

Executive Director's Report

Report to Members – Frankfurt Book Fair 2014

Introduction

My first half year as Executive director has been challenging, because of the need to both take up a new role *and* maintain the level of standards activities set in previous periods.

1 Overview and highlights

This six month period has been busy for all EDItEUR staff.

- we have maintained a significant schedule of involvement in industry events over the spring and summer, with the main focus being on increasing awareness of the sunset of ONIX 2.1 and the adoption of ONIX 3.0, a trip to Korea to speak at a supply chain conference linked to the Seoul Book Fair, and several European visits and training events.
- After a thorough search, EDItEUR has recruited Alex Ingram to the new post of Standards Editor. Alex comes to EDItEUR as a former bookseller for Waterstones, and previously managed by Waterstones e-books programme and the Apple iBooks store for the UK. He brings experience that complements that of existing EDItEUR staff, and has already made a contribution to the development of *Thema*.
- The major ONIX activities have been centred around improving awareness of the sunsetting of ONIX 2.1 at the end of this calendar year. A series of presentations highlighting the sunset process, the main technical aspects of the migration, and the benefits of 3.0 have been given in the UK and US, with more to follow, and the presentation material has been supplied to other ONIX groups for their own use.
- The development of a version 1.1 of *Thema* has progressed satisfactorily after a slow start (with a huge amount of work being put in by members of the *Thema* technical subgroup, and particularly its chair Howard Willows). A draft version 1.1 has been produced, and was ratified by the meeting of the *Thema* International Steering Committee during the Frankfurt Fair. It should be published on the EDItEUR website in four to six weeks time.
- The ICEDIS committee continues to make progress with the adoption of ONIX-PC price catalogue message, and with collating business cases for the development an adoption of a new range of up-to-date messages to replace the legacy ICEDIS message formats.
- The redevelopment of the database and website of the International ISBN Agency has streamlined the annual collection of data from the national agencies around the world. Work continues on the revision of the ISBN standard itself, and editorial drafting is expected to be completed during the next period.
- EDItEUR continues to provide a limited management service to the International ISNI and ISTC Agencies.

- Engagement with the W3C and its Digital Publishing Interest Group has continued to develop, though EDItEUR has not become a member of that body. The W3C work on book metadata for the open web will most likely progress alongside similar work with BISG.
- Over the next few months, EDItEUR will be contributing to the EU-funded FORWARD project, which aims to streamline rightsholder discovery in the audio-visual sector. This builds on past work by EDItEUR for the ARROW project.

2 Membership

I want to welcome two new members that have joined EDItEUR since the last member's meeting, Trilogy Group and CLIL. The Danish Publishers Association has also recently agreed to become a member for the 2015 membership year.

Focused efforts to engage further members will continue. However, EDItEUR remains committed to providing its standards free of charge to all – not just to members – and this poses challenges because explaining and quantifying the specific benefits of membership is tricky.

EDItEUR members are particularly loyal (only one resigned membership in 2014). As a result of this, and through signing new members every year, the membership fees have remained unchanged at £1200 for about a decade. But with increasing costs this is becoming more difficult to maintain. Industry consolidation remains an issue – EDItEUR has a 'flat membership fee, and, unlike a tiered scheme based on a member's turnover, the net loss of a member by merger or acquisition is not counteracted by higher tier fees for the remaining – larger – organisation. As a result, there will most likely need to be a small increase for the 2015 membership year (though it will not exceed £1300).

3 Board news

Erik Jan Bulthuis has replaced Mathijs Suidman as CB's representative on the EDItEUR board.

At the London Book Fair, the Board extended the terms of office of chair Paola Mazzuchi of AIE and deputy Len Vlahos of BISG. The chair's extended term will come to an end at the next meeting in London (April 2015), and – as is customary – Len will become chair of the Board and a new candidate will be sought for deputy chair.

The board also appointed Tom West of the Publishers Licensing Society as Treasurer, replacing Neil Wilson.

4 Standards development

4.1 ONIX for Books

Laurent Dervieu of Electre took on the role of chair of the ONIX International Steering Committee at the London Fair in 2014, and ably chaired the October 2014 meeting too.

