

ONIX International Steering Committee Minutes

*Wednesday 19th October 2016, 1:30–3:00 CEST (UTC+2),
Room Facette, Halle 3.via West, Messe Frankfurt*

Attendees:

Luc Audrain (Hachette Livre)	Renek Mendruń (ISBN / BN Poland)
Detlef Bauer (Libri)	Merve Okçuođlu (Turkish Publishers Assoc)
Graham Bell (EDItEUR)	Diane Ouellet (BTLF)
Marie Bilde Rasmussen (Pruneau)	Jesús Peraita (FGEE / DILVE)
Maria Börman (Bokinfo)	Christer Perslöv (Bokinfo)
Pierre Boudigues (Electre / Cercle de la librairie, chair)	Tine Philips (Meta4Books)
Francis Cave (EDItEUR consultant)	Simonetta Pillon (Informazioni Editoriali)
Fride Fosseng (Bokbasen, incoming chair)	Suzanne Rosario (EDItEUR)
Alain Fournier (BTLF)	Chris Saynor (EDItEUR)
Bente Francke-Sætervoll (Bokbasen)	Ketil Stadskleiv (Bokbasen)
Karina Luke (BIC)	Howard Willows (Nielsen)
Anna Lionetti (AIE)	Johanna Worsaae Petersen (Gyldendal)
Martin Lüning (VLB)	

Summary of decisions in this meeting:

- Fride Fosseng elected unopposed as new steering committee chair for a three-year term
- Minutes of previous meeting approved
- Agreement that ONIX 2.1 should not inherit codelist additions via shared codelists after the end of 2016 (*ie* codelists issue 36 should be the last issue compatible with 2.1, and issue 37 in April 2017 would be for ONIX 3.0 only)
- Ratification of the proposals for Issue 35 of the codelists
- National groups should consult with their members on the relative use of PDF and HTML versions of the *ONIX Specification*
- National groups should consult with their members on the treatment of audio products where a single product (*ie* a single ISBN) is available in a variety of bit rates or file types, and on the potential for using <NameAsSubect> for fictional characters

1. Welcome and introductions

Owing to the unavoidable absence of Laurent Dervieu, PB acted as the outgoing chair of the committee and opened the meeting. PB welcomed the attendees and GB invited each attendee to introduce themselves. GB noted that Chris Saynor was about to join EDItEUR, replacing Alex Ingram who had left EDItEUR in the period since the last meeting of the committee. He also congratulated Jesús Peraita – who is the current chair of the EDItEUR Board of Directors – for also being elected chair of the *Thema* International Steering Group.

2. Selection and appointment of new Chair for the Committee

PB noted that Laurent Dervieu's three year term as chair of the committee was coming to an end, and that GB had invited nominations or volunteers to take on the task. GB had received just one nomination for the post. **Thus Fride Fosseng of Bokbasen was elected unopposed as chair of the ONIX International Steering Committee** for a three year term.

FF chaired the remainder of the meeting.

3. Minutes of ISC Meeting held 13th April 2016, London Book Fair, and matters arising

FF introduced the draft minutes of the meeting, at which the main business had been the recommendations from the Technical Working Group for ONIX 3.0.3. **The minutes were approved.**

Note that as usual, the draft minutes had been circulated in April to attendees for comments, and then in May were posted IN DRAFT FORM on the EDItEUR website.

FC reminded the group that the proposals for 3.0.3 that were not adopted into the standard are not simply rejected. The Technical working group recommended they be reassessed for future revisions, alongside future new proposals. CP suggested a summary of decisions is added to future minutes.

FF noted that there were three main outstanding issues from the discussion of 3.0.3 (repeatable subtitles, a technical working group on 'Block 7' for e-book and print specifications, and a consideration of how consistency of the data can be improved). GB explained the current position with each of these three items. In particular GB highlighted three sizeable posts to the ONIX_implement mailing list on incorporation of sales rights, of HTML markup and of weight and dimension information in ONIX which are aimed at improving consistency in ONIX data. These were successful: they generated significant discussion, and further similar activity is planned. (Of course, the training programme and other documentation work also tackles this issue.)

4. Current ONIX development work

GB introduced his activity report and highlighted the key parts, noting that EDItEUR was resource-constrained during most of the period.

Following the adoption of the recommendations of the Technical working group by the International Steering Committee at its previous meeting in London, ONIX 3.0.3 was finalized, and published at the end of April. This included the updated *Specification* (available as PDF or HTML), the updated *Implementation and Best Practice Guide*, the DTD, XSD and RNG XML tools, a summary document outlining the key additions to 3.0.3. GB noted that there were over 1000 downloads of the *Specification* in the first month after release.

