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## Innovations Affecting Us/ BowkerPower

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# Innovations Affecting Us

Column Editor: **Judy Luther** (The Faxon Company)



## BowkerPower

I must admit I've been reluctant to feature new products in this column, as so many announcements are made at each conference that it is difficult to select a few. But when Katina sent me the news release on BowkerPower, I was intrigued with their use of X12 as a mechanism for product development. Increasingly, the application of these tools provides us with more accurate information available to us in a more timely manner.

Currently *Books in Print* contains 1.25 million ISBNs from 40,000 publishers.

However, 375 publishers, owned by 20 major corporations are responsible for producing 70% of the available titles. Each month tapes from these top publishers are loaded to update 60% of the titles in the entire database.

Early last year, **Albert Simmonds**, as the Managing Director of *BIP*, provided the initiative to design a new process with input from all groups including ALA, ABA, BISAC, AAP and Bowker's Advisory Board of Librarians. This entailed migrating the database from a mainframe to client server technology using a small processor linked with 70 PC's. A decision was made to use the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI X12) standard for more current updates.

The X12 standard, is being developed by the Title Status Subcommittee of BISAC, to be used as a tool for transmitting bibliographic data along with other fields necessary for updating the database. This will enable Bowker to increase the speed of updates from monthly tape loads to daily electronic transmissions. Simon & Schuster and Bowker have been working with SISAC to develop and test this X12 transfer. By the end of 1993 when an upgraded X12 standard has been approved by ANSI, many of the top 375 publishers will participate by sending data electronically in this format. This approach effectively reduces their paperwork, while improving the speed and accuracy of information necessary for ordering books. A diskette with defined fields is available for all publishers who are not currently using X12 so they can upload data.

One of the major benefits for acquisition librarians is the reduction of incorrect ISBNs. Electronically transmitted data eliminates keyboard errors. Duplicate ISBNs and those with missing checkdigits or prefixes will be identified by programs which also compare publisher data with LC MARC records. The publisher will be contacted electronically to secure correct information which is then returned in the same format and loaded automatically.

This application of the X12 standard as Bowker is helping to develop it, offers another benefit by defining additional categories which can be used to search titles and select portions of the database for specific markets. These include:

1) an expanded binding code list including one for mass markets; 2) 7 audience codes for college, young adult, juvenile, professional and scholarly, elementary and high school, trade, special books; 3) 1800 subject or genre codes to simplify the current use of LC subject headings. One of the innovative categories is a breakdown of fiction into romance, action/adventure, fantasy, thrillers, wars, western, etc.

*Books in Print* will continue to be available in paper, fiche, online and

CD-ROM versions as well as tape. Access to the online version of the database will provide the most current information and changes in the status code to reflect "indefinitely out of stock" and "out of print".

In addition, customers will be able to define new subsets of the database and their preferred delivery format. This means that a children's bookstore might opt for quarterly updates of all juvenile and young adult titles.

Once the data is digitized, it is possible to easily produce new products such as the new *Global Books in Print* which will be unveiled at the Frankfurt Book Fair this fall. *BIP* as we know it, will be combined with *Whitaker's Books in Print* in London to produce a CD-ROM with virtually all English language titles published.

In their booth at ALA in New Orleans, Bowker will have their diskette software mounted on a PC to demonstrate how information is coded by publishers for electronic transmission. This demonstration will debut at the American Booksellers Association conference in Miami the end of May. For more information, contact Albert Simmonds at 908-665-2837 at Bowker offices in New Jersey. ☛

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