

# DDC or BISAC: The Changing Balance between Corporations and Public Institutions

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**ABSTRACT:** The changing role of libraries demands examination of the impact of the 21st century book market. Traditionally, public libraries have provided access to information in a physical form, but the purpose of the library has remained unchanged, that of providing access to information for all users. The increasing emphasis on electronic collections has led librarians to consider the issues involved with electronic sources. Changes in the book market, including globalization and the inclusion of the ebook affect libraries in many ways. This paper will examine the effect of globalization on the library and its relationship with publishers and publisher groups.

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## 1.0 Introduction

When Melvil Dewey introduced his classification, he promoted it, not as a better reflection of all knowledge, but as accurate, economical, and convenient. He admired successful entrepreneurs, comparing Dewey Decimal Classification (*DDC*) to the efficient pigeonholes on a businessman's desk. "Cooperation" is notably absent from his biography's index. Nearly a century later in 1967, OCLC was formed as the Ohio College Library Center, a cooperative. Fred Kilgour led the nascent OCLC in what may have been the last great blossoming of cooperative library cataloging. Kilgour accurately predicted (OCLC n.d.a): "people would no longer go to the library, but that the library would go to the people." With the advent of the Internet and electronic publishing reality outstripped Kilgour's prediction. In 1988, OCLC acquired Forest Press, publisher of *DDC*, from the Lake Placid Education Foundation established by Dewey. Technology has allowed knowledge organization systems (KOSs) like *DDC* to go global and has contributed to the disintegrating boundary between the public sphere of the library and commercial enterprises such as publishers, bookstores, and distributors. Google Books is building what they refer to as "The Last Library," and Amazon.com has become a reference tool.

In the pursuit of innovative practices and the maximization of resources and dwindling budgets, some libraries have embraced a customer-driven paradigm and adopted practices from the bookstore and commercial sectors. In addition to less controversial practices such as comfortable seating, better signage and displays, lower shelving, and coffee shops, some libraries have abandoned *DDC* in favor of the Book Industry Standards and Communications Subject Headings List (BISAC), used by the US book industry. One side effect of this collaboration is the transplantation of the commercial values of the book industry into the public sphere of the library. While OCLC has exported *DDC* to the global community and continues to defend *DDC*'s copyright vigorously, they have recently completed a crosswalk between *DDC* and BISAC in collaboration with the Book Industry Study Group (BISG – who owns BISAC).

We identify patterns in texts promoting BISAC or *DDC* from the BISG (US), the Book Industry Communication (UK), OCLC, and related sources, especially scrutinizing the commercial and global philosophies and discourses enforced by systems that are at odds with the public and local focus of libraries, their characteristics, their consequences, and the ethi-

cal implications and challenges for libraries and information organizations in the near-future. Is it possible to return to the local, cooperative spirit of 1967? Have we gone too far back in time putting efficiency, economy, and entrepreneurship before meaningful, local access? In pursuing this ongoing analysis, we have uncovered discourse patterns linking commercial and corporate entities to each other and to libraries in surprising ways. The connections and patterns help identify the choices we need to consider as we move into the future.

## 2.0 Methodology

This research is a Foucauldian genealogical discourse analysis of texts including those which discuss issues of globalization in libraries and bookstores from published and unpublished sources related to libraries and bookstores, including materials available from the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), the Bookstore Industry Study Group (BISG) in the US, the Book Industry Communication group (BIC) in the UK, and EDItEUR, an international publisher group. The texts consist of public records available on the web, conference proceedings, interviews, and published articles. What effects will the increasing globalization of the book supply-chain have on libraries and publishers and the balance between them? Our current research focuses on the systems used to organize information in libraries and bookstores.

## 3.0 The DDC-BISAC switching cases

The vehicle for this exploration is the case of public libraries that choose the book industry BISAC Subject Headings in place of the *Dewey Decimal Classification* (*DDC*), first self-published by Dewey in 1876 and now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> edition published by OCLC.

### 3.1 The role of OCLC in the DDC-BISAC switching cases

OCLC's official discourses on funding, cooperation, and globalization frame the context for this discussion. OCLC is a nonprofit cooperative, funded by the membership, whose public purposes are to further access to the world's information and reduce library costs (OCLC n.d.b). It strives to maintain a strong financial base in order to accommodate growth, upgrade technological platforms, conduct research and development, and sustain worthwhile projects for the benefit of members' libraries and their users.

