

# Executive Director's Report

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*Report to the members – London Book Fair 2015*

## 1 Overview and highlights

I'd first of all like to thank all our EDiTEUR members – and the staff and consultants – for their support and loyalty over my first year as Executive Director.

The period since my last report at the Frankfurt Book has remained challenging but in equal measure fulfilling: it remains difficult to ensure balance between the technical and managerial aspects of the job, though I feel this is now beginning to become a little easier. EDiTEUR has remained busy, and it's always pleasing to see our standards adopted and used to solve real business issues. Over the period since the Frankfurt Fair:

- I have been pleased to welcome five new members to EDiTEUR. And Hachette has become EDiTEUR's first 'International member'.
- The schedule of travel to attend industry events, training, and presentations has been maintained.
- Key ONIX for Books activities have included further ONIX 2.1 to 3.0 transition seminars and webcasts and other activities around the sunset of 2.1, and publication of the ONIX Acknowledgement Message.
- The sunset of ONIX 2.1 has caused fewer issues than it was feared, both for EDiTEUR and across the industry. This is due in part to timely publication of guidance for those intending to continue use of 2.1 into 2015.
- Key *Thema* activity has included the publication of *Thema* version 1.1, following ratification of the proposals at the Frankfurt meeting of the *Thema* International Steering Committee. National groups are continuing to work on translations, and adoption is picking up in a wide range of markets.
- ICEDIS activities have continued to focus on encouraging adoption of ONIX-PC. This remains slow, and there has been disappointingly little progress from EDiTEUR members on developing the case for modernisation of legacy ICEDIS fixed-format transactional messages.
- Agreement has been reached with the International ISBN Agency for a further three-year management contract.
- Subcontract work on the FORWARD project – which aims to trial an infrastructure for diligent search for orphan works in the film sector – has begun.
- The relationship with the W3C and its Digital Publishing Interest Group has continued to develop. The practical side of this work – jointly with BISG – is focussed on expressing book metadata using the schema.org vocabulary.

## 2 Membership

Since the Frankfurt Book Fair, EDiTEUR has signed up five new members – Arvato Systems, Bibliocloud, Danish Publishers Association, Thieme, and Tolino (Deutsche Telekom + Pubbles).

EDItEUR members are particularly loyal, but there have sadly also been losses, as two former members have chosen to resign and two – SWETS and Blinkbox Books – have shut down their operations.

But we are launching a new tier of membership – International Membership. This is aimed at those global organisations who make use of our standards across multiple countries, and I am pleased to say that longtime-member Hachette Livre – on behalf of its affiliates in the UK, US and other countries – has become our first *international* member. We hope that other large organisations choose to join or upgrade to international membership in the future.

Efforts to recruit new members are constant. EDItEUR is committed to making its standards available for use free of charge to all, not just to members – but is equally committed to keeping membership fees as low as possible. New members who choose to support our work help us to do more, while maintaining those commitments, and like all EDItEUR members, they demonstrate their commitment to broad-based and efficient supply chains in the global book, e-book and serials sectors.

The new members for 2015, and the new International Membership for Hachette allowed us to keep the membership fee increase to just £50 for 2015 (the first time in a decade that it has been raised at all).

### 3 Board news

At the meeting of the Board during the London Book Fair, the extended terms of our Chair Paola Mazzucchi and Deputy Chair Len Vlahos come to an end. Tom West will remain as treasurer until the end of his term in 2016.

It would be customary for the existing deputy to become the chair for the next term, and for EDItEUR to seek election of a new deputy at the forthcoming meeting. Sadly, Len Vlahos – our current deputy chair, who would in normal circumstances become Chair of the Board at the forthcoming meeting – has announced his resignation from BISG effective in June, and he will be sorely missed. However, he has indicated he is willing to serve as chair for an interim period until he leaves BISG. The Board will seek to elect a new deputy chair of the Board to sit on EDItEUR's Executive Committee, and to select another new exec committee member later in the year.

