

Notes of the International ISBN Agency Board Meeting

Dark Room, London Book Fair, Olympia, Hammersmith Road, London, U.K.

Thursday 12 April 2018

Present:

Ronald Schild (Chair), Piero Attanasio, Beat Barblan, Henri Barthel (left after item 1), José Borghino, Jamshid Farahani, Miguel Jiménez, Alenka Kanič, Carol Riccalton, Neil Wilson, Jon Windus, Carol Cheesman, Stella Griffiths, Birgit Mahler (left after item 1), Nick Woods.

Apologies:

María Isabel Deaza Pérez, Sophie Saint-Marc.

Ronald Schild (Chairman) opened the meeting and welcomed Henri Barthel and Birgit Mahler from GS1 who will give a presentation to the Board about the GS1 Cloud. All the delegates introduced themselves to one another.

1. GS1 Cloud

GS1 coordinates the bar coding system worldwide and Henri began by summarising the history of the relationship between ISBN and GS1, cemented by a contract signed in 1980 to facilitate machine readable representation of ISBN.

The GS1 Cloud is scheduled for release in May 2018 with the aim to be a trusted global database of product information. Part of the motivation for it is the changing nature of shopping habits, with consumers now routinely placing orders using speech recognition devices. GS1 wants to improve available product data to enhance and better inform the consumer shopping experience. Seven core attributes will be collected for each product and, so far, they have accumulated these elements for 80 million GTIN records. The GS1 Cloud will be a single platform to share data, with suppliers uploading data, rather than third parties (e.g. seller information). Some retailers have begun to insist upon GTIN to stock a product and indeed Amazon intends to ban sellers whose GTINs are incorrect.

The GS1 Cloud will include three key features:

- 1) Check – this function will allow the end user to input the GTIN and verify whether it is valid and from a GS1 member company. This should help to discourage fraudulent use of GTINs, (a problem which is becoming more frequent);
- 2) View – the user can look at the product attributes;
- 3) Explore – allows the user to explore similar products as part of a product catalogue.

Beat Barblan asked about the workflow. Henri confirmed that the 'brand owner' (usually the manufacturer) should upload the product data. They must be GS1 member companies and all must agree to the terms of use. Manufacturers can charge for a value-added service, not for the raw data. GS1 will collect information on the data providers as well, although this mostly already exists anyway in the database of GS1-registered companies.

Birgit confirmed that the Global Product Classification (8-digit number) is used as the product classification system. Jon Windus asked how many categories cover book products. Birgit replied that there are only limited options, mostly relating to format as, historically, there has been no major use of book data in GDSN. Ronald asked how GS1 perceives the GS1 Cloud working alongside existing Books in Print databases since it was noted there is no central, global database for publication data; it is done nationally, albeit with some overlap. Ronald highlighted that in publishing the publisher and manufacturer of the books are often different entities and it is conceivable that the limited data (7 core elements) might provoke customer dissatisfaction.

The Board members present agreed that, as with GTINs, there are sometimes problems with ISBNs. Dummy ISBNs can accidentally get into the supply chain clashing with legitimate assignments and Neil Wilson stated that a similar problem has been noticed in libraries now that their databases are interconnected.

ISBN is a subset of GTIN, but there have been some cases where Amazon has refused to list books if the ISBN is not listed in the GS1 Cloud. Henri advised that GS1 is a neutral organisation and this was not a policy, but an error. GS1 has started to appoint account managers to manage relationships with the bigger users of their system and Henri has passed the details about the ISBN cases to the relevant Amazon account manager.

The discussion concluded with ISBN and GS1 agreeing to keep each other informed of any developments. Birgit **agreed** that slides of her presentation could be shared with the Board members afterwards.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

A correction was made to the attendance list as José Borghino had not been present. This adjustment aside, the minutes of the previous meeting were **approved** by the Board members present.

3. Composition of Board and Elections for 2018 The directors whose terms are due to complete in 2018 are Alenka Kanič and Ronald. Ronald confirmed he is willing to stand again, but Alenka stated that she will not stand as she cannot complete another full term (she expects to retire from the National Library of Slovenia in 2019). In May, in line with our Articles of Association, we will write to all agencies to invite them to make nominations. An election will be held if there are more than two candidates. Led by Ronald, the Board offered its thanks to Alenka for her long service on the Board.

4. Revision of ISBN standard Following the publication of the standard and the accompanying users' manual, translations of the manual by national agencies are now underway. The first translation we have received is the French, kindly provided by AFNIL, which the IIA will publish shortly. We know that other translations, including Spanish and Polish, are underway.

The IIA issued a press release to announce the new standard and a number of industry bodies picked this up and included the news in their own newsletters and news platforms. These included BookNet Canada, ALPSP, IPA and BIC. Stella had also made a presentation about the new standard at BIC's *Building a Better Business* seminar earlier that day at London Book Fair and there are plans underway for a possible BIC Breakfast event in October.

Some Board members thought the new Users' Manual was not prominent enough on the IIA site.

Action: IIA to make the link to the new users' manual more prominent

5. ISBN AGM

a) Update on the AGM 2018 arrangements.

Stella and Nick had met with Mark Camilleri from the National Book Council of Malta, who is optimistic and confident about the meeting's success. Our discussions were very positive, and we expect a good meeting in Malta.

b) First draft of the AGM 2018 agenda. A first draft of the AGM agenda had been circulated in advance and further suggestions from the Board members present were invited.

Paul Jessop – who will be in Malta anyway for the ISMN meeting – had proposed that he update the ISBN community about ISNI. A brief slot regarding updates about the ISLI was also suggested. The Board **agreed** to both of these. It was further **agreed** that there should be a presentation on Thema (to be given by Ronald), while Piero suggested ARDI and ARDITO as a topic. Assuming Diana Segovia of the Argentina ISBN Agency can attend the meeting in Malta, she has expressed willingness to speak about publishing trends in her country. Beat raised the issue of virtual reality publications and it was proposed to hold a workshop or breakout sessions on the topic “When is a book not a book?”

Action: Carol Riccalton agreed to ask Jonathan Clark about DOI topics to present at our AGM

Action: Piero to check whether a presentation on ARDI and ARDITO is possible

Action: Beat to investigate a possible presentation on the issue of digital objects and virtual reality and their eligibility for ISBN

Action: Stella and Nick to explore the possibility of ISNI, ISLI, and Argentina presentations, and to coordinate with several people regarding the potential workshop session

c) 2018 Academic Conference Mark Camilleri had confirmed that no papers had been submitted for the academic conference yet, but the deadline is not until 30 May. Some Board members mentioned that they are considering whether to submit papers. Angus Phillips of Oxford Brookes University and some of his academic colleagues will attend, as well as some Maltese publishers.

e) 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 AGMs It is almost certain that the 2020 meeting will be in Oslo, Norway. We don't yet have any detailed expressions of interest regarding 2021 and 2022.

6. Any Other Business Carol Cheesman raised the issue of the forthcoming 25 May 2018 deadline for companies to show that they are compliant, or taking steps to become compliant, with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). Members of the Board recommended that the IIA talks to Karina Luke of BIC, to the Publishers' Association, and that legal counsel should be sought.

Action: IIA

7. Date of Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held on Sunday 23 September 2018 in the early evening at the Palace Hotel (the same venue as the AGM) in Sliema, Malta. The 2019 London Book Fair will revert to March so the Board Meeting is due to be held on Thursday 14 March 2019 at 2pm at Kensington Olympia, London.