

## The Creation, Management, and Export of Digital Books – Part 2

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### Standards and Organizations

#### Book Industry Study Group (BISG)

The Book Industry Study Group is the core standards organization for the U.S. book trade. It is taking an international leadership role in developing new identifier standards that will help the e-book supply chain function, particularly the International Standard Text Code. Its report on the identification of digital book content is a must-read for publishers who are embarking on e-book programs.<sup>1</sup> The BISG is worth watching as a venue for professional development: they deliver a number of presentations through the year and are often willing to speak at Canadian events. However, BookNet Canada and the BTLF are the appropriate venues for communicating information on product identifiers to Canadians.

#### International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF)

The IDPF is a trade and standards organization that specializes in the development of open, interoperable e-book formats. It is based in New York and dominated by large trade publishers (Wiley, Harlequin, Hachette) and technology firms (Adobe), but its executive director, Michael Smith, is a Canadian who works out of his home in the Toronto area. As a result, the secretariat is more sympathetic to Canadian concerns than it might otherwise be. The BookNet Canada, the BTLF, and the ACP are members. Other Canadian members include the University of Montreal and the University of Alberta Bookstore.

The IDPF's chief achievement has been the development and popularization of the EPUB standard. Canada is best represented in the standards development process through BookNet, the BTLF, and the participation of publishers' front-line technical staff. The IDPF collects sales data on wholesale e-book sales in the U.S. and plans to extend its sources to include other jurisdictions. The IDPF's greatest benefit to non-technical associations is its Business Interest Group, which conducts regular conference calls to discuss practical issues on the implementation of e-books. Membership for non-profits is \$650 USD/year.

#### Automated Content Access Protocol (ACAP)

ACAP is a standard for expressing digital rights on the Internet, jointly developed by the International Publishers Association (IPA) and the World Association of Newspapers. It is a signpost designed to tell search engines and other automated Internet crawlers what they can and cannot do with Internet content. The search engines that would be obliged to implement it have shown no interest in the standard, and without them it is not a useful technology. While its development does occasionally bear watching it does not merit significant investment.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bisg.org/bisac/id/index.html>

## Professional Development and Training

Professional development on digital publishing is now presented as a matter of course at all of the major international rights fairs. However, more interesting material is often presented outside of the fairs circuit. The following conferences are particularly valuable:

### Tools of Change for Publishing Conference. Feb 9-11, New York.

Presented by O'Reilly Publishing, this is the world's premier conference on publishing and technology. Registration is expensive at \$995-\$1545 (with discounts available for non-profits) but talks are often posted online after the event.

### BookNet Technology Forum, March 11-12, Toronto

### Digital Book. Spring 2009, New York.

Presented by the IDPF, this one-day conference focuses specifically on new developments in e-book technology.

### Making Information Pay. Spring 2009. New York.

Presented by the BISG, this one-day conference typically explores publishing experimentation and innovation in general, but usually focuses on using data or digital technology to better access or understand publishing markets.

## Further reading:

Because digital publishing is a quickly evolving discipline, most developments end up being reported through a loose network of blogs maintained by consultants, service providers, and publishers. Print publishing journals usually do a poor job of keeping up with the news. *The Bookseller* is an exception, but its relevant articles are usually picked up by one or more of the sources below. A single research paper, which is the definitive study of digital asset distribution, is included in this list.

### *The Big Picture.* <http://www.ljndawson.com/>

Publishing technologist Laura Dawson's bi-weekly e-mail newsletter on digital publishing issues. Subscription-only, but subscriptions are free and the archives are published online.

### Bill McCoy. <http://blogs.adobe.com/billmccoy/>

The personal blog of Bill McCoy, General Manager of ePublishing Business at Adobe and former IDPF Executive Director. Infrequently updated, but posts tend to be significant. Primarily concerned with EPUB implementation in Adobe's publishing products.

### BookNet Canada Blog. [http://www.booknetcanada.ca/mambo/index.php?option=com\\_mojo](http://www.booknetcanada.ca/mambo/index.php?option=com_mojo)

Takes in useful stories on online marketing and publishing technology.

### *Digital Asset Distribution for Book Publishers: an Emerging Infrastructure.* Mark Bide and Mike Shatzkin.

This 2007 paper on Digital Asset Distribution remains the best survey of the technology, theory, and major players, even though the landscape has changed a bit since it was published. Available for \$100 USD from Klopotek ([g.logan@klopotek.com](mailto:g.logan@klopotek.com)).

**The Digitalist.** <http://thedigitalist.net/>

A group blog by Pan Macmillan UK's digital team. An excellent resource on how one large trade publisher deals internally with digital issues.

**The Googlization of Everything.** <http://www.googlizationofeverything.com/>

A project of Law and Media Studies professor Siva Vaidhyanathan, this blog's particular focus is on Google's Book Search programs. It is a one-stop shop for news and opinion on developments in this area.

**O'Reilly Tools of Change Blog:** <http://toc.oreilly.com/>

More than just a promotional blog, this year-round blog provides both news and analysis on publishing and technology from senior O'Reilly Publishing staff.

**Persona Non Data:** <http://personanodata.blogspot.com>

A blog maintained by strategy consultant and former R.R. Bowker President Michael Cairns. Mixes general analysis on the financial reports of publicly traded publishing concerns with excellent news and information about digital publishing developments.

**Teleread:** <http://www.teleread.org/blog/>

This group blog about all things e-book includes a great deal of irrelevant material and ill-informed opinion, but if there's a digital publishing story happening anywhere in the world, it is likely to be picked up here.

**Threepress Development Blog:** <http://blog.threepress.org/>

Threepress is a digital publishing consulting and open-source software business. Their principal, Liza Daly, maintains an excellent blog that encompasses both strategic issues and technical minutiae.