November 1997

Chaos-Electronic Data Interchange-An Update and Look at the Future

Albert Simmonds

R.R. Bowker

Sandra K. Paul

SKP Associates

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Simmonds, Albert and Paul, Sandra K. (1997) "Chaos-Electronic Data Interchange-An Update and Look at the Future," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 9: Iss. 5, Article 36.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2938>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Chaos — Electronic Data Interchange An Update and Look at the Future

by **Sandra K. Paul** (President, SKP Associates)

Column Editors: **Sandra K. Paul** (President, SKP Associates)
and **Albert Simmonds** (Director, ISBN —US Agency, R.R. Bowker)

We've been talking about Electronic Data Interchange in this column and throughout the community for so many years now, I may stop using the full wording and just say EDI from now on! Many organizations have figured out what it is and how it works, even if fewer find themselves using it on an everyday basis. Well, just when you thought you had it down, things they are a-changing. This overview is intended to bring you up-to-date on some of the current activities, as well as to give you a look at the Oh, Oh world of the future!

U.S. Book and Serial EDI Activities

The **Book Industry Systems Advisory Committee** (BISAC) has been working in this arena since 1974; its Serials counterpart, SISAC, for a slightly shorter time. No wonder the formats they have developed are used by publishers, book wholesalers, subscription agents, retailers and libraries across the country. Albeit some are using formats developed over 20 years ago, but they are doing EDI and reaping the benefits of receiving data that does not have to be rekeyed into their computer systems. Book manufacturers are just starting to work with publishers to see the same types of benefits for their job specifications, orders, invoices and production schedules.

There are some other new developments on the national scene as well. The first is the actual use of a format that has been around for some time — the Advance Ship Notice. Recently **Ingram Book Company** and others have discovered the AMAZING potential savings if they don't have to open each box they receive and key the ISBN of the books into their system or even match the ISBNs on the books in the box with those on an electronic packing list on the screen. Instead, they "qualify" suppliers by testing the data in Advance Ship Notices versus the actual books in the carton, until they are convinced of the accuracy. From that point forward, they accept the information from the Advance Ship Notice, with only a spot check on the actual contents every so often. You can't image the HOURS that are saved and the DOLLARS into which that translates!

The other "news" in the book industry is the fact that the folks who have been tracking the music sold at retail (and creating the basis for the *Variety* "charts") are going to provide comparable information about

books. TODAY no one in the country — least of all the publisher who has to decide whether or not to reprint a book when all of the copies in the warehouse have been shipped to customers — knows how many copies were actually purchased by customers and how many are really sitting somewhere in the wholesaler-retailer chain or on the retail shelves, ready to be boxed up and sent back as returns. **SoundScan**, the music-tracking agency, announced its **BookScan** project recently. They will have some figures this year, but be in full swing

in 1998. They have been asked to provide the information in the BISAC Sales Reporting EDI Format the same format now used by **Barnes & Noble** to report its sales to publishers and the one to be used by White Bridge division of **Ingram** for reporting on some independent booksellers' sales and WordStock for reporting on others'.

On Today's International Front

EDItEUR, the international umbrella organization for BISAC, SISAC and their national counterparts around the globe, is really picking up steam. With the agreement of SISAC to develop all of its future formats in the international standard used by EDItEUR (UN/EDIFACT) and the concurrence by BISAC to do the same once it progressed to the point in which it finds itself in November, 1997 — when an upgraded version of the U.S. national standard is published as the **Charleston Conference** begins they are working with the EDItEUR Message Development Group to expedite

the development of new international messages, while providing implementation guides to ones that already exist. The EDItEUR EDIFACT standards are now available for sale from the BISAC/SISAC offices (see the Web site <<http://www.bisg.org>>) and the Implementation Guides (one for trade; one for libraries) are available online at <<http://www.editeur.org>>. Take a look. AND, if you find that you don't like what you see, let us know. Contact BISAC and SISAC through the Web, or by fax at 212/989-7542 or by phone at 212/929-1393.

Tomorrow's EDI

Several organizations have been looking into "future" or "open" EDI. These include the United Nations group that developed EDIFACT and the international standardization organizations (ISO/IEC) committee on Information Technology. What they see today is a world in which national and international EDI standards are not STANDARD. There is a plethora of options in all of the standards today. Before you can start an EDI relationship with another organization, you must develop a "trading partner relationship," which includes deciding which of the many, many options you really will send and receive in your electronic communications. This complexity reduces the number of organizations who are using EDI to some of the biggest and their customers/suppliers. The 90-pound gorillas of this world are using today's EDI; tomorrow's has to be appealing and useful for EVERYONE.

To that end, the UN and ISO/IEC folks are looking at two techniques. The first is Business Modeling. It says that I must understand my business and that of my customers and suppliers and our communication needs with each other BEFORE I can develop standardized tools for all of us to use. BUT, once I have completed the model, I should be able to create these tools in a way that EVERYONE can use them and without prior complex agreements. The current methodology under strong consideration is Object Oriented Technology, or OO. That includes tools that we've all heard of, such as JAVA.

The concept under development is an international receptacle in which the EDI objects can be stored. If I want to send you a purchase order, I would simply go to that location, pull the appropriate object out, put my data in, and send it to you. Because it is a

continued on page 93

Chaos

from page 92

complete unit, the Object can be used by your computer without pre-arrangement. For a look at these concepts in more detail, I urge you to spend a few minutes on the Web. Go to <<http://www.disa.org>> (DISA, the Data Interchange Standards Organization, is Secretariat to the U.S. EDI standards development group). Once there, you are given the option to look at some of the committee activity. Select the Strategic Implementation Task Force (SITG) and take a look at the UN and ISO/IEC documents on file there. AND, if you find yourself thinking that you can help this effort and make it work more appropriately for your organization or community, get involved. Contact BISAC or SISAC at the addresses elsewhere in this article and volunteer. We can use all the help we can get if we're going to get in right in the next century!!

