated rights management; in this context I should particularly like to draw members' attention to a project launched by the European Publishers Council called "The Answer to the Machine is in the Machine", for which I am acting as Project Director. More information about this project (one of the winners in a European Commission DG InfSo competition for "big ideas for the digital agenda") can be found at <http://bit.ly/gI8e3T>. Several members are already familiar with the project, having submitted Use Cases to the project.

This is a project with a very short timescale. Working with our technical partners (CNRI), our aim is to demonstrate how the existing technical infrastructure – including ONIX-PL and the permissions capability of ONIX for Books 3.0 – can be used to make copyright work effectively on the network. EDItEUR will be contributing – directly or indirectly – to a number of the Use Cases which the project

aims to demonstrate, and this should be valuable in raising EDItEUR's profile in a number of different ways.

This demonstration has two audiences. One is made up of European regulators and legislators – the project has already gained significant support in the Commission and among MEPs; and has also been given a considerable support as a viable alternative to the extension of copyright exceptions in responses to the Hargreaves Review of Intellectual Property in the UK. The other is the copyright industries themselves – the recognition that a viable alternative exists which “simply” requires implementation rather than the invention of whole new technical solutions is a very important one.

Why is this important in the context of media standards convergence? Because, in the end, it is not viable for the ends of this project to be achieved through independent developments in different media – somewhere, these have to “meet in the middle”. The differences between different media sectors matter a lot to those of us in each sector – but rather less to everyone else! We need to seek cross media agreement, not on some monolithic single rights management structure – an impossible aim – but on the necessary standards basis to create the rights management infrastructure that we all need.

The next opportunity to move this agenda forward is presented by the EPC's project, and EDItEUR will, I am sure, be an enthusiastic supporter of these developments.

7 Personnel

We have already made two new hires for our new financial year (starting on April 1st):

- Nick Woods joined us on 31 March as full time Operations Manager. Nick has a strong track record of work in both commercial operations and in local government – and we are confident that, as a maths graduate, he will bring very useful skills to EDItEUR.
- Tim Devenport, for many years a consultant to EDItEUR, joined us (part time) on 1 April as Lead Consultant, ICEDIS.

One new hire is still to be made: our Project Lead for Linked Heritage.

At the end of March, Brian Green stepped down as Executive Director of the International ISBN Agency to be replaced by Stella Griffiths. As already foreshadowed in this report, Brian will continue as a Principal Consultant to EDItEUR, working primarily on the ARROW PLUS project, but also supporting Stella as she identifies the need.

8 Some reflections – two years in

I have now been in post for a little over two years, and it is probably appropriate for me to step back a little and think about what has been achieved – and what hasn't yet been achieved – in that time; and what the implications may be for the next two or three years.

In *The Road Ahead* (a remarkably prescient book published in 1995), Bill Gates wrote: “We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next ten. Don't let yourself be lulled into inaction.” Certainly, some things have changed little in the last two years, but the underlying sense of change in the industries that we

serve continues to be very swift. The most recent figures on ebook sales in the US confirm that the “switch to digital” is now well underway there – and other markets cannot be far behind. Although the “switch to digital” is close to complete in the academic market (particularly the journals market), the renewed interest in standards development in the ICEDIS community suggests that standards development – and more particularly implementation – has lagged behind the market itself. We are perhaps seeing something of the same thing in the slow implementation of ONIX for Books 3.0 and the challenges of ISBN implementation in the ebook space.

The businesses that we support with standards are becoming ever more complex, and this is perhaps at the heart of the dilemma we face. We are always being asked for greater simplicity. But the increasing complexity of metadata and identifier management is simply an accurate reflection of greater business complexity. A reduction of complexity in the metadata simply implies a reduction in the ability to describe a more complex world accurately – in other words, the loss of data.

