**Thema International Steering Committee meeting**  
**Tuesday 20th April 2021 10:00–11:30 BST - minutes**  
Plus, Briefing meeting for Americas Monday 19th April 2021, 15.00 to 16.00 (BST)

Attendees at TISC meeting:

- Tobias Streitferdt (TS) – Chair, Holtzbrinck Buchverlage, Germany
- Marie Bilde (MB) – Danish Publishers Association, Pruneau, Denmark
- Maria Börman (MB) – Bokinfo, Sweden
- Lisbeth Håkansson Petré (LHP) - Bokinfo, Sweden
- Fríde Fosseng (FF) - Bokbasen, Norway
- Tone Løylan (TL) - Bokbasen, Norway
- Jesús Peraita (JP) - FGEE / DILVE, Spain
- Vincent Pouliélaire (VP) - Dilicom, France
- Inari Haapaniemi (IH) – Kirjavälitys Oy, Finland
- Simonetta Pillon (SP) - Informazioni Editoriali, Italy
- Francesca Cacciaiapaglia - Informazioni Editoriali, Italy
- Sophie Salmon (SS) – CLIL, France
- Howard Willows (HW) – Nielsen, UK
- Jon Windus (JW) – Nielsen, UK
- Karina Urquhart (KU) – BIC, UK
- Dr. Detlef Bauer (DB), Libri GmbH/JGPM, Germany
- Obe Alkema (OA). – Veen Bosch & Keuninh (Netherlands)
- Naoki Onodera (NO) – JPO, Japan
- Graham Bell (GB) – EDItEUR, UK
- Chris Saynor (CS) EDItEUR, UK
- Juana Maria Ruiz Martinez (JM) – Observer, Amazon EU
- Peter J Schoppert (PS) – Observer, NUS, Singapore
- Melvin Choo – Observer, Alkem, Singapore
- Yasmina Jraissati – Observer, Middle East,
- Martina Baletkova (MB) – Observer, Libris, Czechia / Slovakia

Attendees at briefing for Americas:
- Gabrielle Maisonneuve – BTLF, Francophone Canada
- Alain Fournier – BTLF, Francophone Canada
- Ricardo Costa (RC) – MetaBooks, Brazil
- Fernando Alves – MetaBooks, Brazil
- Jonathan Fiedler – BISG, USA
- Brian O’Leary – BISG, USA
- Chris Saynor – EDItEUR
1. Minutes of last *Thema* ISC virtual (Frankfurt) meeting held 14th October 2020, and matters arising – TS introduced the minutes which were approved and there were no matters arising

2. Brief updates on adoptions from *Thema* national groups and observers.

   NO - began a round of national updates. JPO has announced the release of *Thema* 1.4 and updated the translation of the scheme and of the Basic User Guide. JPO has promoted *Thema* to Japanese booksellers. It is now translating the Exec briefing to encourage greater awareness. Naoki has done a mapping between Japanese subject scheme (which is based on NDC) to *Thema*.

   IH - *Thema* is going well in Finland. Kirjavalitys has been doing online training with the publishers. Rollout seems to be going well, and suggestions for 1.5 have been submitted. GB noted the interest from the Finnish national library too.

   TS - in Germany the IGPM is working on a list of synonyms which can be used to improve the search performance. This is in co-operation with Austria and Switzerland. They are also working on a list of shortened headings which might improve display in menus. CS suggests that he contact Fride at Bokinfo, who have already done this for Norwegian, DB noted that he had already done so and that they had very useful cooperation from Fride. DB also noted interesting cooperation with the Japanese group on the Law section for potential additions in v1.5.

   FF - Norway has completed the translation of v1.4 and the reclassification of the backlist and the short versions of the headings. A series of webinars over the past year included a well-attended session on *Thema*, with increased interest from publishers and good feedback. Interest from bookstores has also increased as more have focused online. FF had also supplied suggestions for 1.4. TL introduced herself.

   SP reported that IE-online has completed translation work on 1.4, but not yet reclassified backlist. They are beginning to supply *Thema* to IE-online data customers and pushing to reduce the number of subject schemes they use.