The main discussion at the London meeting concerned the upcoming sunset date for ONIX 2.1. The committee was very clear that 2.1 will be sunsetted as planned at the end of 2014 –

just three months away. Practically, sunsetting will mean removal of documentation, online XML resources and a subtle change of focus in mailing list discussions, training content and so on. But there has been continued discussion of some level of limited post-sunset 'twilight' support for the ONIX 2.1 codelists in 2015. The extent of this support is as yet undecided. The ONIX International Steering Committee meeting prior to the member's meeting in Frankfurt will have to resolve this.

The biggest impact of sunset felt by users of ONIX 2.1 is likely to be due to the removal of the online XML resources, which WILL cause failures of production systems in many companies that remain unprepared. A paper on how to avoid such failures will be published in November and promoted via the EDItEUR website, the ONIX mailing list, and I hope other channels.

In addition, I have delivered a focused ONIX 2.1 to 3.0 migration seminar on several occasions, for BIC, BISG and in-house, and will be doing so again (twice) in the week following the Fair. The material from this has been disseminated to the ONIX national groups, so that they can prepare 'localised' versions of the material.

The London meeting ratified the publication of issue 25 of the ONIX codelists. Since the meeting of the ONIX ISC in London, the ONIX national groups have also ratified the release of Issue 26, and the ISC meeting prior to the members meeting should finalise Issue 27. Taken together, issues 25, 26 and 27 provide for (*inter alia*):

- Notification types for test messages (it's something of a mystery why these have never been introduced in the past)
- Further product types such as hardware audiobook players and jigsaws
- Support for specifying US Common Core curriculum alignments
- Further text complexity measures such as ATOS and Flesch-Kincaid
- Support in ONIX 3.0 for pre-order embargo dates
- Support in ONIX 3.0 for rental period extensions
- Clarification on the meaning of a 'digital original' (this last was the subject of significant discussion with the US ONIX national group)
- Further product type (boxed multi-pack)
- A flag for 'short' e-books which are often merchandised in a distinctive way (this has been the subject of discussion for a year, and not all ONIX national groups are in favour of its introduction)
- Support for using CrossRef's FundRef ID for organisations involved in OA publishing
- Additional ONIX 3.0 collection types to support specific and complex groupings of large numbers of books common in French publishing

The release of ONIX 3.0.2 in January 2014 has I believe been successful, as I have already noted the inclusion of some of the new data elements in 'real world' ONIX data.

The 2014 ONIX training programme has continued with sessions in London (for BIC), and in-house with EDItEUR members – this continues to be a successful service offered by EDItEUR.

There has been some progress on documentation of the ONIX Acknowledgement message, and this should be ready for release as a version 1.0 towards the end of the calendar year.

4.2 Thema

Thema is still less than one year old, but has already achieved a remarkably high level of awareness and significant early adoption. In particular, I'd highlight its incorporation into the German VLB Books in Print product and into equivalent data in Sweden, and the decision by BIC in the UK to halt development of its own BIC subject classification scheme in favour of *Thema*.

Over the summer, new translations of the scheme have been completed and there are now complete French, German, Norwegian, Swedish translations in addition to English available online. Partial translations are available in other languages, others are under way, and *Thema* interest has continued to spread

The *Thema* International Steering Committee meeting at the London Book Fair – chaired by Howard Willows – agreed that work should progress on a version 1.1. In the early life of a standard, a relatively quick cadence of revisions is expected, but as *Thema* is adopted more widely, future revisions will likely be once every two years. The subgroup tasked with preparing the revision has presented its proposals, and version 1.1 is due for approval at the *Thema* International Steering Committee prior to the meeting of the Board.

The proposals take the form of around 125 new subject categories, with no deletions or modifications, ensuring that 1.1 will be simple to adopt. The update should be published during November.

