

BIC ORDERING BEST PRACTICE

Order and Acknowledgement Style Guide

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The Book Industry's Supply Chain Organisation

To make the ordering of books in the physical supply chain as efficient as possible, it is important that the order is placed and routed electronically from the bookseller to the supplier. Any manual intervention, whether transcribing or rekeying the order; posting, faxing or handing the order to a sales rep, is to be avoided. Accuracy and timeliness are key to efficient order processes. Manual intervention by the sender or the receiver of the order should be the exception rather than the rule.

Today there are a variety of services and concepts in widespread use that enable electronic ordering. These include recognised industry standards such as EDI, platforms including TeleOrdering, PubEasy and Edelweiss, stock management systems such as Batchline, Gardlink and Booksolve, as well as accounts packages including QuickBooks, Xero and Sage Accounting.

The Ordering Best Practice Resources page of the BIC website has more information on this topic, including a Trading Platform Capabilities document - a quick reference guide for booksellers to several of the most popular ordering platforms. The purpose of which is to show booksellers the range of ordering services and functionality that separately or in conjunction, help expedite ordering processes in a more efficient manner, and also provide a range of self-service options (such as order tracking) that help booksellers proactively manage their stock.

<https://www.bic.org.uk/232/Ordering-Best-Practice/>

The advantage of sending an order electronically is that it is then easier for systems to spin the order into several related transactions according to business need. Why? Because some of the mandatory information needed in these related transactions (ISBN13, SAN, order reference) exists already in the order. Related transactions include order (re)acknowledgements, advanced shipping notices and invoices – all created without manual intervention. This removes the risk of delay and potential inaccuracy creeping into transactions.

There may be occasions when using electronic means to place an order is not possible. For example, there could be specific order instructions that can't be communicated electronically. These could include delivery instructions for an author signing or a request for additional discount in response to a publisher or wholesaler promotion.

Follow the guidelines overleaf to ensure that manual orders are handled as efficiently as possible. There are three templates:

- 1). A standard Word template (see page 4)
- 2). An Excel/ CSV template (see pages 5 & 6)
- 3). Free text for an email (see page 7)

Whichever template you use, there will always be essential information to include (such as a bookseller's account number with a specific distributor). These important pieces of information will inform what other information may or may not be required. For example, the bookseller's account number with a specific distributor may mean that the bookseller's address isn't required on the order. The most important pieces of information are described below and overleaf.



Order to. Include the full name and address of the business to which the orders are being sent. Unlike electronic ordering, booksellers must remember that one order template can only contain book orders for one distributor or wholesaler. One distributor may supply stock for more than one publisher. A wholesaler, depending on their inventory, may focus on supplying particular types of stock, subject categories or more general faster selling titles.

Order from. The name and address of the bookseller's business placing the order. Note that this should be the address to which the books should be sent. Larger bookselling organisations may differentiate addresses according to business purpose (delivery, billing, statement address). Including the customer's account number for the distributor, publisher or wholesaler with whom the order is being placed means that the full postal address is not required. Including the full postal address as well will act as a check if the account number is incorrectly transcribed.

SAN. Standard Address Number. A unique seven-digit code identifying the location of a book business. Used in electronic ordering, the SAN replaces the need to quote the full postal address.

Account number. The bookseller's unique identifier with a publisher, distributor or wholesaler. This can link to a range of business information, including key contacts, billing/ delivery addresses and credit terms.

Record Dues Y/N. A book order that cannot be immediately fulfilled is a 'due'. Booksellers can choose to have the order recorded 'due' for future fulfilment or cancelled if not available for immediate supply.

Contact Telephone and Contact Email. Where any type of manual order is concerned, it is always helpful to provide contact details in case of queries.

Special Instructions. These are for dealing with unusual situations and should not be required for every order. Examples include extended credit terms, additional discounts or specific delivery dates.

Order number. A unique reference that can fulfil several purposes including simply proving that the order is genuine or that a specific order line is for a particular purpose, such as a customer order or event.

ISBN13. International Standard Book Number. The thirteen-digit product identifier that is unique to a specific title, edition and format combination. This is the most accurate way of identifying the book you want to order. Please note that 10-digit ISBNs (ISBN10) are no longer valid.