OCLC has more than 25,900 member institutions in 170 countries. They are grouped by Regional Councils: OCLC Europe, the Middle East, and Africa; OCLC Asia Pacific; and OCLC the Americas, which elect representatives to the 48-member Global Council. The role of the Regional Councils is to strengthen OCLC. They meet annually to keep current on issues of vital and immediate interest to the OCLC cooperative. Member participation in governance is through delegate sponsored resolutions brought to the annual Global Council Meetings. At the top of the OCLC hierarchical governance chain is the Board of Trustees with 16 members: 6 elected Global Council members, the President of OCLC, and 9 trustees elected by the Board itself, 5 of whom come from fields outside librarianship. The objective of the Board is “to align OCLC’s product, research and advocacy strategies with OCLC’s mission: to connect people to knowledge through library cooperation” (OCLC n.d.c). The collaborative and participative philosophy of the organization is also emphasized here: “To ensure that OCLC remains a strong collaborative, the Board encourages a culture of cooperation and vigorous debate” (OCLC n.d.c).

### 3.2 *Licensing and copyright issues of the DDC and OCLC*

Texts from OCLC exhibit three discourses as part of its public purpose: collaboration, improvement of access, and availability of resources. However, the *DDC* is a *copyrighted* and proprietary system managed by OCLC, which also holds the trademarks on the names *Dewey*, *Dewey Decimal Classification*, *DDC*, and *WebDewey*. “Since the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system was created more than 135 years ago, it’s easy to assume that the Dewey name is in the public domain. However, it never has been, and since 1988, OCLC Online Computer Library Center has held the trademark on the Dewey name” (OCLC n.d.d). Continuous updates and revision of the tables preserve OCLC’s ownership of the *DDC*. This ownership has been questioned on the basis of the location of the Dewey editorial office in the Decimal Classification Division of the Library of Congress. Ardito (2003, 20) questioned the consequences that public workers or workers in a public institution could have for a copyrighted system. In 2003, when OCLC sued a library themed hotel in New York that was using *DDC* numbers for their rooms, many librarians debated *DDC*’s ownership in comparison to other systems which are in the public domain, and suggested

the latter had benefits for the library community. The Library of Congress *Classification*, a federally supported classification from the Library of Congress, is in the public domain, as are all federal government works, and therefore is not protected by copyright or trademark laws. Ardito (2003) noted that the *DDC* editorial office, now OCLC-funded, has been located in the Library of Congress since 1923. He claimed that, if the Library of Congress contributes to the *DDC*’s expenses, then some parts of the *DDC* should be in the public domain since the Library of Congress is supported by tax dollars.

Ardito also noted that OCLC has frequently acted to stop the use of the Dewey trademark or other intellectual property by third parties including arguably academic “fair uses,” such as a project that consisted of mappings with feminist thesauri and local revisions from the University of Alberta, Canada (Kublik et al. 2003, 29). According to Ardito (2003), the reason for this is that the Dewey Decimal name and thus its related intellectual property “have acquired an extraordinary degree of consumer recognition in the minds of the relevant public that use the system and are now famous and serve uniquely to identify products and services provided by OCLC.” Indeed, OCLC has defended their legal actions, claiming that “we felt that abandoning our rights in the Dewey trademarks was an unacceptable result for the OCLC membership” (Eberhart 2003, 15). Joseph Dreitler, a trademark lawyer representing OCLC, explained that “if a company that owns the rights to a trademark allows that trademark to be used in such a way that it is no longer associated with their product, it is abandoned. This is not something OCLC wanted to do, but they had to do it to protect their trademark rights from such large-scale use” (Albanese 2003, 17). However, the Dewey trademark has also been the subject of criticism in the library field over the years; criticism suggesting that restricting access to the system does not fit with the purpose of libraries and the public interest. In 2004, Intner wondered about the purpose of trademarking Dewey and tried to guess how a copycat classification might make significant inroads into OCLC’s Dewey market (Intner 2004, 16). However, OCLC has shown a willingness to alter their policy toward uses of Dewey since releasing the revision to Dewey in Germany under Creative Commons license (although still ND – No Derivatives). This surprising move signals a possible connection between the public purpose established by OCLC and the public purpose of public libraries within the community they serve. It is clear that the

public purposes of libraries and public institutions are very different from the purposes of private and commercial entities. Given this history, what will OCLC's stance be toward the incursion of the proprietary Book Industry Study Group's standard BISAC into public libraries?

