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Chaos-An Update on ONIX International-The New International Metadata Standard

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**Adventures in Librarianship**

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2. Does Accounts Payable acknowledge your pleading memoranda?
   a) Sometimes
   b) Yes, by making librarian jokes
   c) Only through legal counsel
   d) That would be against policy

3. In meetings, does Accounts Payable...
   a) Refuse to look at or speak directly to you
   b) Leave the meeting almost immediately for “more pressing engagements”
   c) Whisper disparaging comments to others
   d) Give you what in some cultures would be called “the evil eye”

4. When you give invoices to Accounts Payable for payment, do they say...
   a) Clarissa will do these... as soon as she gets back from maternity leave
   b) Who are you again?
   c) What are these?
   d) Nothing; responding in any way would be against policy

5. When you and Accounts Payable are unexpectedly alone together, do you...
   a) Smile and try to pretend that all is well
   b) Silently sweat
   c) Release a blizzard of distracting, incoherent chatter
   d) Feel a deep sense of impending doom

6. In social situations, does Accounts Payable...
   a) Tell your most embarrassing stories
   b) Flirt like a teenager with the other departments
   c) Drink too much and start sobbing in the corner
   d) Claim to not know who you are

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**Chaos — An Update on ONIX International**

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

We described ONIX International in Against The Grain, vol.12/4, Sept. 2000 p.84, and at the 20th Annual Charleston Conference. This is an update on the ONIX (Online Information Exchange) metadata standard since last fall.

In November 2000 ONIX International Release 1.2 appeared on the EDIHEUR Website www.EDIHEUR.org. That version expanded some of the fields and corrected errors in the prior release. A minor set of additions and corrections appeared in Release 1.2.1 in April 2001. (It should be noted that each release of ONIX indicates the changes from the prior release in its frontmatter. All of the versions of the standard and its DTD are available FREE OF CHARGE at the EDIHEUR site.)

A set of Frequently Asked Questions has been developed and is available on the site. A mapping has been done between ONIX and both MARC 21 and UNIMARC; the links to both of these appears on the site. AND, a list of all of the implementers who have announced status now appears on the Book Industry Study Group Website - www.bisg.org. Efforts are underway to further publicize the standard for printed books within the U.S. and abroad.

Library community interest in ONIX has resulted in the addition of two librarians — Sally McCallum of the Library of Congress and Karen Coyle from the University of California Digital Library and Chair of the American Library Association Task Group on E-Books — to the U.S. ONIX International Policy Committee. Although it is acknowledged that the existing ONIX standard was developed to meet the needs of the retail and e-tail community, there is sufficient overlap with the traditional library bibliographic standards, and sufficient interest by librarians in having the data contained in the ONIX-tagged records in their OPACs, to pursue this avenue further for commoditization. Specifically, we will be seeking input from the library community on tags and values in ONIX that overlap with those in library standards, so that they can be standardized.

ONIX International was originally adopted in the United States and the United Kingdom. At a meeting of the ONIX International Steering Committee in March during the London Book Fair, it was announced that implementations are now underway in Germany, France, Argentina, and Belgium. In addition, a test file has been received from the Russian Book Chamber, indicating their potential adoption in the near future.

At the current time, however, future releases of the standard to cover e-publications and other media and applications are on hold. The implementers are awaiting a paper from the consultants to ONIX International (David Martin and Francis Cave) on the approach to be taken with other media. Just as the MARC standard had various versions for different media, the Association of American Publishers continues on page 94.
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and EDIFiER took the same approach originally for ONIX. However, there is concern in the U.S. ONIX International Policy Committee that this is the wrong approach; that an e-book is simply another version of the text, comparable to the paperback version of a hardback. That concern was supported at the ONIX International Steering Committee and the analytic paper authorized.

It is our hope that the analysis will be carefully reviewed by all of the countries implementing ONIX that the e-publication additions to ONIX can be published by the end of May 2001, and that Release (1.3) will contain all of the fields necessary to describe an e-publication, including its format, length, and the digital rights management software it contains. Controversy still exists within the publishing supply chain about the need to identify each different version of an e-publication with a unique ISBN to enable current systems to handle the item or whether the approach some publishers have taken to go directly to one Digital Object Identifier for ALL formats is currently viable. Release 1.3 will accommodate both approaches.

Other areas undergoing analysis at the moment include ONIX for video products and for serial issue information, including tables of contents and article descriptions. At the urging of the organizers of the Frankfurt Book Fair, the development of an ONIX version for expressing subsidiary rights information should be developed soon. There has also been interest in ONIX from the music industry. ONIX International forms the basis for the metadata associated with the emerging International Standard Textual Work Code and will be recommended for the metadata to accompany an ISBN when that standard is revised to include the conversion from 10 to 13-digits.

For more information about ONIX International, check out BASIC at www基本原则.org or EDIFiER at www.EDIFiER.org.

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>