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Chaos - World Acronyms Over the Years

by **Sandra K. Paul** (President, SKP Associates) <Sandy@SKPAssociates.com>

This walk down memory lane takes me back to many acronyms in the world of standards that some will remember over the years. The following list includes those in a recent issue of *Against the Grain* as well. (p.87 *ATG*, Nov. 2000)

BASIC - Book And Serial Industry Communications — The result of the merger of the Book and Serial Industry Systems Advisory Committees (BISAC and SISAC), this Committee of the Book Industry Study Group provides the technological standards for EDI, bar coding and metadata needed in the United States and provides input to EDItEUR on ONIX International and to ISO on the ISTC.

BIC - Book Industry Communications — The U.K. counterpart to BISG, BIC is the Secretariat to EDItEUR.

BICI - Book Item and Contribution Identifier — A Draft American National Standard for Trial Use to identify pieces of a book. Also see SICI.

BISAC — See BASIC

BISG — Book Industry Study Group — Parent of BASIC, the EBX Working Group, and U.S. input source to EDItEUR.

BOOKLAND EAN — see EAN

DOI - Digital Object Identifier — The international method for locating the appropriate URL(s) for a given digital object on the Internet. Intended for use by publishers and others involved in electronic commerce involving intellectual property.

DRM - Digital Rights Management — All of the standards that protect a work of intellectual property and provide the end user with the capacity to obtain all of the “rights” purchased. Think — I bought the right to read, but not print this text until January, 2001.

DTD - Data Type Definition — All text tagged in XML requires a DTD to define what tags should come in what sequence. A more sophisticated vehicle is called a Schema, which also allows for checking the type of data in each XML tag.

EAN - European Article Number — Originally known by this acronym, it is actually the 13 digit international counterpart of the U.P.C. and identifies the “country” of origination in the first few digits. Currently the digits 978 represent the make-believe country of “Bookland.” On January 1, 2005, 979 will as well, as we move to the 13 digit ISBN. 0 represents North

America.

EBX - Electronic Book Exchange — The EBX Working Group, an affiliate of the Book Industry Study Group, is developing DRM standards for textual works. They are coordinating efforts in this area with OEBF.

ebXML - Electronic Business XML — One of two serious competitors involved in the development of EDI standards tagged in XML for use by small and medium sized organizations which want to send their EDI messages over the Internet and cannot afford the overhead of the “old fashioned” EDI sent through Value Added Networks. The ebXML effort is sponsored by the United Nations section that developed EDIFACT - the international EDI standard - OASIS (the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards), a consortium of major global businesses. The competitor is RosettaNet, a consortium originally of organizations in the computer hardware business, but evolving into other industries as well.

EDI - Electronic Data Interchange — Not a new concept, but EDI is experiencing many changes in light of the use of the Internet for electronic commerce.

EDItEUR — Although this acronym originally stood for EDI for EUROpe, today EDItEUR is the group concerned with all global e-commerce standards for intellectual property. EDItEUR held its first meeting outside of Europe during the Charleston Conference in November, 2000.

EPICS - EDItEUR Product Information Communication Standard — The EDItEUR standard upon which ONIX International is based. EPICS is compliant with the framework developed by **indecs**.

HTML - HyperText Mark-up Language — The method of marking text for display on the Internet.

IDF - International DOI Foundation — The governing body for the DOI.

IETF - Internet Engineering Task Force — The folks who establish Internet standards.

indecs - INteroperability of Data in Electronic Commerce Systems — A framework for defining the metadata for all works of intellectual property that may be involved in electronic commerce. They completed the “discovery” aspect of their standard as their European Community funding expired; the rights metadata is still to be defined.

ISAN - International Standard Audio/Visual Number — Under development as an ISO standard, this “number” identifies the basic work in an audio/visual production — i.e. a movie. It actually identifies a few “minutes” of both the audio and video that compose the full manifestation — a movie or video production. Also see ISTC and ISWC

ISBN - International Standard Book Number — An ISO standard you all know!

ISTC - International Standard Text Code — Under development as an ISO standard, this “code” identifies a basic work of text before it rears its head in a manifestation such as a manuscript. Think *Moby Dick* and all of the varieties of books, magazines, audio, video and other products based on this “textual work.” Also see ISWC and ISAN

ISSN - International Standard Serial Number — An ISO standard you all know!

ISWC - International Standard Work Code — The first of the “work” codes under development as an ISO standard, this “code number” identifies a basic work of MUSIC before it rears its head in a manifestation such as a recording or in a concert. Think Chopin’s First Symphony. Also see ISAN and ISTC

MARC - Mrs. Avram’s Remarkable Catalog — Now MARC 21.

NAC - Network Advisory Committee to the Library of Congress. A distinguished group of advisors in the early ‘90s. Published a number of reports on topics of interest to the Library at that time.

NII - National Information Infrastructure — Remember when you first heard about this from Senator Gore?

NISO - National Information Standards Organization — Formerly known as ANSI Z39, NISO is the focal point for ANSI and ISO standards for publishing, libraries and information science.

