



BOOK INDUSTRY COMMUNICATION LTD

BIC Weights & Dimensions

Best Practice Guidelines

Version 1.0

December 2018

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7 RIDGMOUNT STREET, LONDON WC1E 7AE | +44 (0)20 7255 0516/3
WWW.BIC.ORG.UK | INFO@BIC.ORG.UK | @BIC1UK

BIC Weights & Dimensions Best Practice Guide

This document is the output from the BIC Weights & Dimensions Best Practice Task & Finish Working Group that concluded its recommendations for this area of the supply chain in December 2018.

Most product metadata is trusted by recipients. The data is used or deployed usually without intervention. However, Weights and Dimensions data is often not trusted and is re-measured by each recipient causing wasteful duplication when the data could have been correct at source. Errors in Weights and Dimensions data can lead to poor customer service and increased shipping costs. This document attempts to outline best practice and guidance around the handling and interpretation of Weights and Dimensions data.

Weights & Dimensions Pre-Publication

When a new ISBN is created it will either be a standard format (A-format, B-format, Demy or Royal) book or non-standard format book. For standard format titles, publisher systems will use Expected Dimensions, sometimes based on trim page height and width rather than Overall height and width. These may be available long (more than 16 weeks) before publication. For non-standard format titles, publishers should populate their metadata feeds with Expected height and width Dimensions a minimum of 16 weeks before the publication date. There should be little variation between these Expected Dimensions and the finished product. The weight and thickness of a book may also be calculated in advance, where the production extent, paper weight and board weight are known. Data should be identified within ONIX by using the applicable MeasureType from ONIX Code List 48 (<https://ns.editeur.org/onix/en/48>).

The provision of such data should be made in accordance with the ONIX for Books Application Note: Weights and Dimensions in ONIX 3.0, which has been endorsed by BIC:

<https://www.editeur.org/files/ONIX%203/APPNOTE%20Weights%20and%20dimensions%20in%20ONIX.pdf>

Weights & Dimensions Post-Publication

The Confirmed Weights and Dimensions data of an ISBN cannot be introduced to the supply chain until the book has been physically manufactured. As the specifications the printers will use Expected Weights and Dimensions data based on the same calculations as the publisher but there may be variations in final manufacture, and so Confirmed Weights and Dimensions data is unlikely to be available until a title reaches the distribution warehouse. On receipt the distribution warehouse should check and record actual height, width, thickness and weight. This data should be fed back to the publishers' systems, so that where necessary the measurements delivered in their ONIX message can be updated. Alternatively, a publisher should physically measure final printed copies when they are delivered to the publisher and the system updated. At this stage the publisher should be sending actual and overall measures – not estimated measures or just trim sizes. The publisher can also indicate standard sizes using a product form detail (from ONIX 3.0 Code List 175 (<https://ns.editeur.org/onix/en/175>)). The distributor should also include the Confirmed Weights and Dimensions data in any feeds (e.g. EDI Price and Availability (P&A) feeds) to customer and or data aggregators. All stakeholders should aim to ensure that Confirmed Weights and Dimensions data received from the distribution warehouse take priority over Expected Weights and Dimensions data.

Other Known Issues

Conflicting data from multiple sources

- The best source of data prior to publication will be the originating publisher.
- Post publication, data from the main distributor within the territory should take precedence, and



can be verified with the data held by Nielsen and other data aggregators, provided that such aggregators are taking updated Weights and Dimensions data from their distributor feeds. Even if data aggregators are ingesting this data from other territories, they may not be able to output them, e.g. the same ISBN printed in 3 different territories may have slightly different measurements and an aggregator may only be able to output one of these.

Reprints

- Titles reprinted under the same ISBN may be subject to some small variation in book weight. If publishers and retailers receive updated measurement data from their distributor for a reprinting title this data should be ingested into their (publishers and retailers) systems.

Points to consider

Publishers

- Are you creating Expected Weights and Dimensions data in your metadata in accordance with the ONIX 3.0 application guidelines?
- Are you receiving and validating Confirmed Weights and Dimensions data from your distributor/warehouse on publication and for any reprints?
- Are you updating these measurements in your systems and then your outgoing ONIX feeds?
- If you are not receiving Confirmed measurements from your distributor / warehouse, are you updating your systems with Weights and Dimensions data provided by Nielsen or any other aggregator?
- Are you validating using the XSD schema and the stricter advanced XSD schema that EDItEUR provides? You can find out more and download them, here:
<https://www.editeur.org/93/Release-3.0-Downloads/#Schema%20defs>
- Are you feeding back to your distributor if Weights and Dimensions data is incorrect and/or fails the above XSD validation?

Distributors

- Are you checking and recording Weights and Dimensions data on receipt for new publications and reprints?
- Are you feeding this Confirmed Weights and Dimensions data back to publisher for including in their ONIX data?
- Are you feeding this information to Nielsen and other data aggregators in your P&A feeds?
- Are you auditing the accuracy of your own measurements to ensure correct data in the supply chain?
- Do you complete regular / routine housekeeping on your Weights and Dimensions data?
- Are you proactively feeding back conflicts between Confirmed and Expected measurements to your publishers?

Retailers

- Are you having to check and record your own Weights and Dimensions data on receipt? (Ideally this should not be necessary as industry accuracy improves).
- Are you feeding back any errors to the publisher and/or distributor and/or your data aggregator?
- Are you updating your system with Confirmed Weights and Dimensions data from Nielsen or other data aggregators?
- If you are receiving Weights and Dimensions data from multiple sources, do you have rules in place about which data should take precedence?



Further information

Documentation regarding the implementation of ONIX 3.0 and the provision of P&A updates for customers can be found on the BIC website, here: <http://www.bic.org.uk/5/ONIX-for-Books/> and <http://www.bic.org.uk/files/pdfs/100818%20trade%20price.pdf> or on the EDItEUR website, here: <https://www.editeur.org/93/Release-3.0-Downloads/>. BIC members can raise questions about product Weights and Dimensions data with the BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee.