### 3.3 *The role of the BISG in the DDC-BISAC switching cases*

The Book Industry Study Group (BISG) is "the leading U.S. book trade association for standardized best practices, research and education ... working on behalf of its diverse membership of publishers, retailers, manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, librarians and others involved in both print and digital publishing to forward its mission of *creating a more informed, empowered and efficient book industry supply chain for both physical and digital products*" (Book Industry Study Group n.d.a, emphasis original). The BISG has regular meetings to discuss issues concerning the book industry or member interests, such as conferences on "*Making Information Pay*," a title that symbolizes the gap between the interests of libraries and those of the book industry. Most libraries that have advocated the use of BISAC over DDC have attempted to establish opposition between the two systems and the institutions that are in charge of them. However, OCLC is a BISG member (Book Industry Study Group n.d.b). On December 7th 2009, BISAC Subject Headings 2009 Edition was released (Book Industry Study Group 2009). On December 9th 2009, a special BISG Webcast entitled "BISAC Subject Headings: Connecting Books and Readers" was sponsored and jointly developed by OCLC (Bole et al. 2009). In 2007, when BISAC was first adopted by a US public library amidst some strong anti-DDC and anti-OCLC sentiment, OCLC was cautious. In the 2009 article titled "Who Really Likes Dewey, Anyway?" published in the *Library Journal* (Annoyed librarian 2009), the assumptions BISAC advocates held against the DDC and OCLC, although not the BISG, seemed to be clear. One commenter even stated that "The extra good thing about BISAC is that it would allow a direct vertical technology link between publisher and library. The publisher could create the Onix [sic] record with the BISAC subject heading and then transfer it directly to the library for import. No more expensive OCLC!" However, the role of OCLC as an intermediary between libraries in the exchange of library records does not seem to be in danger of disappearing immediately. ONIX

(ONline Information Exchange) for Books is the international XML-based standard developed and maintained by EDItEUR, the international group coordinating development of standards infrastructure for electronic commerce in the book and serials sector. The assumption that using ONIX for books will eliminate OCLC or the cost of acquiring cataloguing records has not been proven.

### 3.4 *Convergence of BISG and OCLC standards: ONIX-MARC and BISAC-DDC mappings*

In January 2009, the Global Product Manager at OCLC Cataloging & Metadata Services: Renee Register, also responsible for partnering with publishers, vendors, and other content providers in the creation and distribution of title metadata to libraries, the publisher supply chain, and end users, presented a work titled "From ONIX to MARC and Back Again: New Frontiers in Metadata Creation at OCLC" at ALA Midwinter Meeting (Register 2009). In her presentation, Register suggested that libraries and retailers should join forces to describe books together and communicate those descriptions through the ONIX standard to improve interoperability. In May 2012, OCLC published the report "A Crosswalk from ONIX Version 3.0 for Books to MARC 21" (Godby 2012). The convergences of ONIX and MARC, BISAC subject headings, and the DDC were seen as key points to be worked on.

Joan S. Mitchell, editor in chief of the DDC at OCLC, carefully noted that BISAC might be of use in a particular context. In 2007, when several libraries in the US started to drop DDC and adopt bookstore-based systems, Harry Courtright, director of the 15-branch Maricopa County Library District, claimed that this new approach could be, and probably should be, the death of Dewey. On the other hand, Mitchell simply stated: "Perhaps he knows his library's clientele and he's meeting their needs. Libraries are always experimenting to meet the needs of its patrons" (Mitchell cited by Lynch and Mulero 2007). On the other hand, Mitchell suggested that the performance of BISAC as a proper library classification system should be improved with some kind of joint use together with DDC: "if you equate 'using Dewey' to a physical shelf location device, you are missing the rich layers of access" (Lynch and Mulero 2007).