Back to the Future

from page 85

tutions, but for future generations as well. Thus, expending capital on information as though it were merely a utility is onerous. On the other hand, if reliance on per-use fees for low impact information allows more selective capital investments in high impact information, then my instincts as a collections person might be satisfied. The expansion of reliance on per-use fees might accelerate the market correction we at HighWire are involved with as well.

20. After two years into the project what has surprised you? Any profound lessons? Have your goals changed?

MK: The enthusiasm for the online versions by readers has surprised us. The warmth and strength of our relationships with our co-publishers has been a wonderful surprise. The examples of the *JBC* and *Science* have been mentioned only and are quite pervasive ones, but the other relationships with the other publishers have been wonderful and quite productive as well. The most profound lesson to date is that HighWire demonstrates what a small, but brilliant band of professionals can do to affect change given the focus on the mission, on satisfying authors, editors, readers, publishers using information technology. Our goals have not changed, though our methods and technologies have.

21. Would you like to add anything?

MK: I can promise only that the future will bring as many opportunities and changes as the recent past. Not only HighWire, but Stanford in general seeks to exploit the opportunities to the advantage of its academic community and for the colleague communities elsewhere. Get more information about HighWire at <http://highwire.stanford.edu/>.

Copyright 1997 by Michael A. Keller. Licensed for print and digital publication to *Against the Grain* by Michael A. Keller.

Innovation Affecting Us

from page 89

Popular report options include: items selected but not yet ordered, recently shipped items, approval plan activity report sorted by fund code. Reports can be created, viewed online and printed or (if too long) attached to emails. For collection development purposes, records display global title histories showing how many customers received the book on approval, compared to customers who received only notification slips for that title.

GOBILink, used in conjunction with GOBI, can create bibliographic and order records in a local library system from orders entered into GOBI, eliminating the need to re-key item-by-item. Libraries can down-

load data which will trigger encumbrance, order, receipt and payment transactions in the local library system.

For cataloging support, **GOBILink** can facilitate the overlay of order-level records with cataloging records directly from YBP or through **OCLC PromptCat**. GOBI ordering screens provide space for libraries to communicate local data to be included in the cataloging fields. YBP is beta-testing shelf-ready materials for libraries with call numbers provided by OCLC via PromptCat.

Available since January 1996, GOBI continues to evolve and a list of enhancement ideas appear on the Website. A picture of GOBI (bird) and imaginative description also appears on the Website, adding a sense of humor to the electronic environment.

Back Talk

from page 94

them, causing all sorts of troubles. and yet, it is in the future where our greatest leverage is. We can't change the past, although if we are smart, we learn from it. ... If we learn to anticipate the future better, we need not fear it. In fact, we can welcome it, embrace it, prepare for its coming, because most of it will be the direct outgrowth of our own efforts." (p. 18).

The proponents of the Yale classical curriculum were able to hide behind its historical legitimacy. Are we hiding behind the historical legitimacy of print research? Me?

I am good at attacking digital foolishness: I mouth the "you can't read a computer in the bathtub or bed" clichés. But do any of us really believe that this steady growth in the amounts spent on electronic resources is going to end or even slow down? Do we really think the generation of kids flocking to the Internet (whose fragile minds I worried about in a previous column) are going to reverse direction? So are we the people shifting the gears from how information is acquired, processed, stored and preserved now to how it will be done in the future? Or are we some loose nuts and bolts in the gears, trying to stop or slow down the process?

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

13 ACADEMIC PRESS	11 CARL CORP.	95 JAEGER GLOBAL ENT.
87 ACCENTS	38 CASALINI LIBRI	40 KLUWER
2 ALFRED JAEGER	73 CHADWYCK-HEALEY	89 MAJORS
67 AMBASSADOR	83 COGNIZANT COMMUNICATIONS	9 MCGRAW HILL
81 AM. CHEMICAL SOCIETY	91 COUTTS	96 MIDWEST LIBRARY
53 AM. INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS	48 DICTIONARY OF ART	62 MARTINUS NIJHOFF
76 AM. MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY	65 DOODY'S REVIEW SERVICE	51 PUVILL
33 AMIGOS	33 EASTERN BOOK	31 READMORE
35 ANNUAL REVIEWS	27 EBSCO INFO. SERVICES	47 RHODE ISLAND LAW PRESS
39 ASHGATE	55 EBSCO DOC	45 RICH, LLOYD
5 ATG	85 EMERY-PRATT	60 SCHOENHOF'S FOREIGN BKS.
58 AUX AMATEURS DE LIVRES	84 EUROPEAN BOOK CTR.	25 SPRINGER-VERLAG
7 BAKER & TAYLOR	57 FAXON	21 SWETS
3 BLACKWELL'S	63 G & L WISSENSCHAFTLICHE	17 WILEY
43 BLACKWELL'S	59 HENRY HOLT	23 WILEY
69 BOOK HOUSE	15 INFORMATION QUEST	19 YBP
77 BOWKER	75 INSTITUTE FOR SCIENTIFIC INFO.	
71 BRODART	29 INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS	

Ads Manager: Edna Laughrey Internet: elaughrey@aol.com
phone: 313-429-1029, fax: 313-429-1711