

Thema International Steering Committee Minutes

*Wednesday 15th April 2015, 10:00–12:00 BST (UTC+1),
Conference Room One, Olympia Conference Centre, London*

Attendees:

Luc Audrain (Hachette) [part]	Alex Ingram (EDItEUR)
Graham Bell (EDItEUR)	Karina Luke (BIC)
Liv Berg (Bokbasen)	Renek Mendrun (Nat Library of Poland)
Maria Börman (Bokrondellen)	Diane Ouellet (BTLF)
Francesca Cacciapaglia (IE Online)	Jesús Peraita (FGEE/Dilve)
Virginie Clayssen (Editis)	Christer Perslöv (Bokrondellen)
Piera Constantini (IE Online)	Lisbeth Petré (Bokrondellen)
Laurent Dervieu (Electre)	Chris Saynor (Giant Chair)
Fride Fosseng (Bokbasen)	Len Vlahos (BISG)
Alain Fournier (BTLF)	Howard Willows (Nielsen) [chair]
Bente Franck-Sætervoll (Bokbasen)	Jon Windus (Nielsen)
Noah Genner (BookNet Canada)	

1. Howard Willows (chair) welcomed attendees to the meeting, and noted that a recording would be made for the benefit of the minutes. There were no objections to this. Attendees introduced themselves.

Graham Bell congratulated Len Vlahos and Jesús Peraita, who had been appointed chair and deputy chair of EDItEUR, but noted that Len would be stepping down before Frankfurt as he will be leaving BISG.

HW noted that the challenge for this period following publication of version 1.1 was to maintain and build on the early momentum the scheme gained in 2013–14.

2. HW considered the minutes of the last meeting, noting that any matters arising would be covered under the main meeting agenda. GB reminded national group representatives that they should check the group details on the EDItEUR website (see http://www.editeur.org/153/Maintenance-and-Support/#thema_ng_and_isc) and update if necessary.

The minutes were approved without changes.

Note that draft minutes of *Thema* ISC meetings are circulated to attendees for initial comments, then posted publicly on the EDItEUR website. However, they remain 'draft' until formal approval at the next meeting

3. HW summarised the main activities since the last meeting:
- a. The major activity has been the publication of *Thema* 1.1 and various related resources. The contents of version 1.1 were approved at the Frankfurt meeting, and after some minor editorial changes were published via the EDItEUR website on 30th November 2014. Following this, fully-updated translations had been published for French, German and Norwegian, and others are ongoing. GB noted that he expected at least two new languages within the next few weeks, in addition to updates to some of the existing languages.
 - b. HW noted that the BIC 2.1 to *Thema* mapping had been updated to version 1.1. LV and Noah Genner reported that the BISAC to *Thema* mapping and the BISG / Booknet Canada online bulk mapping tool had both been updated to take into account publication of BISAC 2014 and *Thema* 1.1. The French national group reported that the Commission de liaison interprofessionnelle du livre (CLIL) had produced a mapping from its own CLIL subject scheme to *Thema* 1.1, and had also contributed to the updated French translation.
 - c. AI reported the creation of a Thema_implementation mailing list, modelled on the successful ONIX_implementation list. This is to be distinct from the *Thema* Google group – the latter is for discussion of future development and governance of the scheme, with the membership being similar to the TISC, and the former for technical queries and discussion concerning implementation and use of the existing scheme, with membership of the list being open to all. All present were encouraged to join the *Thema* Google group if they had not already done so.

Anyone can join the Thema_implementation list at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/thema_implementation/join

The *Thema* Google group is a private group. ISC attendees should e-mail Graham Bell for an invitation to join.

- d. GB noted the slightly surprising *lack* of proposed additions to *Thema*, and reminded the steering committee that each National Group can propose national extensions (geographic, historic and educational) at any time. They need not wait for changes to the core scheme, but can be added to in a similar way to the quarterly revisions of the ONIX codelists.
- e. AI introduced the work of the Geographical Extensions working group. He and the group are considering:
 - i. how best to design a hierarchy of geographical qualifiers within any country
 - ii. how to govern geographical extensions within countries that do not currently have national groups (particularly where national groups may arise in the future)
 - iii. what additional geographical details are needed now, to provide adequate detailed coverage

AI emphasised that *Thema* has two approaches to geographical coverage, broadly administrative (countries, regions, cities *etc*, including *historical* as well as contemporary entities) and physiographic (continents, mountains, plains, coasts, seas *etc*), and that the group would consider both.

- f. HW noted progress on updating the User Guidelines had been delayed by the lack of suggestions for ‘worked examples’ that illustrate how *Thema* is used. He (with GB and AI) had taken the decision to separate the Guidelines from the Examples, and the

intention is now to publish two linked documents, rather than waiting for the examples to be finished. National Groups would also be free to add their own important or illustrative examples for use in their market. The updated Guide should be published immediately after the Book Fair. **(Post-meeting update:** The Guide has now been published.)