Note the Specification (DOI: [10.4400/jzhw](https://doi.org/10.4400/jzhw)), the ONIX 3.0 Implementation and Best Practice Guide, and the Codelists now have DOIs. The identifiers also act as links to the download locations for these documents.

The Implementation and Best Practice Guide also contains a useful glossary of terms. If attendees have suggestions for additional terms to add to the glossary, please let GB know.

The only issue that has provoked any significant comment with release 3.0.3 is the treatment of zero prices. Some users reported that previously valid ONIX 3.0 files were no longer valid under 3.0.3. GB noted that this was due to the 3.0.3 schema providing more comprehensive validation, thus rejecting some errors that older schemas for 3.0.0 or 3.0.1 did not check.

As a specific example, it has always been implicit in ONIX that a price amount of 0 is not valid – <UnpricedItemType> should be used instead. This helps avoid a common error, where a blank or null price in the publisher's database appears to be a free of charge product, when in fact no price has been set yet. However, prior to 2015, this was not checked by the ONIX XSD schema during validation – any number, including zero and negative values, was okay in <PriceAmount>. For ONIX 3.0.2, a 'strict' version of the XSD was produced at the beginning of 2015 which checked for invalid zero and negative price amounts, and also checked other numerical elements (eg ensuring percentages were between 0 and 100, ensuring edition numbers were not negative etc). Note that the strict XSD simply checked things that were already part of the standard – it did not change the standard in any way. Later, at the beginning of 2016, the strict

checks were incorporated into the XSD for ONIX 3.0.2. Naturally, 3.0.3 also incorporates these strict checks.

Note that one of the additions in 3.0.3 was to allow a product to be normally priced in one circumstance, but free of charge in another circumstance – prior to 3.0.3, this was one of the reasons that a zero <PriceAmount> was sometimes misused. Addition of <UnpricedItemType> at P.26.70a – used instead of <PriceAmount> makes this simple. It should be used for products that are made free of charge for a promotional period, or where the product is free of charge in one country or for one customer group but priced in another country or for a different group.

GB outlined the current status of ONIX 2.1. The support ‘sunset’ date was the end of 2014. ‘Twilight’ support for ONIX 2.1 codelists ended at the close of 2015. All codelists used exclusively with ONIX 2.1 have been frozen since then (eg lists 7, 10, 78). Meanwhile, 2.1 continues to receive updates via *shared* codelists (eg lists 17, 21, 51) – as a new code is added for ONIX 3.0, it is inherited automatically by 2.1. GB had suggested at the previous meeting of the Committee that this continued updating of 2.1 should also be ended, and had tentatively proposed the end of 2016. GB asked the Committee to confirm that it wanted to end this inheritance of new codes into 2.1 at the end of 2016.

HW said it was difficult to think of a better time to do this. If not now, when? FF agreed strongly. LA questioned whether any further time should be spent on evolution of 2.1. KL suggested continuing to update 2.1 through shared codelists would send a mixed message. GB noted that this proposal had been discussed in advance with the US national group (who were not represented at the meeting), and there was no particular reaction. **There was general agreement and no opposition from committee members that 2.1 should no longer inherit any codelist updates.**

Post-meeting update: there have been some concerns about this raised more recently within the US national group (the BISG metadata committee), and GB will follow up with BISG.

The exact mechanism of the separation of shared codelists is not yet determined. Issue 36 will be the last that is fully compatible with 2.1, and thereafter (from issue 37, in April 2017) additions for ONIX 3.0 will not be inherited by 2.1. ML suggested that the archive packages for 2.1 on the EDItEUR website – which currently include codelists issue 27, but are updateable with any new codelist file – should be updated with the final issue 36.

GB reported that EDItEUR training had continued, via BIC and in-house at various EDItEUR members. A first course in Germany was planned for February, and BIC and BISG courses for 2017 were in the earliest planning stages. He also mentioned the overdue publication of the BISG recommendations on mapping between ONIX and schema.org – this will be published as a joint EDItEUR / BISG paper around the end of the year. LA and KS suggested addition of a new code to allow incorporation of a schema.org JSON-LD snippet into <TextContent>.

Finally, he noted that work on ‘block 7’ for POD and e-book specification, on a multi-lingual database of codelists, would be completed in the next six month period. If work on block 7 resulted in a change to the ONIX schema (ie a 3.0.4) then repeatable subtitles and a new French requirement for specifying taxes levied on only part of the price (eg VAT on DEEE levy) should also be included.

The use case for these French tax requirements is that an item such as a lighted POS display stand would attract special French levies that are applied to furniture and to electrical items (these levies are intended to subsidise responsible disposal of the item at the end of its life). The underlying price of the display stand, and each of the levies all carry VAT, and these can be at different VAT rates. Each of the six parts of the price needs to be separately identifiable.