According to the BISG Webcast (Bole et al. 2009, 5), OCLC Metadata Services for Publishers automatically adds BISAC Subject Headings to publisher data using mappings from the DDC. This initiative is



part of a collaboration project being carried out by Diane Vizine-Goetz's team in OCLC Research and the Dewey editorial team on DDC and BISAC mappings. In this project, OCLC Research even created MARC authority records for BISAC subject headings, according to the guidelines for past projects related to mapping DDC and other schemes such as the *Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)*.

On the 1st of April 2011, the new release of WebDewey 2.0 was announced on the Dewey blog (Crawford 2011). One of the new features of this release was the BISAC-to-DDC mappings. Some of the features provided by WebDewey 2.0 include not only the aforementioned mappings, but also search and browsing in Dewey numbers, LCSH, and BISAC headings (OCLC 2011). According to the WebDewey 2.0 overview demo, this system seems to have intended to widen the audience: "WebDewey 2.0 is designed with the occasional user in mind, but robust enough for an experienced user." This means that WebDewey 2.0 has been designed for both the occasional and the experienced user, the user who knows the system and the user who does not want to complicate him/herself, the traditional Dewey audience and the bookstore-oriented BISAC audience. The inclusion of BISAC in WebDewey 2.0 seems to provide the system with the advantages of both worlds and for all kind of users.

BISAC in MARC records had been introduced earlier in May 2008 (OCLC 2008a) with new codes for data such as BISAC Subject Headings, BISAC Merchandising Themes, and BISAC Regional Themes. Meanwhile, some of the libraries adopting BISAC for their collections took different approaches for their records depending on the nature of the switch, e.g., a new collection vs. an established one; working with vendors to make it work, e.g., Brodart and Baker & Taylor. Other librarians rejected the change as being too costly, such as Phoenix Public Library's Ross McLachlen (Fister 2009b).

### 3.5 *The role of distributors and Baker & Taylor in the DDC-BISAC switching cases*

In this new scenario of closer collaboration between libraries and commercial entities regarding metadata descriptions, the importance of data aggregators such as Baker & Taylor, Bowker, and Ingram is even greater. Indeed, Connie Harbison of Baker & Taylor was one of the participants, along with others from BISG and OCLC, in the BISG webcast two days after the release of the BISAC Subject Heading 2009

edition. According to the presentation (Bole et al. 2009, 3), Harbison has been involved in the BISAC Executive Committee since 2004, when she took on the role of BISAC Subject Codes Committee Chair. Baker & Taylor is also a BISG member. Baker & Taylor's role in the adoption of BISAC by some libraries in the US was also very important. As mentioned before, library staff at Maricopa worked with Baker & Taylor deciding which headings patrons would use. According to Jennifer Miele, Perry Branch manager (cited by Fister 2008): "most certainly you need a plan to work closely and continuously with any vendor, if you outsource your material, or cataloger(s) to keep them apprised of changes and additions in your BISAC-based scheme." Similar cooperation took place at Rangeview Library District in Colorado. These activities are similar to the outsourcing of cataloging and related functions to vendors, which risks homogenizing libraries rather than allowing them to tailor their catalogs to the needs and skills of their various users.

This displacement of the categorization process from the library to the publisher is a further and more profound step towards universalization and homogenization of clients, ignoring their diverse nature and allowing the publisher to determine their standard profile from a profit motive. Concerning this, the first of the alleged benefits of BISAC according to the BISG website is to "provide the publisher with the opportunity to tell the retailer and the general book trade of the primary and secondary store sections within which the title will best fit (and, hopefully, sell best)." And who is best suited to assign this categorization? According to BISG, "The best person to assign the codes to your titles is the person who knows the most about the content of the book. Most likely this will be the editor or, perhaps, a marketing department associate." One "philosophy" that person will follow in applying commercial subject headings will be to assign "a code that represents a best-selling category of materials in the hopes the new title will ride the coattails of the best-selling category. This is not recommended if that category is not appropriate for the work in question" (Book Industry Study Group. n.d.c). Therefore universalization, standardization of the language, and communication of the best-selling descriptions of books are desired characteristics of BISAC, probably due to its commercial origin, its appropriateness in a commercial context, and its pragmatic approach. However, are we sure this is the most appropriate thing for public libraries?