4.3 ICEDIS and ONIX for subscription products

EDItEUR's ICEDIS committee held its meeting during the UKSG Conference in Harrogate in April as usual, with the meeting co-chaired by Shilo De Vries of Taylor and Francis and Dan Heffernan of Advantage. Ringgold's Phil Nicolson kindly gave a presentation on the International Standard Name Identifier (ISNI) and other recent developments in organizational and personal identifiers. Reports at the meeting indicated progress on the adoption of the ONIX-PC (serials price catalogue) message by Springer in time for the 2015 price round. The major topic of discussion was Open Access, which is transforming significant areas of 'traditional' publishing models and operations. ICEDIS voted to convene a working group to investigate and advise which ICEDIS and ONIX messages need updates to respond to various OA requirements.

The meeting also emphasised the need for clear business cases to demonstrate the value of adopting the new range of up-to-date ICEDIS message standards (which will replace legacy standards in use since the mid-1990s). Since that meeting, EDItEUR's Tim Devenport has worked to survey membership priorities as part of the plan to build convincing business cases for adoption of the new approaches.

Over the past few months, Tim has also updated various resources on the EDItEUR website, including Issue 7 of the ONIX for Serials codelists, sample files for the ICEDIS New Orders message and clarifications to the documentation of the ONIX-PC price catalogue format.

The OA working group has also met (by phone conference) to discuss standardisation needs to support Open Access. This is an area of considerable activity at present, with a diverse range of topics covered during the calls – from minor adaptations of existing standards

through to workflows and procedures for the collection of Article Processing Charges (APCs). Headline outcomes from the call will be reviewed at the Frankfurt ICEDIS meeting on 6th October (immediately prior to the Frankfurt Fair) so that the committee can decide upon the best way forward.

ICEDIS also plans a meeting during the Charleston Conference to engage with North American members of EDItEUR. We are also hoping for a number of drop-in attendees – primarily librarians – from this well-supported conference, so that we can continue to promote ICEDIS and EDItEUR's wider activities. Some progress has been made towards making the ICEDIS meeting a regular part of the Charleston conference and for the first time we will be using the conference location for the meeting.

4.4 ONIX-PL

ONIX-PL is a highly specialised standard used by only a handful of organisations to describe resource licenses offered by publishers to academic libraries. As such, each new implementer often requires significant help from EDItEUR consultant David Martin.

Over the last few months, experience from the now complete NISO-supported ONIX-PL encoding project has been rolled into a new issue of the ONIX-PL codelists (issue 5). This project resulted in the encoding by Selden Lamoureux of around 20 US library licences in the ONIX-PL format (slightly fewer than originally planned). David Martin provided invaluable input to the project.

This update to the codelists released in September is the most extensive to date. Fifty-six new terms have been added. Most of these have been defined to meet requirements identified by ONIX-PL users, principally JISC Collections, Quali OLE, as well as the NISO ONIX-PL encoding project. Two noteworthy examples in Issue 5 are improvements to the treatment of continuing access rights to subscribed materials after a subscription has been terminated, and new provision for handling Open Access materials supplied alongside proprietary content.

4.5 EDItX

There has been one small EDItX-related activity in the past period, relating to minor improvements in the documentation. However, over the next period, there will be a need to revise the EDItX Sales reporting formats to allow for price identifiers (recently added to ONIX for Books) to be included in sales reports, and possibly to add data elements to the report to deal with new EU requirements for the reporting of VAT on e-books and other digital products.

5 Identifier Agencies and other standards activity

5.1 International ISBN Agency

The Agency launched its new database infrastructure and website immediately prior to the last meeting of the Board, and ISBN Executive director Stella Griffiths and EDItEUR Operations manager Nick Woods have remained busy over the last period. The new infrastructure proved its worth in the annual collation of the ISBN statistical data. CINECA continue to provide maintenance and support for the database.

Stella has attended regional ISBN agency meetings in Amman, Jordan (for Arabic ISBN agencies) and in Montenegro (for a group of Balkan agencies).

The revision of the ISBN standard begun by the International Standards Organisation TC46 SC9 has continued through the summer, including a face to face meeting of many of the review committee in Washington DC in May. The revision process has not revealed any need for radical change, and editorial work has been limited largely to clarification of assignments for e-publications, and updating of terminology and example text. The editorial drafting is expected to be completed within the next few months.

