Toward a single subject classification scheme for the global book trade

What are the benefits and how do we get there?

Howard Willows
Nielsen Book
“confusion of tongues”

Subject classification schemes tend to be *local* not *international* – and there are a lot of them.
Schemes recognised in ONIX

ECPA Christian Book Category
Suomalainen kirja-alan luokitus
Varegrupper
BSQ
Thèmes Electre
Varengruppen-Systematik des deutschen Buchhandels
Tabla de materias ISBN
Children’s Book Marketing Categories (CBMC)

BIC

BISAC

ANELE Materias
KDC
Gemeinsame Normdatei
Läromedel
Genre-Code
CCE
YSAN
Förhandsbeskrivning
RVM

Nederlandstalige Uniforme Rubrieksindeling (NUR)
C-Code
Having multiple subject classification schemes is inefficient, costly and inhibits expansion
Problems with multiple schemes

- Gap in the metadata for trading partners across national borders
- Even between divisions of multinational companies
- Traditional fix: Mappings
Mapping works – but only up to a point
Problems with Mappings

• Mapping is not a complete solution

• Often competing versions: different mappings of different quality give different outcomes.

• Tend to be either simple and inaccurate, or complex and difficult to maintain
Data Quality
less Control
less Precision
less Discoverability

= Lost Sales
Mapping is not infinitely extensible

MAP-O-RAMA
Growth of digital publishing and online trading and has outrun interim solutions
Global market

Publishers and retailers can sell to consumers anywhere as long as the consumers can *find* the product...

Global market needs universally understood metadata
The best and only viable long-term solution is a single universal subject classification scheme
Who will benefit from international scheme?

• PUBLISHERS – greater control over product data

• AGGREGATORS – less data manipulation

• RETAILERS – information from a wider range of suppliers

• CONSUMERS – discover the whole world of publishing

• A clearer, simpler Information Supply Chain, even as the number of players increases