### 3.6 *The role of Google Books in the DDC-BISAC switching cases*

The relationship between Google Books, a BISG member, and BISAC is also a key point in the move toward commercialized globalized adoption of the latter. In 2008, Google and OCLC announced an agreement to exchange data in order to improve Google Books search program through sharing WorldCat-derived MARC records (OCLC 2008b). In April 2010, it was also announced that OCLC was adding MARC records to WorldCat for the Google Books Library Project and HathiTrust Digital Library collections (OCLC 2010a). From the OCLC point of view, this movement is completely in line with WorldCat's mission, consisting of working with libraries, publishers, and other partners to connect web-information seekers to the collections held in libraries. In addition, it also allows Google Books to use these resources provided by OCLC as any other library connected to the network can. Indeed, the Internet has been described as a "giant public library" (Nie and Erbring 2000, 5), and Google Books has also been called "The Last Library," although it has been highly criticized for the quality of its metadata (Nunberg 2009a, 2; 2009b). From a librarian's point of view, while the description of Google Books as "the Last Library" could be argued (Fister 2009a; Metz 2009), the decision to use BISAC Subject Headings for the Google Books project instead of any existing library schemes seems to be by far the most relevant issue for the future of library classifications.

Although Dan Clancy denied that Google Books was asked by the publishers to use BISAC, according to Nunberg, "this might have to do with their own ambitions to compete with Amazon" (Nunberg 2009b). Indeed, Amazon.com, an online bookstore, uses a BISAC-based scheme as expected. Jon Orwant, the head of metadata for Google Books, stated (2009), concerning the denomination of Google Books as "the Last Library," that "I wouldn't call Google Books 'the Last Library'—we are not a library, and rely on brick-and-mortar libraries and flesh-and-blood librarians to practice genuine librarianship—but eagerly acknowledge that it's critical to properly curate the collection we have." So even if Google Books does not consider itself to be a library, if they position themselves more closely to libraries or bookstores and want to use a well-tested subject classification scheme, they must consider the choice of the most appropriate one according to their nature. Or, as Orwant (2009) puts it, the decision had to be made from among "ontolo-

gies of book subjects, such as the Dewey Decimal System that Americans learn about in grade school, the fine-grained Library of Congress classifications, or the retailer-friendly BISAC categories." The only reason for the adoption of BISAC that he mentions was "our end users would find it useful."

### 3.7 *The role of EDItEUR and BIC in the DDC-BISAC switching cases*

"EDItEUR is the international group coordinating development of the standards infrastructure for electronic commerce in the book and serials sectors.... A leader in global standards for the exchange of bibliographic information and of e-commerce messages in the book and journal supply chains" (EDItEUR. n.d.a). EDItEUR was established in 1991 in the United Kingdom and includes members from many countries: Canada, United States, Australia, China, Japan, Korea, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and UK (EDItEUR. n.d.b). Members generally include publishers, book aggregators and distributors, and associations like BISG and its UK counterpart BIC (Book Industry Communication).

While OCLC is a BISG member, BISG is an EDItEUR member. While EDItEUR was the institution in charge of ONIX, in April 2010, it was announced in the EDItEUR newsletter that the "responsibility for US input to the standard and for its promotion in the American market passed to the Book Industry Study Group (BISG), through its BISAC Metadata Committee" (EDItEUR 2010).

BIC "is the book industry's independent supply chain organisation, committed to improving the efficiency of the trade and library supply chains, reducing cost and automating processes" (Book Industry Communication. n.d.a). Concerning the book supply chain, the information webpage states that "BIC is committed to creating an efficient supply chain for both physical and digital products in the trade and library sectors." BIC's subject classification products are BIC Standard Subject Categories; e4Libraries Subject Category Headings; and Children's Book Marketing Classifications.