   VP reported that in France they have updated of the CLIL *Thema* mapping, and *Thema* codes have been added to all the products in the Dilicom database (using the mapping).

   HW reported steady progress on awareness and adoption, although the old BIC subject scheme has not yet 'gone away' entirely. He noted the UK trade worked strongly through the pandemic, and a 30% increase in hardback fiction sales. KU reported three training sessions (delivered by EDItEUR) and *Thema* is now part of the BIC Product data accreditation scheme.
OA - the Netherlands has updated the translation of Thema 1.4 and added synonyms to improve the search performance. Roughly half the books in the CB database have Thema codes and there is consideration of making Thema compulsory. CS noted the Dutch group has been good on suggesting additions for v1.5

JP noted there are about 1m active books in Spain, and all have (I)BIC codes. Last year, the (Nielsen) mapping was used to translate the BIC codes to Thema -- publishers have then been confirming the new Thema codes (or correcting them). Around half the active books have CONFIRMED Thema codes. Use of Thema is increasing with publishers. For booksellers the growth is slower but definitely progressing.

LP updated the position in Thema in Sweden. It is the #1 classification, and the 1.4 translation is complete. The pandemic has been good for internet bookstores and audio streaming.

MBR since the last meeting, they have been working on some Danish guidelines based on Chris’s guidance. Audio streaming is really thriving, as are book sales and some new ideas around paid podcasts

JM – Amazon carrying on implementing Thema, very pleased to hear the positive progress in in all the countries

PS from Singapore Publishers Assoc (obs) – they are just beginning to implement national books in print database, and they want to have Thema built in from the start.

MB from Czechia works for an e-shop operator in five countries, expanding across Eastern Europe. Has translated Thema 1.2 into Czech and Slovak and is waiting until v1.5 to update.

YJ - happy to have listened. Based in Dubai, beginning to apply Thema codes to a list of books, working on a project with the Emirates Foundation, who are considering the translation of the remaining Thema codes to Arabic

CS reported on the Americas briefing. (see below)

TS asked Chris to move on to his activity report. He focused on the work around the proposals for 1.4. He proposed a working group to work June–August, to finalise the proposals (with the intention of putting it forward for ratification at the next TISC meeting in October). He asked for confirmation that the group approved the working group (it did) and asked for volunteers. He will be sending out a revised doc of the proposals at the start of May 2021 which will be the starting point for the V 1.5 working group.

The working group will study each proposal, but it is also important for each national group to ensure they are happy with the proposals. Feedback from national groups will
be important for the working group. SO too will input from specialists - legal and medical publishers for example -- will also be important.

There are three big areas where there are numerous proposals.

(Melvin joins)

Comic books – a lot of new suggestions and revisions because of requests from specialist retailers / publishers

Children's - *Theme* encourages mixing child and adult codes, but this may not always be practical in the market (because of lack of adoption of <MainSubject>) so adding greater depth to the existing codes.

CS highlighted that there is a list of Emotions codes for the Y* section - there is a long list of proposals, rather than the original positive / negative split and feedback was very important here and all the children’s / teenage (YA) code proposals.

For Qualifiers – CS said that v1.4 introduced codes for peoples of certain descent or diasporas. For v1.5 there is a larger list of proposals for commenting on. Especially if there are missing large groups and to make sure that the language and terms use are positive.

If there are specialists who have good knowledge of any of these sections, please put them forward or get their feedback on relevant areas.

CS said that the v1.5 suggestion spreadsheet has been optimised for comments. He also reminded people that if this is sent out to third parties, please emphasise that these are early draft proposals (there is no point in implementing them as they WILL change)

CS then moved on to the EDItEUR update. They have updated all existing documentation to v1.4, including a new annexe of worked examples to the Diversity and inclusion paper. This is - in some markets - a big topic and as always feedback is encouraged and please share the document with interested parties.

CS said there will be an updated version of using *Theme* and ONIX together, to emphasise the importance of <MainSubject>. JP noted that this is important.

