



Frequently Asked Questions about ONIX for Books

EDITEUR FAQ on ONIX 2.1 and ONIX 3.0

Schemas and validation

What is the 'schema'?

What are the 'DTD', 'XSD' and 'RELAX NG' schemas?

How should I validate an ONIX for Books message?

Schemas and validation

What is the 'schema'?

A schema is the formal definition of the structure, content and, to some extent the semantics (or meaning) of data in an XML file (in this case, an ONIX XML message).

However, there are some 'business rules' both explicit and implicit within the documentation for the ONIX *Specification* that cannot be defined and enforced within the schema – and these too are part of the 'definition' of ONIX.

What are the 'DTD', 'XSD' and 'RELAX NG' schemas?

These are three widely-recognised 'languages' in which XML schemas can be expressed. EDItEUR provides DTDs and XSD schemas for all current ONIX for Books releases, and for Release 3.0 there is also a RELAX NG schema. Developers can use a variety of widely-available XML tools to 'validate' an ONIX message against the DTD, XSD or RNG schema. With the DTD, only the structure is validated. With the XSD or RNG schema, both the structure and the codelist values are validated. An ONIX message which fails at either of these levels is invalid, and it is reasonable to expect it to be rejected by a receiver.

How should I validate an ONIX for Books message?

In the first place, whether you are sending or receiving ONIX messages, we strongly recommend that you should use a suitable XML validation tool to check the message structure and, preferably, the codelist values against one of the schema definitions. EDItEUR uses an application called oXygen for this purpose, but equally suitable applications include XML Spy, Stylus Studio and other 'enterprise' XML tools, and most software development frameworks also include XML parsing and validation functionality (often based on *xmllib*).

ONIX messages can also be validated using low-cost or free software such as XML Nanny (on Mac OS X) or XML Notepad (on Windows).

However, over and above what can be validated, there are also business rules which (for example) specify conditional requirements. These cannot at present be validated by off-the-shelf XML tools, but are still part of the ONIX *Specification*. Some national groups and

independent developers offer validation tools which may check some of these added criteria. These groups operate accreditation schemes which involve a more rigorous test process, typically taking into account not just the basic validity of ONIX messages but also their timeliness and the level of content.

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