1, Why we need Thema
2, Origins & history
3, The structure of Thema
4, Latest developments
What is Thema?

THE

International standard for subject classification for the global book trade – physical & digital
The Communication Problem

- Growth of digital and online means ever more content available to greater number of consumers in an increasingly global market
- ONIX means we can now communicate all product data in standard form – *except subject classification*
- Because book trade subject schemes tend to be national, not international
Legacy Schemes

- Most devised to describe, sort & locate physical products sold through physical bookshops
- Typically, books published in a certain country would be sold in that country or to key export markets
- Exports limited by territorial rights and cost-efficiencies
- Numerous schemes set up: national, market-specific
Current Schemes (recognised in ONIX)

- DDC-Sachgruppen der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie
- Tabla de materias ISBN
- VSQ
- BISAC
- BIC
- ECPA Christian Book Category
- SAB
- Schlagwort-Normdatei (SWD)
- YSA
- JEL
- RVM
- Genre-Code
- BSQ
- Schlagwort-Normdatei (SWD)
- Läromedel
- Warnguppen-Systematik des deutschen Buchhandels (WGS)
- ANELE Materias
- C-Code
- Förhandsbeskrivning
- Netherlandsstalige Uniforme Rubrieksindeling (NUR)
- Thèmes Electre
- Bokgrupper
- CLIL
- Ämnesord
Mappings

- Traditional solution: MAP between schemes
- Mapping works – up to a point, but...
  - Schemes are of various size & detail
  - Different mappings > different outcomes
  - Degrade data > loss of precision, loss of value, loss of control > loss of sales?
  - Can be complex, need to be maintained
Limitations of Mappings

- Maintaining one or two mappings is manageable.
- But so many national / proprietary / specialist schemes.
- Situation Michael Tamblyn (Kobo) termed MAP-O-RAMA.
What Map-O-Rama Looks Like
How *Thema* can help

- International trade requires international standards
- *Thema* can replace local schemes and the need for endless mappings & conversions – direct, clear communication across borders & languages
- Retain control & precision in product data > improve discoverability > increase sales
How Thema Works

- Italy
- Sweden
- UK
- France
- Netherlands
- Germany
- Spain
- N.America
- Norway
- Germany

Thema
Like all the best standards...

- ... *Thema* arose from actual business needs
  - facilitates & supports existing activity; increases efficiencies

- ... *Thema* is responsive & flexible
  - open to input from users & allows for development in new markets
Do we still need Subject Class?

- Consumers may have access to word search, tag clouds, full text searching, ratings, ‘People who bought this, bought that’, etc.

- Isn’t it *restricting* to pigeon-hole creative works and information resources in fixed categories?
So, do we still need Subject Class?

- YES!
- Subject Classification provides the core CONTEXT within which other search strategies can be used
- Need not be visible to end users, but underpins search & retrieval logic
- And because...
Core Functions

• Core functions of Subject Class still apply:
  • to provide a key access point for search & discovery for consumers
  • to enrich product information between trading partners, to inform purchasing decisions
  • to enable a common language for sales reporting, identification of trends, etc
New Trading Environment

- Subject Class needed *more than ever* in new trading environment
- Products and formats proliferate and the trade is increasingly global
- Book buying is increasingly unmediated by experts (booksellers),
- Clear accurate product data is essential
Need for *Thema*

- Book trade needs subject classification
- International trade needs *Thema*
1, Why we need Thema
2, Origins & history
3, The structure of Thema
4, Latest developments
The story so far...