Title. Can be quoted in the absence of an ISBN13 or included as an extra check in case the ISBN13 has been transcribed incorrectly.

Author. Can be quoted in the absence of an ISBN13 and/ or included alongside the title as an extra check in case the ISBN13 has been transcribed incorrectly.



Discount. As per agreed commercial terms, this is the percentage discount off the full retail price that the bookseller is charged.

Retail Price. The price at which a retailer sells a book to a consumer. Also known as the suggested or recommended price. The price may change over time, but in manual ordering it can be another check to help identify the product in case the ISBN13 hasn't been correctly transcribed.

An extensive glossary of supply chain and ordering related terms is available on the Ordering Best Practice Resources page of the BIC website:

<https://www.bic.org.uk/232/Ordering-Best-Practice/>

[Templates overleaf].



BOOK ORDER

Order to: Business Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Postcode	Order From: Business Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Postcode	Additional Information: SAN: Account Number: Record Dues: Y/N Contact Telephone: Contact Email: Special Instructions:
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Order No	Quantity	ISBN13	Title	Author	Discount	Retail Price (£)
<i>SJL230721</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>9780241408506</i>	<i>Agent Sonya</i>	<i>Ben MacIntyre</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>25.00</i>



To upload a file or copy and paste unique ISBNs, you need to confirm with the platform provider, stock management system supplier or accounts package what their specific requirements are. It is also worth checking that your book suppliers can accept uploaded order files.

For example, to copy and paste, it is highly likely that you only need to copy the ISBN from your chosen programme (Excel, Word, Notepad, EPoS system or accounts package) and then input other information such as quantity and line reference manually.

Better still, you may be able to upload a file. The advantage of this is that it reduces the manual steps required with 'copy and paste'. It allows suppliers to ingest the orders directly to fulfilment systems without intervention. Dependent on the range of information included in the order file, suppliers may be able to provide order acknowledgements by return. These could be uploaded to bookseller systems, reducing manual intervention and providing clear order status information by ISBN13.

However, you should first check on the required format (CSV or comma-separated values is popular). Usually, there will be a specific layout and sequence required for the information, as well as stipulations about how to separate each piece of data. For example:

A CSV order file may look like this, with a comma separating the four required pieces of data:

ISBN,Quantity,LineReference,SANORGLN

0099774909,10,SJL020921,0000000OR000000000000

BIC recommends using a simple CSV format, with the minimum amount of information needed to create an order. The above is a good example.

Remember that ordering electronically comes with advantages such as the ability to stipulate whether dues are recorded or not, though this means including more data in the order file. For example:

ISBN,Quantity,LineReference,SANORGLN,DUES(Y/N)

0099774909,10,SJL020921,0000000OR000000000000,Y

In return for the electronic order, wholesalers and distributors may provide electronic order acknowledgements to show the precise status of each order line.

If your EPoS, back-office system or accounts package can produce a CSV order, consider whether it could also process a CSV order acknowledgement in response. Is an acknowledgement something that your distributor can provide?



Just as with the order, you should first check on the required format for receipt of the order acknowledgement. Usually, there will be a specific layout required for the information. A CSV acknowledgement may look like the example below. In this case, with a comma separating the required pieces of data. Note that data in blue is mandatory while data in green is conditional and depends on the status of the acknowledged order line:

ISBN,QuantityOrdered,LineReference, OrderAcknowldgementCode,OrderResponseCode QuantitySupplied,QuantityCancelled,ExpectedSupplyDate

0099774909,10,SJL020921,OF,04,00,00,DDMMYYYY

More information on order acknowledgement codes is available on the Ordering Best Practice Resources page of the BIC website:

<https://www.bic.org.uk/232/Ordering-Best-Practice/>

[Templates continued overleaf].



Below is the suggested free text for emailed orders:

This assumes that the bookseller is familiar with whom to contact at the publisher, distributor or wholesaler and with the information required to action the order.

The text can be adapted as required.

“Dear ____

We would like to place an order for an event taking place on 5 November 2021.

Are you able to supply the following by 1 November 2021?

20 copies of 9780241408506, Agent Sonya, by Ben MacIntyre

Account Number: 123456.000

Order Reference: EVENT051121

An additional 5% discount would be appreciated if at all possible.

Many thanks,”