## 4 Standards development

### 4.1 ONIX for Books

Laurent Dervieu of Electre very ably chaired the ONIX International Steering Committee at the Frankfurt Fair, and will chair the London meeting immediately prior the Members open meeting.

Key activities over the period have included the publication of the ONIX Acknowledgement message. This is a relatively simple message that can be sent from an ONIX data recipient back to the original sender of the data, confirming receipt, confirming successful processing and potentially – in more sophisticated implementations – informing the sender of any

issues with their original ONIX message. Although cast within the ONIX for Books framework, the Acknowledgement message has been designed to accommodate ONIX-PC, a key member of the ONIX for Subscription Products family, too.

The other major event has been the long-planned sunset of ONIX 2.1, a version of the standard that has been in use since 2003. This involved the removal of support for online validation of messages, archiving of the documentation, and a subtle change in emphasis of answers to support questions (*eg* on the ONIX mailing list). Preparations included the publication of advice for those organisations planning to continue using 2.1 after sunset and a large number of webinars and face-to-face events. In the end, the sunset has caused fewer reported problems than we expected, and I think has been successful in sending a signal to those organisations which have not migrated to ONIX 3.0.

Of course, the regular cadence of codelist updates has been maintained. Only a few requests were received for Issues 27 and 28, so both are relatively small updates, but they introduced a number of key additions at the request of various national groups:

- a trade category code in List 12 for e-book 'shorts'. While not entirely ideal, this allows short publications to be identified and (for example) merchandised separately by retailers;
- new subject scheme codes in Lists 26 and 27 for Library of Congress children's subject headings and various updates for subject schemes used in Norway and Sweden;
- the ability to include a '*digital exclusivity* statement' in Lists 33 and 153 (following clarification of the correct use of the edition type DGO for *digital originals*). This correctly treats exclusivity as a marketing statement, rather than a permanent feature of the product;
- a name identifier type in List 44 for CrossRef's FundRef, a registry of organisations funding academic research and publication, to support open access publishing models;
- addition of ISO-derived region codes in List 49 for Kosovo, which is now widely recognised but does not have an ISO country code (use of a region code still allows organisations with distinct distribution arrangements in Kosovo to specify them correctly);
- clarifications on the use of spiral binding types and trade/library hardback bindings in Lists 78 and 175;
- initial clarifications on leather cover materials in List 99. This list remains slightly problematic, but will be addressed in future codelist updates. Interested experts with knowledge of high-quality bindings are encouraged to get in touch;
- recommendations on the number of decimal places to be included in prices (List 96);
- a new usage restriction in List 147 on the resolution of pages printed from an e-book – the quality of such printing can be controlled via DRM;
- addition of a special *collection éditoriale* collection type in List 148, primarily for use in French language publishing, where the tradition is for very large-scale super-collections bearing many of the characteristics of an imprint or *marque*;
- new downloadable resource types in List 158 for a long description and the index pages of the book;
- addition of a transfer date in List 163 to improve notifications of change of ownership of products;
- new contact types in List 198, to make it simpler to contact the publisher about co-op advertising, review or evaluation copies, and permissions requests;

Detailed proposals for Issue 29 of the codelists will be discussed at the meeting of the ONIX International Steering committee prior to the members meeting, and this issue is intended for release at the end of April. Key proposals in Issue 29 include contributor role codes (List 17) to support comic books, a sales restriction for subscription services, more detailed price type qualifiers for non-consumer (libraries, education and corporate) sales, and codes in Lists 78 and 175 describing the audio channel structure (*ie* mono, stereo or surround sound) for audiobooks and video soundtracks.

