



Metadata and Classification

Connect books with the readers who will love them.



Practical advice for book industry professionals on how BIC can help to optimise metadata and increase discoverability of book products.



DID YOU KNOW

Books with complete
metadata sell on average
110% more copies.

SOURCE: NIELSEN METADATA MARKETING REPORT



Metadata and Classification

The efficiency and smooth-running of the book industry depends on the accurate and timely sharing of data between organisations.

Organisations can go a long way towards achieving this by streamlining and standardising their processes through using and promoting **best practice** and **industry recognised** and approved standards. BIC, in association with partner organisations such as EDItEUR, aims to support this through a number of projects, schemes and training.

Many of our **completed and live projects and best practice** resources link to and are concerned with metadata. Head to the next section for our core list and signposting to more information.



Projects, Standards and Best Practice

This section captures a small selection of BIC's core projects, standards and best practices in the metadata and classification area. Signposting to more in-depth information can be found below and also within *Section 4: Access and Recognition*.

DATA RECIPIENTS



This project centred on product information in the book supply chain. The **best practice documentation** is designed with business-to-business recipients of metadata in mind. However, there is lots of valuable information for anyone involved in the creation, management and communication of metadata.

THEMA



Thema is a **multilingual subject category scheme** designed for organisations in all sectors of the global book industry. It enhances **merchandising, discoverability** and **potential sales** of books by simplifying the communication of accurate and detailed subject information across international markets.

At the end of February 2024, *Thema* replaced the outdated BIC Standard Subject Categories scheme (BSSC). For more details see our website.

Thema is developed and managed by **EDiTEUR** (the organisation that also develops ONIX), with guidance from an international committee of representatives from more than **15 countries** including the USA, UK, Canada and many European countries. Groups in Japan, China, Korea, Australia and Latin America are also involved.

BIC runs the **UK *Thema* National Group**, which feeds directly into the International *Thema* Steering Committee which meets at London and Frankfurt Book Fairs every year.

METADATA CAPABILITIES DIRECTORY (MCD)



"The MCD is an important step toward providing greater transparency and insight into the supply chain for metadata in the UK book industry."

Howard Willows, Nielsen BookData

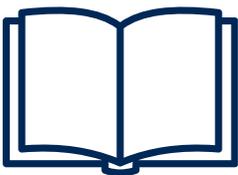
For full information, visit the [MCD Hub](#) on the BIC website.

The MCD is a vital free facility provided by BIC that enables supply chain partners to share key metadata activity with each other.

The Directory is a secure database of survey responses from a wide range of organisations and by contributing to it participants are able to benchmark their own actions and identify potential improvements to their metadata systems and processes. It aims to represent actual metadata behaviours within the data supply chain, allowing contributors to update their information as and when data activities change.

BIC member organisations (only) are able to access the full MCD database for free after making their own contribution to it by completing a comprehensive metadata survey.

OUT OF PRINT



This project was charged with agreeing, documenting and promoting best practice for the treatment of out of print (OP) products for all organisations in the book industry.

The resulting [Out of Print Best Practice Guidelines](#) cover all areas of the supply chain (physical and digital). As such the guidelines include best practice across the industry for **publishers, data aggregators, retailers, service providers, distributors** and so on.



For further details and documentation, visit the [UKSLC page](#) on the [BIC website](#).

UK STANDARD LIBRARY CATEGORIES (UKSLC)

This 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. Adoption of a scheme of Thema-based standard subject/genre categories, made available to libraries in addition to existing Dewey classifications, offers the opportunity to reduce cost and streamline workflows by automating the categorisation process, and to support further improvements in stock selection, management, **discovery** and **display**.



Some of our other projects, standards and best practice topics involving metadata and classification include:

Weights & Dimensions,
Price and Availability,
Children's Books Marketing Classification (CBMC) codes,
Discount Group Codes
and many more.

Benefits of BIC's Projects

Collectively, the outputs of these projects help organisations and the wider industry to:

- ★ Drive discoverability and sales
- ★ Improve reliability and trust in search results
- ★ Support minimising returns and waste
- ★ Reduce miscommunication throughout the supply chain
- ★ Improve the efficiency of problem resolution and resources





Access and Recognition

Resources

Our Resource Centre contains a full range of information, with some highlights as follows:

- BIC Bites (our short papers, written by industry experts) on an:
 - [Introduction to Thema](#)
 - [Introduction to Thema for Booksellers](#)
 - [Introduction to ONIX](#)
 - [Migrating from ONIX 2.1 to 3.0 Weights and Dimensions](#)
 - [Best Practice in Metadata](#)

Additional [BIC Bites](#) are also available across a wide range of topics.

- [Obsolescence of BIC Codes and Transition to Thema – BIC’s Operational FAQs](#)
- [Ordering Best Practice](#)
- [Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice](#)

[Metadata Committee \(open to BIC members only\)](#)

Composed of expert representatives from BIC member organisations, this committee consults across a range of conversations & topics helping to deliver efficiency & accuracy for operations through the creation and promotion of standards, best practice, training, workshops, various initiatives and accreditation schemes.

Library Metadata Group

This group reviews and promotes bibliographic and related standards, with particular reference to libraries. It is the UK advisory committee to the British Library for the revision of the MARC 21 (Machine-Readable Cataloguing) formats.

UK ONIX National Group

BIC runs the UK ONIX National Group, which feeds directly into the International ONIX Steering Committee, meeting at the London and Frankfurt Book Fairs every year.

MEA accreditation

BIC's Metadata Excellence Award (MEA) scheme is designed to encourage publishers to appreciate the contribution made by accurate and timely product data to their sales; to enable them to demonstrate their commitment to making that data available in the supply chain; and to enable them to benchmark their performance against their competitors.

It's open to BIC members and non-members alike, with four application deadlines spread across the year.

BIC Brunches

These webinars explore many book industry topics including metadata and classification in depth. Our BIC Brunch series: [The Thema Sessions and Accessibility Metadata session](#) can be found on our [YouTube channel](#).

Training

BIC offers a number of training sessions across [metadata and technical](#) areas. Visit the BIC calendar for all upcoming training in *Thema* and ONIX.

Emails

COMMUNICATION

Keep up to date with BIC projects, resources, training by joining our mailing list.



Scan to sign up to the BIC Mailing List

Social Media

We regularly post news, reminders, support and resources via our LinkedIn, Bluesky, Facebook, or YouTube channels.