- g. HW also noted that there had been a few calls for a *Thema* to BIC mapping, which would be used to support BIC as a 'legacy scheme' when primary categorisation was using *Thema*. This is unexpectedly early, but will be a priority over the next few months.
4. HW called for updates from each of the national groups present.
- a. Jesús Peraita (Spain) noted that because of the relatively recent rollout of the IBIC scheme (perhaps better described as 'Spanish BIC') in Spain, progress on *Thema* remained difficult.
 - b. Maria Börman (Sweden) reported that Bokrondellen and the Swedish book trade are now using BIC and *Thema* extensively. An update to the existing Swedish translation is close to completion. Bokrondellen would be very interested in a *Thema* to BIC mapping.
 - c. Chris Saynor (France) noted completion of the CLIL to *Thema* mapping, and this would be used to add *Thema* subject categories to the DILICOM and Electre databases.
 - d. Alain Fournier (French Canada) emphasised that the main need in the market was for promotion of the scheme.
 - e. Fride Fosseng (Norway) reported that in Norway, *Thema* categories are in use at Bokbasen and are supplied to retailers, but they not yet used by retailers. This is because retailers also source data from Nielsen, and so far Nielsen has not provided *Thema*. HW and Jon Windus of Nielsen confirmed that Nielsen has been able to do so since mid-2014, and has around 11m records with *Thema* codes (mapped from BIC).
 - f. NG (English Canada) confirmed that Booknet Canada's records of domestic publications now have *Thema* categories assigned, and that Biblioshare accepts *Thema* codes as part of publisher's bibliographic metadata.
 - g. LV (USA) said that the BISAC 2014 to *Thema* 1.1 mapping had just become available to BISAC licensees and BISG members. LV noted the most likely medium-term development in the US was that publishers would use BISAC and *Thema* in parallel. BISG's recent survey of publishers showed that 50% of respondents were using *Thema* already or planned to implement it within a year. Major retailers, including Barnes & Noble and Amazon, were showing strong interest.
 - h. Renek Mendrun (Poland) reported that a Polish translation of *Thema* was complete and would become available immediately after the Fair. **(Post-meeting update:** the translation is now available via the EDItEUR website and the *Thema* online browser.)
 - i. Francesca Cacciapaglia (Italy) said the Italian group led by Informazioni Editoriali had completed a mapping from the existing Italian scheme CCE to *Thema* 1.1, and that a full and update translation was nearly complete. IE's new IT system, Calypso, will use *Thema*.
 - j. Karina Luke (UK) noted that BIC was promoting *Thema* extensively via various events, including the Supply Chain Seminar on the last day of the Fair, when LV, FF and Azar Hussain of Faber would speak. *Thema* was also being integrated into BIC subject

classification training. HW reaffirmed that there would be no parallel development of the previous BIC scheme – BIC recommended migration to *Thema*. GB noted that various UK publishers had been encouraged by Amazon to prepare to supply *Thema* codes later this year.

5. HW asked whether there was any other business.

LV noted this would be his last TISC meeting. He thanked BIC and Nielsen for their help and generosity in the creation of *Thema*, and admitted that he felt proud of the scheme and of the progress made during his time on the TISC.

CS and GB introduced a discussion of the timetable for version 1.2. FF asked whether adding or updating further scopenotes required 1.2 – and was advised this was not the case. HW reminded the group that the initial view was that the period of updates would be something between 1 and 2 years (faster as the scheme was young, slowing down as it became more mature). JP emphasised his advice to be cautious, and to ensure additions met real requirements and did not burden the scheme with too much additional complexity. LV suggested that *additions* to the scheme could be made frequently, more like ONIX codelists [this is already true of National Extensions], and Bente Franck-Sætervoll agreed. While schemes like BISAC have rules about minimum numbers of books that justify addition of a new code, *Thema* should be responsive to market needs. GB noted that additions could be made relatively frequently, but that the scheme should retain its simplicity – it should be possible to learn how to use it well in a single morning.

CS noted some suggestions from the French group for consideration in version 1.2. These had arisen out of discussions around the French *Thema* translation but CS stated that none was urgent. BFS noted that these and other 1.2 suggestions should be posted to the Google group. There was no sense among the group that work on 1.2 was required urgently in order to launch a new version at Frankfurt: aiming for London 2016 would perhaps be more appropriate.

LV added that BISG had begun a major restructuring to add a ‘young adult’ section into BISAC. There was a suggestion that this unnecessarily conflated *subject* with *audience*, but that it was a pragmatic reaction to the growth of YA as a distinct market segment (in the US at least). HW expressed interest in this approach (noting that the concept of YA material had proved difficult to define in the UK) and requested that the BISG group keep the TISC informed of their progress and issues (via HW and EDItEUR) so that the need for any reciprocal development in *Thema* could be assessed. Laurent Dervieu agreed YA was growing in importance, and said that distinction of audience was equally important with books for younger children. GB pointed out that in the UK, the Children’s Book Marketing Code (CBMC) also combined subject, some aspects of product form and age range, and also whether the book featured an *illustrated* character and/or TV tie-in. CBMCs are used primarily for statistical analysis of sales.

GB noted that there had been a small number of queries about the potential use of *Thema* for categorising serial publications. While plausible, this would likely require additional detail, most particularly in humanities and social sciences (HSS) and bio-sciences.

JW suggested that *Thema* would benefit from a clear ‘job description’ – a statement of what the scope and purpose of the scheme is (for example to enable improved search and discovery, to support merchandising, or to improve markets statistics and analysis *etc*), as well as what it is

not. This could be incorporated into the *Thema* Executive Briefing (see <http://www.editeur.org/151/thema>) or published as a standalone document.

6. There being no further business, HW announced that the next face-to-face meeting of the *Thema* International Steering Committee will be during the Frankfurt Book Fair. It will be held in Room Brillanz within Hall 4.2 at 10am on Wednesday 14th October.

Graham Bell
EDitEUR
15th April 2015