GB asked the committee how much use would be made of an online database of ONIX codelists? This is something that EDItEUR has partially developed, and it would work similar to the multilingual *Thema* browser or to the ONIX code browser run by Lasse Lehtinen of Bonnier Finland. Generally, committee

members felt it would get significant use, and would be a valuable resource. KS asked whether documents such as the *Specification* could link to the online browser? JP asked whether it would be searchable by data element (*ie* find the codelist that is used with price type)? GB replied that in principle, both would be possible.

Finally, GB asked the committee to consider whether it is worthwhile for EDItEUR to continue providing the ONIX *Specification* documents in both PDF and HTML in parallel, and encouraged delegates to consult with a wide range of users prior to the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

5. Proposals for Codelists Issue 35

Summer codelists are usually the smallest of the year. GB summarised the proposed additions to the lists. In particular, he highlighted code 41 in list 51 (related product). This has a very specific use: existing codes cover the case where two products contain the same content (code 6) or where the content of one product is included in its entirety in another product (codes 01 and 02). The new code 41 covers the case where some – but not all – content is shared. The addition for list 21 specifies a particular refinement of a bilingual edition where parallel text is presented on directly facing pages or in directly adjacent columns (sometimes called ‘synoptic pagination’).

GB also highlighted the proposed addition for a refinement of keywords. Current code 20 in list 27 is for keywords. Code B2 is for keywords that must not be displayed (*eg* in a tag cloud) but may still be used for indexing and search purposes. The new code is for keywords that are specifically the names of fictional characters (these may be given a higher weight during indexing, for example). This could alternatively be handled by allowing fictional character names in <NameAsSubject> – though at present this is defined to contain only names of *real* people or organisations. CS [in his role as part of the French national group, not as future EDItEUR staff] supported the addition of character name keywords, as they are qualitatively different from other keywords, and others agreed. FF noted that some fictional characters could also have identifiers, and a <NameAsSubject> structure would be more appropriate. GB asked whether the committee supported the addition of a new type of keyword, or supported a future relaxation of the definition of <NameAsSubject>. Wide discussion revealed that *both* would likely be valuable – a new type of keyword for books featuring a particular protagonist (*eg* Sherlock Holmes in one of Conan Doyle’s stories), and <NameAsSubject> for books about a fictional character (*eg* a psychological study of Sherlock Holmes’ character). However it is noted that making the distinction between books *about* and books *featuring* is likely to be problematic for those creating ONIX data, and the simple keywords solution does not allow an ID for the character. FF, BFS and TP expressed a desire for a full identifier solution in future. The committee supported addition of a code for ‘name as keyword’, and later consideration of a structured solution at the next revision.

The committee ratified the proposal for Issue 35, subject to potential addition of a code for archival-quality paper (in addition to the ‘acid free paper’ proposal).

Post-meeting update – Issue 35 was published 31st October.

6. Updates on key migrations and adoptions from national groups

KL updated the committee on the progress of a revision of the BIC Product Data Excellence accreditation scheme. BIC has awarded ONIX 3.0 badges to a dozen publishers delivering high-quality ONIX 3.0 data to aggregators in the UK (though there many more publishers using ONIX 3.0 which are not accredited). The new scheme – most likely launched early in 2017 – will require ONIX 3.0 and a wide range of data elements to achieve the highest accreditation. Lower levels of accreditation will still be available for 2.1 and narrower ranges of data delivered.

JP reported that the DILVE Books in print system in Spain is being migrated to ONIX 3.0. DILVE currently uses ONIX 2.1 as its storage format, even though most publishers continue to use CSV files to deliver data, so this is a complex migration.

ML said that VLB in Germany is implementing ONIX 3.0 ingestion in late 2016, and will promote it in 2017. He expects big publishers to transition to 3.0 relatively quickly, though VLB is likely to provide both 2.1 and 3.0 for several years.

BFS raised an issue relating to description of audiobooks, which may be available in a variety of bit rates. GB asked whether each different bit rate, compression scheme, deliver method (download or stream) should be a different product, or whether a single product with a single ISBN covers all options. BFS clarified that the issue is arising with the latter, where the consumer might choose one of a range of bit rates, file formats or delivery options (but with a single ISBN and a single price). GB replied that this is in part about policies related to ISBN assignment, and in part about ONIX. He asked interested national groups to consider this question and report views to EDItEUR.

7. Any Other Business and Next Meeting

FF asked for any other business. There being none, she advised the next ONIX ISC meeting would be during the London Book Fair, March 15th 2017, location to be confirmed later. NOTE THE EARLIER THAN USUAL DATE OF THE 2017 LONDON BOOK FAIR. FF thanked the attendees and closed the meeting.

Graham Bell
EDItEUR
19th October 2016