BIC Bites

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Introduction to UK Standard Library Categories (UKSLC)

The UKSLC scheme is designed for the public library sector to provide library-oriented category headings applicable across the full range of Adult Non-Fiction, Fiction and Children's/Young Adult stock. It can be used alongside, or in preference to, more complex trade and library classification schemes, according to requirements.

Background

The UKSLC scheme grew out of the BIC E4Libraries initiative – a partnership between BIC, MLA, CILIP, NAG, library suppliers and library management system suppliers designed to streamline workflows and realise the potential for efficiency gains in the library supply chain. Initially, UKSLC was based on the BIC Standard Subject Categories scheme, the UK industry standard, and v1.0 was released in 2008. There was a minor revision (v1.1) in 2016, which simply amended duplicate code values for clarity.

In 2019, a major revision of UKSLC was undertaken by a BIC Task & Finish Working Group with the aim of bringing the scheme up to date and ensuring it remains fit for purpose. Specifically, the headings were compared against recent developments in *Thema*, the subject category scheme for a global book trade. The resulting version, v1.2, was released in September 2019; UKSLC can now be said to be based on *Thema* rather than BIC.

A list of all v1.2 codes and headings with associated *Thema* codes can be found here:
https://www.bic.org.uk/files/pdfs/Subject%20Categorisation/BIC%20UKSLC%20v1.2%20Grid%20with%20associated%20Thema%20codes%20(September%202019)_read%20only.xlsx

Basics of UKSLC

UKSLC provides a concise set of values designed to express the key characteristics of library stock, where the detail and complexity of more extensive schemes, such as DDC, LCSH or indeed *Thema*, are not required. The scheme is divided into three sections, relating to Adult Non-Fiction, Adult Fiction and Children's/Young Adult material, and each section has specific sets of values that reflect the particular features of each type of stock.

For Adult Non-Fiction, each title is assigned a Subject (or a wider Broad Category if preferred), and may also have an Audience code. Adult Fiction has a Genre code, and may also be assigned a number of Audience and Treatment codes. Children's Early Years items are given a single Book Type value only. Other Children's or Young Adult materials are classed by Age and Subject (or Genre for fiction), and may also have Audience or Treatment codes as applicable.

For full details see the UKSLC v1.2 User Guidelines here:
https://www.bic.org.uk/files/pdfs/Subject%20Categorisation/BIC%20UKSLC%20User%20Guide%20v1.2_FINAL.pdf

Particular features of v1.2

With reference to the expanded range of subject codes available in *Thema* and taking user feedback into account, the changes introduced in v1.2 include the addition of new codes for new trends in society and publishing output, the breaking down of larger categories into smaller ones to improve discoverability; and revisions to headings with regard to consistency and current terminology. Some examples of the changes made include:

- Changing the Audience code headings from "Gay/Lesbian Interest" to "LGBTQ+ Interest";
- Addition of the fiction Audience codes to indicate Black and Asian Interest, and Treatment codes to recognise fiction in languages other than English – for both adult and children's fiction;
- Replacing the single Children's code for "Science, Maths and Technology" with three new values for each constituent element;
- Creating a new adult non-fiction Subject code of DGL: "Digital Lifestyle".

Importantly, redundant codes are deprecated rather than deleted to maintain backwards compatibility with previous versions. A list of all v1.2 codes and headings with version history can be found here:
https://www.bic.org.uk/files/pdfs/Subject%20Categorisation/BIC%20UKSLC%20v1.2%20codelist%20with%20version%20history%20(September%202019)_ready%20only.xlsx

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Why use UKSLC ?

Adopting UKSLCs offers many benefits. They can be used to facilitate the evidence-based assessment and benchmarking of stock supply, demand and performance. They support standardised servicing and supply specification, reducing the complexity and cost of processing and selection. On the library shelf, they provide the basis for a logical and user-friendly display of stock, scaleable for different sizes and type of library. Most significantly, they underpin improvements in access to library stock, facilitating on-line browsing by subject and genre using the 'search, discover, refine' methodology familiar from on-line retailers and supporting personalised reader recommendations, regional and national catalogue initiatives, and links to retail sites.

UKSLC values may be applied locally by libraries or consortia, or included in data feeds from bibliographic aggregators or library suppliers. They may be assigned manually or generated through a mapping based on *Thema* codes and other pertinent data elements.

Expressing UKSLC in ONIX and in MARC

UKSLC is a recognised subject scheme in ONIX, indicated by Subject scheme identifier code 92 in List 27. No distinction is made between Adult Fiction, Adult Non-Fiction and Child/Teen sections, but this is not an issue, as all UKSLC codes are now unique. The basic expression in ONIX3.0 for an adult non-fiction title on media studies of LGBTQ+ interest would thus be as follows:

```
<Subject>
    <SubjectSchemeIdentifier>92</SubjectSchemeIdentifier>
    <SubjectSchemeVersion>1.2</SubjectSchemeVersion >
    <SubjectCode>MED</SubjectCode>
</Subject>
<Subject>
    <SubjectSchemeIdentifier>92</SubjectSchemeIdentifier>
    <SubjectSchemeVersion>1.2</SubjectSchemeVersion >
    <SubjectCode>GLN</SubjectCode>
</Subject>
```

Note that there is a separate iteration for each value; that it is sufficient to send the code only (i.e. without the heading); and that it is best practice to include the version number (for each iteration).

UKSLC, as might be expected for a library standard, is also recognised in MARC21. The codes are included in the 072 subject category code field, and the associated headings may also be provided in the 650 subject access fields. The entire tag is repeated for multiple iterations. For example:

```
072  7$aF9$2ukslc
072  7$aYFM$2ukslc
650  7$Fiction 9+.$2ukslc
650  7$aFantasy and Magic.$2ukslc
```

Links and documentation

All of the documents referenced above, plus further background reading, can be found in the Product Information section of the BIC website at https://www.bic.org.uk/51/UK-Standard-Library-Categories/.
For details of *Thema,* see https://www.editeur.org/151/Thema-v1.3/.

the book industry's supply chain organisation