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Book Industry Communications — Recent Activities

by Sandra K. Paul (President, SKP Associates)

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Those of you who read this column regularly have heard about the variety of standards-related activities of the Book and Serial Industry System Advisory Committees (BISAC and SISAC) of the **Book Industry Study Group**. Some of you may not know, however, that there is a European counterpart to the Study Group named **Book Industry Communications**. With its unfortunate acronym (though not able to offer you pens or shavers), **BIC** is headquartered in London, with **Brian Green** as its Managing Agent. They are sponsored by the British Publishers Association, Booksellers Association, Library Association and individual organizations. Here's a sample of some of their activities.

EDI

BIC, BISAC and SISAC work very closely on Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) formats. We exchange our existing national standard formats and look forward to the day when there will be only one format for a book and serial order — and that will be an internationally accepted EDIFACT standard. To help us toward that end, BIC is the Manager of **EDItEUR**, the Pan-European Book Sector EDI Group sponsored by the Federation of European Publishers, The European Booksellers Federation and the European Bureau of Library Information and Documentation Associations.

EDItEUR is working with the EANCOM version of EDIFACT to develop book and serial industry-specific formats for business transactions, starting with the book quotation, order and invoice. Their standards have been reviewed by BISAC to insure that, when the U.S. moves to EDIFACT syntax standards in 1997, they will have comparable functionality to those which are in use here today — and tomorrow.

Bar Coding

The original Bookland EAN resulted from the deliberations of a British group

called the Machine-Readable Codes Joint Working Party of the Publishers Association. BISAC played a role in those deliberations. Today that Working Party is part of the BIC and we keep in touch with each others' efforts to assure common barcoding of books, serials, and cartons throughout the international publishing community. To that end, we all use Bookland EAN barcodes on our books and SISAC Barcode Symbols on our journals. BIC is working with the NISO Committee now revising the **Serial Item and Contribution Identifier** (SICI) upon which the SISAC Barcode Symbol is based.

The Study Group has recommended the adoption of the **UCC/EAN International Guidelines** for the barcoding of book cartons and BIC is reviewing those recommendations. Since those Guidelines (and the EANCOM EDIFACT standards) call for identification of locations in terms of a UPC or an EAN identifier, BIC is working with the Study Group to provide numbering for publishing industry locations that makes use of the existing U.S. and U.K. Standard Address Number and is acceptable to the European EAN Authority and U.S. Uniform Code Council.

Other Areas of Concern

BIC took the lead in several other areas which I know are of interest to **ATG** readers. First, they are looking into the contents of digitized Tables of Contents. Originally involved in a test of two-dimensional barcoding on the Table of Contents page of serials, they quickly moved to an analysis of the data elements that are appropriate to provide book and serial Tables of Contents digitally. Their first report in this area was reviewed by BISAC and SISAC and U.S. and found to be most comprehensive. They accept the **SICI** for article identification and are working on the use of **SGML** for tagging. We will be reviewing their future activities in this area.

BIC was asked by retailers and librarians to look into security tagging in books. The idea is that publishers would place a security tag inside the binding of books during their manufacture. That tag can be turned on to trigger security devices at the door of bookstores and libraries and off once the book is purchased or loaned. The report they issued, **Standards for Electronic Security Tagging** by **Brian Llewellyn**, recommends the use of electro-magnetic technology for the tags because they can be deactivated and re-activated many times and can be used with several competing security systems. A pilot test of these tags is underway involving three publishers, two printers, a security tag vendor, and a number of libraries and bookstores in the U.K. The pilot is expected to end in early summer after which the findings will be described in a seminar. The final results should be a set of operational guidelines for the book trade, including systems and tag specifications.

Finally, BIC has established a homepage on the **World Wide Web**. The URL is <http://www.bic.org.uk/bic>. It provides access to lists and hypertext links to U.K. publishers, booksellers and others, information about BIC's projects and its sponsoring organizations. Latest word from Brian is that he's experiencing about 850 accesses per week from all over the Internet.

As always, BISAC and SISAC will keep themselves involved in BIC's activities — and vice versa. If you want to be part of this effort, please contact me at 4164812@mcimail.com on the Internet. 🐼