Work has begun on collecting requirements for a future minor revision of ONIX 3.0 (*ie* 3.0.3), which we expect to publish at some point between July 2015 and January 2016. The exact timing will depend on priorities set during the ONIX International Steering Committee meeting immediately prior to the members meeting. Likely key additions will be support for communication with subscription services, further additions to support Open Access and DRM usage restrictions, and – possibly – some new elements to support POD or e-book format conversion services. If you have relevant business requirements that are not currently supported in ONIX 3.0, then now is the time to let us know, either direct or via the ONIX national groups.

ONIX training has been a significant new activity over the last three years, and we run many in-depth courses on ONIX, either in-house with our members, or public courses via members like BISG and BIC. We are working to extend this in two directions: first by delivering in-depth face-to-face ONIX training in other languages, and second by building an on-screen training offer particularly aimed at the smaller publishers. Both initiatives should be unveiled over the summer.

## 4.2 Thema

*Thema* remains a very young standard, but has already achieved a remarkably high level of awareness and significant early adoption. Following ratification of a draft at the Frankfurt meeting of the *Thema* International Steering Committee chaired by Howard Willows of Nielsen, version 1.1 of *Thema* was published (initially in English) at the end of November 2014. There's an updated User Guide. Translations of the new version are still being prepared by various national groups, but updated German, Norwegian and French are already available and others are well advanced. We expect to publish at least two more language translations over the next couple of months.

Part of the programme of the Supply Chain Seminar on the last day of the Book Fair will be dedicated to *Thema*.

Work has begun on extending the range of geographical detail in *Thema*, and defining a means of managing geographical qualifiers (*eg* region or city names) for countries which do not have *Thema* national groups.

## 4.3 ICEDIS and ONIX for subscription products

The ICEDIS committee – EDItEUR's special interest group for the serials supply chain – held its latest meeting during the UKSG Conference in Glasgow in April as usual. In the unavoidable absence of the normal co-chairs of the committee, the meeting was graciously chaired by Keith Whiter of Elsevier. William Kilbride of the Digital Preservation Coalition gave an engaging presentation on digital preservation – not a dry a topic as you might imagine,

and one where serials publishers are well advanced, particularly in comparison to museums and archives (an issue which EDItEUR encountered within the DCH-RP project) .

The main work over the last period has been focussed on ICEDIS's Open Access working group, specifying what OA and licensing information should be added into a revision of the ONIX-PC message (and possibly into ONIX-PH and other serials standards). This will be documented within the next three months and piloted in late 2015.

The recent deliberate concentration on ONIX-PC rather than the other more specialised variants of the serials messages (SOH, SPS and SRN) is seen as successful. Progress on adoption of ONIX-PC remains slow, but system vendor Publishing Technology has committed to some development work and members Proquest and OCLC plus the ISSN International Agency have shown significant interest. Its application within library knowledge bases is being actively pursued with GoKB and KB+ (somewhat related initiatives from EDItEUR members Quali and JISC).

#### 4.4 ONIX-PL

The nature of ONIX-PL, a highly-specialised XML licence expression format, means that progress is slow and the number of users of the standard is very limited. Most work on the standard has to be linked to external projects able to provide small amounts of funding. However, David Martin has kept documentation, sample licence expressions *etc* up to date.

#### 4.5 EDItX

The advent of the new EU VAT rules on e-book sales adds new complexity – and provides new impetus – to the e-book sales reporting requirement. At a recent EDItEUR technical strategy day, further work on EDItX sales reporting, including technical tools and improved documentation and implementation notes, was noted as a priority. A case study on the use of EDItX sales reporting will be delivered at the Supply Chain Seminar on the last day of the London Fair.

## 5 Identifier Agencies and other standards activity

### 5.1 International ISBN Agency

EDItEUR has agreed a new three year management contract with the International ISBN Agency. The ISBN International Agency itself has:

- Launched the second phase of its website redevelopment, and the Global Register of Publishers. This online registry replaces a previous paper publication, with the publisher information being made available free of charge for the first time.
- Progressed the revision of the ISBN standard itself to Committee Draft stage, and work to update the ISBN User's Manual is ongoing.
- Executive Director of the International ISBN Agency Stella Griffiths has been elected chair of TC46/SC9 – an important subcommittee of the International Standards Organisation for a three-year term.