CS noted the new Korean translation from Korea Publishing Content. There are now 25 language versions of *Theme*, although a couple are 'vestigial' (Russian) and a handful have not been fully updated to v 1.4.

CS said that training has been a highlight this year, as it moved online. EDItEUR has worked with BIC, BTLF, ANEL, BNC and with individual publishers. The training now also has introductory videos. We have upcoming training with BIC, BNC, South African university presses etc.
GB mentioned Thema is available in SKOS format

TS called for AOB. There was none, so he re-introduced Francesca who will chair the next meeting. EDItEUR and the group warmly thanked Tobias for his work and welcomed Francesca back from her maternity leave.

Francesca introduced the question of the next meeting likely to be the morning of the 20th Oct (but the form this depends critically on the final form of the Frankfurt Book Fair)

**Summary of briefing meeting for Americas**

CS introduced the meeting and asked everyone to present themselves and give an update from their group

NO – Japan – introduced the JPO and said they were implementing Thema and had been working on the mapping from NDC (Nippon Decimal Classification) to Thema.

AF – French Canada – they have had other projects this past year and have nearly completed the updated translation of headings for v1.4 and will wait v1.5 to update all the translations of the notes. The national group is looking for new volunteers. The book trade has been doing quite well and BTLF has worked a lot on their online form and which is going to be updated soon as well. They are seeing more small publishers using Thema. They are also getting large ONIX files with Thema, BISAC and CLIL codes from larger publishers.

AF said CS had given three online Thema trainings organised jointly by BTLF and ANEL (l’Association nationale des éditeurs de livres) in March and April. AF said they were developing a mapping from Thema to Dewey as part of their project for moving to work more with Canadian partners like BNC, rather than European organisations.

GM – said that the feedback to the training was very positive and that the attendees said they had a much better understanding of Thema. Also, a couple of trainees said they might be interested in joining the national group.

RC – in Brazil, MVB Metabooks has been working with Thema / ONIX to raise awareness of these standards in Brazil. They started four years ago, with very little awareness of metadata in the Brazilian market. They started slowly with basic Thema and BISAC codes and then recently they have added the Qualifiers to the platform. They are preparing a basic workshop in the next few weeks for the market about using qualifiers. They have persuaded one of the major software ERP providers for bookshops to have Thema as a suggestion for booksellers instead of the bookshop creating their own schemes. Nielsen Bookscan in Brazil is also using Thema. Thema is gaining traction in Brazil. RC introduced FA, who reviewed the previous translation and did the new v1.4 Brazilian Portuguese translation.
FA introduced himself, he has been working in STM publishing since the 1980s and recently has set up his own publishing house. He said he is very happy to be involved with Thema project in Brazil.

JF – in USA still dominated by BISAC and BISG has just released the mapping from BISAC 2020 to Thema V1.4. This is now available from BISG website and Brain O’Leary confirmed BISG will make a version available via EDItEUR website with just the BISAC codes and not the literals, as they have done before.

CS then gave the Americas group the update about the timetable for v1.5 and also the update in the report. Both of these points were the same as in the main meeting. This group confirmed it agreed with the provisional timetable for the working group and for v1.5.

AF asked RC & FA if it was important to have a different translation for Brazil, like they have a different French translation for Canada and RC said that it is important as there are different ways of saying things or different words used in Brazilian Portuguese. The current translation in Brazilian Portuguese is a completely new translation from English. FA confirmed that, while both languages are mutually understandable, it is a question of which words are used. So now the translation will always be done from the original English to Brazilian Portuguese.

CS reminded them that EDItEUR is very happy to host linguistic variations of the translations, so along with the above, there is also Flemish and Dutch, for example. In English the variations are often covered by notes or in the hidden search terms. For the Spanish of Latin America so far there has been no request to have a version for Latin American Spanish, but if the LatAM group requires this, EDItEUR will be happy to host this and add it to the documentation and browser.

AF said that it was important as well, to make sure the right words were used for the domestic market, so they were happy to see this ability to have linguistic variations for Thema.

Chris Saynor
EDItEUR
7th May 2021