The Agency also held a successful Annual General Meeting of the national ISBN agencies in Istanbul, Turkey in September, which 55 agencies attended. The meeting was also coordinated with similar meetings for ISMN and ISSN (the first time the three agencies have collocated their annual meetings for many years).

5.2 International ISNI Agency

EDItEUR provides a limited secretariat service to the International ISNI Agency. This work – delivered by Nick Woods – continues as normal.

The International Agency will hold its first AGM in Frankfurt during the Book Fair.

There are now roughly 8m ISNIs allocated, three registration agencies (two of which are EDItEUR members) and 12 other members, and the ISNI continues to gain traction in the market. For example Wikipedia is beginning to display ISNIs against some articles.

5.3 International ISTC Agency

EDItEUR provides a limited secretariat service to the International ISTC Agency.

The ISO TC46 SC9 ballot process between February and July 2014 resulted in a vote to confirm the standard 'as is', but some disquiet over the lack of widespread adoption has prompted the ISTC Agency itself to begin an internal review of the standard and the business case for adoption. This review is in progress, and may lead to further calls for significant changes to the standard.

5.4 Arrow Association

EDItEUR has joined the ARROW Association, which has been created to continue the work of the ARROW project. Graham Bell was elected vice chair of the Association.

5.5 Linked Content Coalition

EDItEUR provides a limited secretariat service to the new Linked Content Coalition on a *pro bono* basis. The company registration was completed for the 1st April start to the financial year, and LCC is now actively soliciting further membership from standards agencies, trade bodies and other organisations in order to fund further work.

5.6 World Wide Web Consortium

Over the past year, the W3C has been active in attempting to recruit major publishers as members and has created a Digital Publishing Interest Group, but the W3C's high membership fees are problematic and EDItEUR has *not* become a member. However, EDItEUR has nonetheless begun to contribute to the Interest Group on metadata issues.

This meshes with similar work begun by BISG, which is setting up a working group to study the representation of ONIX data using schema.org – a method to embed metadata in HTML web pages that's used by Google, Yahoo and other major search engines. EDItEUR's view is that it is essential for the industry that a very high level of semantic interoperability be maintained between our existing ONIX XML standard and RDF and microdata syntaxes used by schema.org, because publishers, intermediaries and retailer cannot afford to maintain different metadata for different purposes *in parallel*. Graham Bell will chair the BISG working group.

This area of work will grow over the next few months, and I am sure that it is in the interests of our members that we build upon the engagement with W3C.

6 Major project activity

6.1 Digital Cultural Heritage Roadmap for Preservation (DCH-RP)

The DCH-RP project (Digital Cultural Heritage: a Roadmap for Preservation) is approaching its conclusion, with a final plenary meeting in Rome taking place prior immediately before the Frankfurt Fair. EDItEUR has participated throughout the project, with a particular focus on identifying factors that are considered important in convincing commercial publishers to partner with cultural heritage institutions in exploiting digital cultural resources. As part of the project wrap-up, Tim Devenport intends to provide feedback to those who kindly contributed to an online survey on this subject.

6.2 FORWARD

EDItEUR has become a subcontractor to the EU-funded FORWARD project, which aims to build a comprehensive 'diligent search' solution to help assess rights status and identify orphan works in the audio-visual sector. The project partners are mostly film archive organisations, whose metadata will need to be consolidated and enhanced. EDItEUR will be consulting with CINECA on metadata schemas and messaging architecture, and CINECA aims to build a consolidated catalogue of works and rights from data supplied by the archives.

Initial assessment work has begun, and the major part of the work will be completed in the next six months.

7 Personnel and management issues

In June, EDItEUR employed Alex Ingram in the new post of Standards Editor, to provide support in the development of ONIX, *Thema*, EDItX and our other standards. Alex previously worked for Apple (managing the UK iBooks store) and prior to that for Waterstones where he managed its e-book programme. Alex has already made some significant contributions to *Thema*.

Graham Bell
28 September 2014