Arrangements are progressing for the ISO/TC46 plenary meeting in Beijing in June and the ISBN AGM in September to which all ISBN registration agencies around the world are invited.

## 5.2 International ISNI Agency

EDItEUR provides a limited secretariat service to the International ISNI Agency. There are now roughly 9m ISNIs allocated, three registration agencies (two of which are also EDItEUR members) and 15 members (three of which are also EDItEUR members). Adoption of the relatively new standard is growing – for example Wikipedia now often lists ISNIs when they are available.

## 5.3 International ISTC Agency

EDItEUR provides a limited secretariat service to the International ISTC Agency, although there remains some uncertainty about the future viability of the ISTC standard.

## 5.4 Linked Content Coalition

EDItEUR provides a limited secretariat service to the Linked Content Coalition. Membership of the LCC has grown from the initial six founding members to 14. The newest member is the UK Copyright Hub. While the first dozen members are all standards agencies in one media sector or another, the Copyright Hub is a major *implementer* of standards based on LCC principles and data models.

## 5.5 World Wide Web Consortium / Schema.org / International Digital Publishing Forum

Over the past six months, the W3C Digital Publishing Interest Group (DPIG) has continued its activities. It is important for EDItEUR to retain strong links with this group. Equally important is our link to the International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF), the group that develops the EPUB 3 format, and Graham Bell has recently been elected to the Board of the IDPF.

Many of the DPIG and IDPF activities are important for EDItEUR members – for example, work on EDUPUB, a profile of EPUB 3 aimed specifically at the educational content market.

These initiatives also have links to work we are carrying out with a BISG Working Group on mapping between ONIX for Books and schema.org. Schema.org is a way of embedding structured metadata inside HTML web pages. As such it does not compete with ONIX – broadly, ONIX is for bulk distribution of metadata through the supply chain, whereas schema.org is for enhancing individual web pages that are about individual books. But it is vital that publishers and retailer should not need to manage two *separate* corpora or streams of metadata – so a mapping needs to be defined.

Google and other major search engines use schema.org data to boost search rankings and populate their '[knowledge graph](#)'. In turn, the knowledge graph info can be presented in little infoboxes alongside search results. This promotes discoverability and presentation of books and e-books on the web.

## 6 Major project activity

### 6.1 Digital Cultural Heritage Roadmap for Preservation (DCH-RP)

The DCH-RP project (Digital Cultural Heritage: a Roadmap for Preservation) has now ended, with Tim Devenport having been involved in final reporting for the project in November.

## 6.2 FORWARD

Work on FORWARD – an EU-funded ARROW-like project dealing with identification of rightsholders and orphan works in the film sector – began just prior to the Frankfurt Book Fair. EDItEUR is a subcontractor to the project, working with film institutes and archives from across Europe, and with technical partner Cineca in Italy. This has progressed slightly slower than expected, but activity will pick up over the next period.

## 6.3 Frankfurt event (formerly CONTEC)

EDItEUR does not intend to take part in any future version of the CONTEC conference held during the Frankfurt Book Fair.

We are currently considering a possible re-launch of an independent EDItEUR Supply Chain Seminar at Frankfurt. Consultation with a small number of EDItEUR members who have attended Frankfurt events in the past (including CONTEC, TOC and the old EDItEUR events) suggests there does remain an appetite for such an event (at least among these former attendees), but the expense of running a full-scale event on an independent, commercial basis outside the Frankfurt Fair is prohibitive.

There remain opportunities for a more limited-scale event, for example a Tuesday afternoon mini-conference, either independent of or within the Fair, and we continue to explore these options.

If EDItEUR members have views on what topics they would like to see explored at such an event – or on what *type* of event they would be willing to pay to attend – then please discuss it with us.

Graham Bell  
7 April 2015