- Discussions at London Book Fair 2011
- Initially largely Eurocentric
- USA & Canada joined at Frankfurt 2012
- Ongoing interest from other countries around the world
- Thema went live with v1.0 late 2013
- Thema v1.1 released late 2014
Initial countries: LBF 2011
Thema countries: FBF 2015

Maps from www.presentationmagazine.com
## Who is involved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIE</th>
<th>Danish PA</th>
<th>Kobo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amazon.co.uk</td>
<td>Dilve</td>
<td>Kogan Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian PA</td>
<td>Editis</td>
<td>Libri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker &amp; Taylor</td>
<td>Electre</td>
<td>MVB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnes &amp; Noble</td>
<td>Elkotob.com</td>
<td>National Library Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIC</td>
<td>Elsevier</td>
<td>Nielsen Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISG</td>
<td>GiantChair</td>
<td>Norske Bokdatabasen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokrondellen</td>
<td>Hachette</td>
<td>NTCPDSAC (China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booknet Canada</td>
<td>HarperCollins</td>
<td>Penguin Random House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowker</td>
<td>Informazioni Editoriali</td>
<td>Springer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTLF</td>
<td>Ingram</td>
<td>Waterstones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Japan Publishers Org</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Governance & Review

- EDItEUR provide governance & administration
- *Theme* International Steering Committee, with representatives from National Groups
- National Groups propose new subject headings based on their market needs
- Ongoing review, new releases expected every one or two years
1. Why we need Thema

2. Origins & history

3. The structure of Thema

4. Latest developments
Thema Overview

- Straight-forward general book trade scheme
- Based on the BIC Classification scheme
- c2500 shared Subject Categories – 20 sections
- c2000 shared Qualifiers – 6 sets
Thema Subject Codes

- Hierarchical Category Codes (alpha-numeric) for specific subjects (eg Arts, Fiction, Medicine)

  QR  Religion & beliefs
  QRMB34  Lutheran Churches
  FFC  Classic crime fiction
  PHN  Nuclear physics
  WBF  Quick & easy cooking
  YBCS  Picture storybooks
Thema Qualifier Codes

- 6 sets of Qualifiers indicating Geographical, Language, Time Period, Educational Purpose, Interest, Style

1HFDF  Burkina Faso
2ADP    Portuguese
3MLBL   c 1740 to c 1749
4TM     Revision & study guide
5AL     Interest age: from c 10 years
6GA     Gothic
National Extensions

- National Extensions within the Qualifiers – providing market-specific detail
- Enable *Thema* to ‘look local, act global’

**1KBC-CA-KQT**  *Nunavut: Qikiqtaaluk Region: Iqaluit*

**1KBC**  *Canada*
EDItEUR Thema site

- Best place to investigate Thema
  
  www.editeur.org/151/Thema

- Executive summary

- Full text of v1.1 & supporting documentation in all available languages

- Interactive multilingual search tool
Thema and other standards

- *Thema* is able to be transmitted in ONIX (2.1 and 3.0)
  - List 26 and List 27, Codes 93 to 99

- *Thema* is recognised in the MARC standard
  - Attracting interest from library sector
1, Why we need Thema

2, Origins & history

3, The structure of Thema

4, Latest developments
Thema is in active use

- Germany: *Thema* now fully integrated into VLB (German BiP)

- UK: *Thema* in Nielsen data feeds (over 10 million records on db classified); also provided by Bowker, BDS; now also sent by publishers

- *Thema* adopted as primary scheme in Norway and Sweden, and new Greek BiP

- N.America: 40k+ titles on Bowker BiP with *Thema*; Booknet Canada assigns *Thema* on local titles
**Thema** implementation begun

- Other countries around the world are at various stages of adoption

- *Thema* is available in: Arabic*, Danish, Spanish, French, Italian*, Japanese*, Polish, Russian*, as well as English, German, Norwegian & Swedish

- The Greek, Turkish and Chinese translations await approval from the relevant authorities

* Indicates incomplete translation
Next Actions

- Promote v1.1; complete documentation, translations etc
- More participating countries, more users
- Target RETAILERS – especially international traders, who have most to gain
- Publishers are assigning *Thema* codes – Retailers must DEMAND them, to create ‘push & pull’ effect
- Consider timescale for v1.2
Summary

- Arose to meet real needs & solve a real problem
- Looks local, acts global
- Works with ONIX and other standards
- Responsive to needs of new & existing users
- Run by EDItEUR, supported by major players
- Improves communication and supports discovery of products across the global book trade
Two key messages

• If you want to trade internationally, you need *Thema* and *Thema* needs you

• *Thema* is in active use