Press Release
Launch of BIC Metadata Capabilities Directory
First deliverable of the Metadata Map Project
LONDON 22nd July 2021

BIC is delighted to announce the launch of its Metadata Capabilities Directory (MCD), a new facility powered by BIC members for BIC members, enabling participants to share information with each other about their own use of metadata within the supply chain. The MCD has been created as part of BIC's Metadata Map project.

Metadata underpins our digital age. It drives discoverability and sales, and therefore demands careful attention in terms of its initial creation, dissemination, and ongoing maintenance. However sometimes best practice can be undermined by legacy processes, system development limitations and commercial priorities: but above all by a lack of clarity over the way metadata progresses through the supply chain.

The MCD is the first facility available to UK book trade organisations, (and organisations trading with UK book trade organisations), to record and describe *what actually happens* within their own metadata activities. All participants in the MCD will provide a full response to an extensive survey which provides a detailed record of their own metadata policies and practices. By recording, aggregating, and sharing actual behaviour across our industry, the MCD will provide an overview of the whole, which will enable contributors to benchmark and calibrate their own activities and help identify development priorities for the future.

What is the Metadata Capabilities Directory?

In simple terms, the MCD is a secure database. All completed submissions will be aggregated and made available in read-only spreadsheet form for other MCD participants to review. The Directory will be updated each week with responses from new contributors and with updates from existing participants where their own status has changed. Participating organisations will be expected to update, or re-confirm, their submission at least once a year to ensure the MCD remains current, and the full data will only be available to other participating organisations.

The benefits of participation

Users will be able to benchmark their own metadata capabilities against all contributing organisations, and against the needs of their supply chain and trading partners. By doing so, participants will be able to identify:

- metadata gaps: product characteristics that *could* be supplied/accepted but are not
- data transformation: where data quality changes as it moves through the supply chain
- development potential: opportunities to improve product data clarity
- metadata effectiveness: prioritise what is really valued by data partners

Get involved

The MCD is open only to BIC members who must start with a submission to the MCD survey. Potential users should visit https://www.bic.org.uk/metadata-capabilities-directory/ which has been added to the BIC website to showcase the project, and use the link to the survey provided there. This page will illustrate a few selected data points from the Directory, which will automatically update as new submissions are received. A number of organisations have already contributed to the MCD, including:

Simon Pallant of Gardners Books, who says…*This is a fantastic opportunity for all parties within the book supply chain to understand the flow of data, the relevance of specific fields of information, and the way in which this is used by all concerned."*

Howard Willows from Nielsen Book commented:

"At Nielsen Book we have long supported the aims and objectives of BIC's Metadata Map project to provide greater transparency and insight into the supply chain for metadata in the UK book industry. The Metadata Capabilities Directory is an important step towards those goals. We will be taking part ourselves from the outset, and we strongly encourage other organisations to consider participating."

Antonia Squire, proprietor of the Dorset Bookshop said:

"Metadata is the very foundation of our businesses. As Independent Booksellers we are significant users of Metadata, yet we have no say in how it is created, compiled, or distributed.   Participating in the Metadata Capabilities Directory is the single most impactful action we as Independent Booksellers can take to influence this most critical of tools."

Visit our new page, click the survey link, complete your submission, and gain access to the full MCD.

The greater the number of contributing organisations, the greater the benefits for each and all of us.

Karina Urquhart

Executive Director,
BIC

About BIC

BIC is a not-for-profit members organisation working at the heart of the UK book industry to promote supply chain efficiency in all sectors of the book world through e-commerce, best practice, training, events, and the application of standards. BIC helps organisations become more efficient, save money, become less wasteful and ultimately greener. At the cornerstone of the book industry, BIC holds a unique position of trust, facilitating UK and international industry-wide collaboration to reach agreement on dependable standards and best practice in the supply chain. Find out more at www.bic.org.uk and follow via @bic1uk

The MCD development has been coordinated by consultant, Peter Mathews

Peter has had over 35 years' experience in the UK book trade in a wide variety of organisations – bookseller, wholesaler, publisher, and data aggregator. Seeking improvements to the supply of product metadata has been a central part of Peter's career and he has been actively involved for many years in standards developments through a number of BIC's committees and in the development of ONIX.

Note to Editors: For more information, please contact: info@bic.org.uk

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