### 3.8 *The convergence of BIC Standard Subject Categories with BISAC*

The latest edition of BIC Standard Subject Categories, BIC Standard Subject Categories – Version 2.1

(November 2010) or just BIC2, is defined in the BIC2 User's Guidelines as "the standard classification scheme for the UK book trade and other English language markets" (Book Industry Communication, and Nielsen Book Services Ltd. 2011). The main aims of the previous BIC2 Version 2, revision 01 (July 2006) were: Removal of UK bias; Overhaul of key subject sections to meet users' needs; and convergence with BISAC (Willows 2006). The long term aim is the unification of these two schemes into a single classification system for the English language book market. In December 2009 at the BISG webcast sponsored by OCLC, a "universal BIC-to-BISAC mapping" was announced for 2010 (Bole et al. 2009, 44). On August 2010, it was announced by the BISG that the mapping between BIC Subject Categories 2 Revision 01 and the forthcoming BISAC Subject Headings, 2010 Edition was complete (Book Industry Study Group 2010a). Finally, on 4th November 2010, BISAC 2010 was officially announced, including for the first time a mapping of the BIC Subject Categories to the BISAC Subject Headings (Book Industry Study Group 2010b).

Analyzing the aim of unifying the two schemes into a sole classification system for the English language book market, it could be concluded that while removing UK bias, a new bias was inevitably adopted, probably BISAC's. This is a consequence of an inevitable ordering of facets and the linear nature of library classifications, as Olson (2002, 173) pointed out:

"library classifications are linear in that they line books up in order on shelves or in a database. As a result, it is not possible for a classification system to gather simultaneously all aspects or facets of a work, to represent equally the multiple play of differences.... Works are gathered by one privileged facet, then subdivided by another, and so on, creating a hierarchy." These facets could be gender, racial or ethnic background, nationality, etc., so only the first level of the hierarchy can be gathered together while facets of subsequent levels are scattered throughout the system. Olson also studied further implications of this problem for libraries and the literature" (Olson 2001, 116).

On the other hand, Ranganathan considered this problem when talking about multiplicity of helpful order of library classification (1989, 91): "for each kind of reader there is one and only one order which

is helpful and every other order is unhelpful." The question here is: what users' needs are being addressed in the overhaul? Library users? Bookstore users? BIC users? BISAC users? The review process is said to have been carried out by a review committee with representatives from various sectors of the trade such as academic and trade publishing, bookselling, library supply, and bibliographic agencies. None of these groups consulted users. This is a problem inherent in all classification schemes. Charles Cutter (1904) wrote about "the public," "the class of people who use the library" or the "public's habitual way of looking at things." According to Olson (1997, 56): "the use of the singular in these phrases indicates that Cutter is envisioning one public with one convenience and one way of looking at the world. Cutter is envisioning a community of library users with a singular perspective and a singular way of seeking information.... Therefore, a universality is present in Cutter's view, but it is the singular public who defines it." Even if the public-defining universality in BIC2 are those traditional BIC users from the United Kingdom, it is also implicit that the desired universality would be defined by convergence with BISAC users. Therefore the community aimed at in this universalization process will effectively be a universal community composed of the sum of the two main systems used in the English language and taking into consideration that BISAC is also used in non-English speaking countries worldwide with a singular way of seeking information and a singular bias. In this vein, Olson adds: "if universality is present then it implies that there is not diversity. What diversity is excluded if the universality represents the community? ... The result, then, of a community in singular is that it is not totally inclusive." So here the real problem seems to be knowing which groups will inevitably be excluded while developing this new global system. Concerning the convergence with BISAC, there is a presumption of universalization in the scheme on at least two planes: object of application, i.e. bookstores and libraries; language, i.e. convergence of the two main English-language schemes; and culture, i.e. validity of this USA-UK converged scheme not only for all English-speaking countries but presumably for most countries around the world.

After the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2011, the BIC announced their intention of launching, in October 2012, a global multilingual classification scheme based on the long-established BIC and its variant forms in other non-English speaker countries: the International Book Industry Categories (IBIC) (Book In-

dustry Study Group 2011). The development of this scheme would have participation and support from publishing industries in the UK, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Portugal, the Netherlands, Norway, and the Arab world. Some of the globalized features of the IBIC would be the adaptation to individual country's needs by extensions to the 'qualifiers' which define geographical, historical, educational, and other country-specific aspects. Peter Kilborn, Executive Director of BIC, added (Book Industry Study Group 2011): "We see this as just a start in the process towards addressing the needs of future consumers and readers. In parallel with the IBIC initiative, we are delighted to have agreed in principle with the Book Industry Study Group in the US to conduct research into content discovery and online taxonomies to further inform the creation of global standards and best practices."