OCLC - Ohio College Library Center; now Online Computer Library Center — Remember the old days?

OCR - Optical Character Recognition

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Webworthy

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*Web sites selected for broad appeal, depth of information, and ease of access. Sites are organized by broad subject area and are visited just prior to publication. Please let the editor know of any sites that are not accessible. Comments and suggestions welcome to **Pamela M. Rose**, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14214-3002; 716-829-2408 <pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu>. Unless otherwise noted in square brackets following the description, Internet addresses were published in *Science*, NetWatch column edited by **Jocelyn Kaiser**. — PR*

Antarctic

SCAR isn't a description of the Antarctic landscape of rock and ice. It stands for the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, an interdisciplinary committee of the International Council for Science (ICSU). Charged with initiating, promoting and coordinating scientific research in Antarctica, SCAR also provides scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty System. The

SCAR Web site provides a good overview of research projects being conducted in Antarctica by over 18 countries, as well as basic facts like 0.4% of the continent is exposed rock and approximately 80 % of the freshwater in the world is ice in the Antarctic. There is also a list of Antarctic related Web sites and access to SCAR publications. <http://www.scar.org/>

Evolution

Mimicry is the sincerest form of flattery, even when it comes to evolution. Hot research topics such as applying the concept of memes (behaviors and ideas copied from person to person by imitation) to human mortality reduction can be found on the Evolutionary Theories in the Social Sciences (ETSS) Web site. Maintained by Johann Peter Murmann, a professor at Northwestern University, the site includes a growing collection of bibliographies, books and reviews, journals, researchers, conferences, associations, Ph.D. syllabi, and a discussion forum that provides a central location for review and discussion of the latest research. <http://www.etss.net/>

Geoscience

From "Dinosaurs 'hunted in packs'" to "University At Buffalo Research Offers First Evidence That Massive Lava Flows Triggered Apocalyptic Climate Changes," the latest Geosciences news is presented on Geoscience Central, along with a number of other services provided by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Geoscientists can search for fellow workers in their field, browse the list of upcoming meetings, update their own personal notes accessible from any Internet connected site, or search for jobs. Curious visitors can browse for geo-merchandise or create a postcard from images of fossils. The site is also home to Palaeontologia Electronica, a bi-annual, free, peer-reviewed journal. A visit to Other Resources reveals a nifty mouse-activated map showing the break-up of Pangea from 200 million years ago to the present and a Quickest Conversion operator for Celsius, Meters, and Liters. <http://geosciences.org/>

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Chaos

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— The machine-readable code used for the ISBN on the back of books before we changed to the Bookland EAN.

OEBF - Open eBook Forum — The OEBF developed the standard methods of "tagging" manuscripts, so that they can be transferred from the publisher to all e-book distributors. They are working with the EBX Working Group on standards for DRM.

ONIX - Online Information eXchange — The ONIX standards for book metadata was originally developed by the Association of American Publishers. Now an EDItEUR standard, ONIX International provides a standardized method of XML-tagging information about books, including the basic bibliographic data, but also enriched information such as author biographies, cover artwork, flap copy and reviews.

SAN - Standard Address Number — The American National Standard identifier for the addresses of organizations in the publishing, library and related communities.

SGML - Standard Generalized Markup Language — An ISO standard which is the "parent" of XML and HTML.

SICI - Serial Item and Contribution Identifier — The American National Standard for identifying issues and articles in print and electronic journals. Also see BICI.

SISAC - See BASIC — Special thoughts go out about two of the "founders" and hardest workers — Mary Ellen Klapper and Fritz Schwartz!

TRSDOS - Tandy Radio Shack Disk Operating System — My first computer's software!

U.P.C. - Universal Product Code — The 12 digit bar code used in North America. On January 1, 2005 all North American businesses are asked to change their databases to recognize a 13 digit product identifier to accommodate the 13 digit EAN.

W3C - World Wide Web Consortium — The standardization group for the Web. Their standards include HTML, XML and many more.

XML - eXchange Mark-up Language — A W3C standard that provides more "intelligence" than HTML, commonly used today to determine how text and illustrations "appear" on the World Wide Web.

Y2K - Year 2000 — No explanation needed, nor problems left unsolved. 🐛

The Fire of Progress

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My current theme (as some readers will have seen from other articles that I have written in 2000) is that we need to be information evangelists. We have to get the word out about the need for every businessman, academic, publisher and everyone else in the information chain to take information very seriously indeed. Unless the market for quality information products and services, be they books, journals or CD-ROMs, can be expanded, publishers will be reluctant to invest in new titles and enhanced service functionality. Information always costs money to collect and distribute. Just because a user does not pay for the information they manage to find on the Web does not mean to say, of course, that no costs were incurred by the originator. There are signs that the support of Web services through indirect revenue models, such as advertising and sponsorship, is no longer as attractive as it was.

I have a favourite quotation that perhaps I can use this article to seek out an attribution. "The fire of progress is lit by inspiration, fuelled by information and sustained by hope and hard work." That to me puts information into context. Without it there cannot be progress in science, business or society. 🌱