We particularly recognise this in the effort to implement standards for communication about rights and permissions. Publishers and others in the chain are increasingly recognising the importance of this issue – but are often ill-equipped in system terms to manage the implications. There is a growing trend to improve rights and licensing systems in publishers, but these are still far from comprehensive, and no one has any experience of communicating information between systems. The BISG committee which has been working in this area has been working hard against this background and has made commendable progress.

All this is easy for us to articulate but much more difficult for our stakeholders – something we recognise completely. How can we best support them?

We have come to the broad conclusion that we will fulfil our mission more effectively by creating more but simpler standards (rather than fewer, individually more complex, ones). We gained experience in the ARROW project of managing families of simpler messages from a central complex schema which is never seen by anyone but us; we have reached internal consensus that this is the best way forward (currently reflected in the development of the specialised “preservation” message within the Online Holdings family). It will slightly add to the complexity of what we need to manage; but we remain committed to making it as easy as possible for everyone to **implement** EDItEUR standards – a commitment underlined by our continuing work on providing better implementation documentation for ONIX for Books 3.0.

At the same time, we cannot turn away from issues of **compliance**. Another commonly heard complaint is that “no one implements ONIX in the same way” (specifically in discussions about ONIX for Books). There are at least three possible explanations for this:

- Inadequate or imprecise documentation, either from EDItEUR or from national groups
- Imperfect implementation, based on developers not following documentation – either “guessing” at what things mean or because of a need to work round system inadequacies
- Demands of powerful individual players in the market for customised data feeds – which are difficult to resist by smaller organisations (or even larger ones anxious to get their products to market) and which lead to a fracturing of the standard

The first of these is (at least partly) in our hands, and we are taking all the steps that are available to us to improve core EDItEUR documentation of standards. The publication of the international

implementation guidelines for ONIX for Books 3.0 is an important development in this respect (and has involved a significant investment on our part).

We can also help to some extent with the second of these challenges – by giving direct support for implementations to our members (something we are offering on an increasing basis) and by publishing improved compliance testing tools (exemplified by our work on Schematron).

The last is more difficult. In the end, compliance with standards is a peer community issue more than a central “enforcement” one. We can only exhort all our members – and all our users – to be more forceful in driving out non-standard implementations – otherwise, the cost savings available through the implementation of standards can never be optimised.

Having said all that, I am by no means dissatisfied with what we have achieved over the last two years in terms of our core mission – to provide standards that are fit for purpose for our stakeholder community – but neither am I in any way complacent. It is clear that the demands on us are continually increasing, and we have to find effective ways of managing that demand effectively.

Looking inwards at the organisation, I can equally see that we have achieved a great deal in two years. We have totally changed the governance structure, and in this last year can now see more of the elements falling into place (for example, we have completed appointments to the Executive Committee; changed the remit of ICEDIS; and completed an MOU with NISO). There is more still to do, not only in completing the standards governance infrastructure work, but also in developing a proper set of By Laws for our members.

Membership is the next issue to mention. Despite a difficult economic background, we have driven up total membership by 20% over the last two years – and I remain cautiously optimistic that we can continue to increase our membership in coming years.

Another development has been a major drive into supporting projects which will have a particularly marked impact on us in the coming year. The advantage of this type of “project” work is that it helps us to extend our reach and reputation into adjacent areas of work – for example, with guidelines for the visually impaired, or work on improving metadata provision and metadata flow – without distracting too much effort and resource from our core mission. However, we need to recognise that projects of this kind (even when we recruit excellent members of staff to run them) do require management time; although this may be partially or even fully recompensed (which contributes to better management of our overheads), it is not an infinitely flexible commodity.

It is important to recognise that 2011 will see a really major change in the support for our most important single client – the International ISBN Agency. Brian Green has now stepped down as Executive Director of EDItEUR, and his place has been taken by Stella Griffiths. In a sense, this marks “the end of the beginning” of my tenure at EDItEUR.

We are well on our way to making EDItEUR the organisation that it needs to be to fulfil its critical role in the next ten years of change in the industries we support. But much more remains to be done.