#### 4.0 Discussion

ONIX is an XML-based exchange format, independent of the classification scheme or categories used for the descriptions. However, on the BISG website, ONIX is recommended as the best way to use BISAC (Book Industry Study Group n.d.d). Although initially only intended as a homogenization tool for the commercial supply-chain and Product Lifecycle Management (PLM), ONIX could also be linked to the homogenization and universalization of library classification uses if it were to become the one standardized way to exchange book related data. The consequences (benefits and drawbacks) of this standardization process for the supply-chain are valid for both library and bookstore markets, since there are few real differences in the philosophy and practices of the principle actors involved. On April 27 2010, "*The metadata is the message*," an OCLC webinar (2010b) drew an analogy between the E-Commerce metadata trail and the Library metadata trail, describing the same process with different actors: Bowker/Ingram/B&T vs. OCLC and Google/Amazon/B&N vs. Ordering/OPAC. Miller (2010, 11) also pointed out the benefits to the publisher supply chain: "reducing cost in bibliographic description, categorization and authority work; Providing better marketing data to support buying decisions for wholesalers, retailers, libraries, end users; Supporting marketing, sales and business intelligence needs for multiple markets." It should be noticed that this statement makes no distinction between library and bookstore markets. However, this homogenization seems not to be explicit since regional differences are

being considered, but the question here is: what happens with global markets and supply channels such as Amazon.com or Google Books? Because of the nature of the e-book market and all the facilities of internet commerce, a further step of globalization and universalization is implicitly being taken. This global scenario is also being affected by the new situation of the supply-chain and standards like ONIX. Amazon and Google are companies using ONIX for books (Book Industry Study Group. n.d.e) and are BISG members (Book Industry Study Group. n.d.b). Both companies are also using BISAC or BISAC-based categories for the organization of their books on the internet, and this is happening not only in the US but also in a globalized international context.

#### 5.0 Conclusions

The development of the electronic book supply-chain is converging and homogenizing both library and bookstore markets. Local and regional adaptations are losing importance since all the technical processes are being taken at the publisher and aggregator stages in order to save costs and increase marketing power. Given a choice between publisher information organization standards and library classifications, BISAC, supported by ONIX, seems to be the standard for this new homogenization of the book supply-chain. In fact, BISAC has apparently been chosen as a standard by publishers and some libraries. The globalization of the processes surrounding the subject classification of books creates a new scenario where further research and evaluation of the outcomes should be taken in order to measure or predict the consequences for libraries. While publishers are represented by BISG, BIC, and EDItEUR, libraries are often represented mainly by OCLC in these decision-making processes, and there is ample evidence, as discussed in this paper, to show that libraries have many differences of opinion with OCLC and its choices and that globalization would have an effect on the library's ability to offer customized services for local user needs. Even on the bookstore side, there is evidence that individual store owners and managers feel a need to continue local adaptations for the needs of their local customers. The convergence of publisher supply chains in a worldwide context will affect libraries and bookstores not only in the US but also worldwide in the new era of universalization and globalization.

Traditionally, local and regional adaptations were one of the most effective devices to ameliorate cultural bias in library classifications across libraries and



nations. With the adoption of BISAC, the US market-based scheme, these possibilities decrease considerably in three ways: first, through a greater rigidity in correcting inadequacies for countries other than the US, due to the dependency of the system on the US market, which may not match other countries; second, through the displacement of the classification process from the library to the publisher, eliminating chances for ad-hoc adaptation to the library collection if a strict adoption is followed; and third, through the end of local variations between libraries due to a greater rigidity of the system when assigning categories to books. BISAC, by nature, is much less faceted and flexible than other traditional schemes such as the *Dewey Decimal Classification* or the *Universal Decimal Classification*. In general, what may seem to be disadvantages for libraries might not be so for bookstores. Through the analysis of both libraries' and bookstore agents' reactions, this paper tries to call for reflection in a globalized digital world where these two different institutions, with very different philosophies and goals, are starting to converge following a short term efficiency motif and lacking a theoretical and critical basis for these decisions.

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