



The Book Trade

How the books trade gets information about your book

Most wholesalers, booksellers and online bookshops get their information direct from Nielsen BookData, which provides the book trade with a comprehensive database containing relevant information about all the books in the UK that have an ISBN. This includes bibliographic information such as the publication date, book size and pagination, as well as the cover image and blurb. Matador provides Nielsen with information about all the books that are published through us, which means all our books are available to order through any UK bookshop.

Generally, bookshops will either order their books direct from us or, as is more usual, through a book wholesaler, such as Gardners or Bertrams. We hold accounts with all the big book wholesalers, but that doesn't necessarily mean they hold all our books in stock – although all of our books are available to order through them. The big wholesalers usually order stock initially on publication, but then tend to be reactive in their ordering. Unless they see a definite need to keep a book in stock in quantity, they'll order conservatively. *The fact that a book is not held in stock at a wholesaler does not prevent a bookshop from placing an order.*

BooksoniX

In 2008, Matador switched to supplying data to the book trade via ONIX – a state of the art bibliographic data system. This allows for improved record keeping, data dissemination and workflow for all Matador and Troubador titles. It allows us to send accurate data quickly and efficiently to bibliographic agencies, and direct to wholesalers, online booksellers and other agencies. By using ONIX to distribute our book information, we are able to ensure that the information we provide meets the industry's standards, can be integrated with other book data systems and is consistent with that of other publishers. We use ONIX to send detailed information direct to the book trade about price, content and availability, as well as providing images, like book jackets and author photos, and additional information such as review quotes and author biographies.

Industry Standard Advance Information (AI) Sheet

Advance Information sheets are used in our retail trade marketing to market books to retailers. They contain all the information needed by the trade to make buying decisions – including the book synopsis, price, ISBN, format and ordering details. Each Advance Information (AI) sheet is written by a member of the marketing team, who uses your Author Questionnaire as a basis for the content. The draft is then sent to you for your approval. Once you have approved this content, the blurb and author biography will be added to your bibliographic data listing, as well as to your book page on the Troubador website. Note that because the AI is a fixed industry template, the changes you make are limited to the content of the text. You cannot make changes to the general layout of the AI or other aspects of the document.

Why's my publication date so far away?

Every publication date we set will be on the 28th of a month, due to bibliographic data requirements. We set our official publication dates six months in advance – because the book trade works that far ahead. Our publication dates are set to meet their expectations and to make the most of the available sales and promotional opportunities in the intervening months.

By matching book trade expectations, we can give our books the best chance of competing on an even playing field with mainstream published books, and can meet book wholesalers' catalogue deadlines (which allows our books to be listed in literature sent out by them to UK bookshops). We can also meet seasonal buying timetables and pre-publication previews. This lead-in time also gives us the chance to get our books actively promoted in bookshops by our repping agent, Star Book Sales (something that no other self publishing services provider offers). To be able to rep a book, Star requires information about each title 5-6 months *in advance* of publication, so our publication dates allow enough time for this to happen. (Star do not rep all of our titles, however – please check **Factsheet 10** for details.)

While a book's publication date is set this far in advance, *this is not when we would expect to receive finished copies of the book*, and we make books available for sale as soon as they are printed. You can therefore start selling them direct and through our website straight away (although some bookshops won't release the books until the publication date has been reached, they should still take orders).

It's important, wherever possible, that there is a lead-in time from when the books are printed to the official publication date, to allow for the books to be physically disseminated within the book trade and readily available to buyers, and for the information to be disseminated to the media, once review copies are available. Some of the national media, for example, would expect copies of a book at least three months prior to publication before they will even consider a review or feature, and the lead-in time allows us to make the best possible use of any opportunities that are available.

If your book is not marketed by us, then we will usually set the publication date three months in advance, as we do not have the same marketing requirements.

If it becomes clear that your book will not meet its current publication date and the publication needs to be rescheduled, we can easily change this. Retailers are aware that publication dates often slip, and we ensure that we keep your publication date correct on your bibliographic entry so that the data filtering out is always accurate.

Overseas Bookshops

The UK and overseas book trades work independently of each other. Your book is registered by us in the UK and has a UK ISBN. We don't market our books abroad, and concentrate our sales and distribution efforts within the UK. As a result, your book will be available to order through any bookshop only in the UK and Ireland. We are happy to fulfil orders from bookshops overseas (although we only supply on firm sale).

As a publisher, we also have arrangements with suppliers in other countries so that we can make our titles available to customers in those countries. This usually means that a UK title is listed by a certain country's retailers as being available locally, rather than having to be imported from overseas. For most of our self-publishing authors, this is usually a case of making their book available in the United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil and South Africa. We are able to set a title up with our suppliers in those territories so that it is printed locally 'on demand' and supplied at local postage rates. There is a one-off fee of £100+VAT to set the title up with the overseas suppliers, but from then on there are no further costs to the author. The cost of printing the book is borne by the customer who has ordered the book; as the author, you would receive a royalty on each book sold. If you would like to take up this option, please let the marketing team know. For more details, please check **Factsheet 6**.

BIC Classification

When a book is made available to order through the book trade, it needs to be given a readership classification. The readership classification is a book industry standard category chosen by us to best reflect the principal subject matter of your book. It allows trade book buyers to classify your book and needs to be as accurate as possible.

The BIC Standard Subject Categories & Qualifiers scheme is the standard classification scheme for the UK book trade

and other English language markets. It contains a comprehensive list of hierarchical Categories and Qualifiers. The most recent list of BIC categories is here: www.bic.org.uk/files/pdfs/101201%20bic2.1%20complete%20rev.pdf.

The main points for guidance are listed below. This will help you understand how we select your BIC code:

- Ensure the first category entered is the primary subject and accurately indicates the most pertinent and important subject of the work.
- Classify titles as precisely as possible. If your book specifically matches a BIC category, we select that rather than using the more general subject code.
- We can assign a maximum of two BIC categories. If your book covers several subject areas, we assign the two most relevant categories. As per BIC guidelines, we only assign categories for subjects that the book is substantially about as a whole, not for peripheral subjects.
- As well as one or two BIC codes, we also select at least one BISAC code for your book. A BISAC code is a standard code used by many companies throughout the supply chain to categorise books based on topical content. The additional BISAC classification code is used so that we can further pinpoint the subject of your book.

For example, a biographical travel book set in France, that is related to wine, may have the following BIC and BISAC categories:

Main Subject

BIC subject category (ver 2.0) : WT – Travel & holiday

BISAC category heading (ver 2010) : TRV009050 – TRAVEL / Europe / France

Additional Subject(s)

BIC subject category (ver 2.0) : WBXD1 – Wines

BISAC category heading (ver 2010) : CKB042000 – COOKING / Holiday

BISAC category heading (ver 2010) : CKB088000 – COOKING / Beverages / Wine & Spirits

A full list of the BISAC subject headings and sub-categories is available to search at <http://www.bisg.org/what-we-do-0-136-bisac-subject-headings-list-major-subjects.php>

The correct categorisation and widespread dissemination of accurate and full bibliographic data to the book trade is key to readers finding and being able to buy books. We endeavour to ensure that we supply accurate, timely data to retailers using state of the art systems. However, once the data has left us via the ONIX system, we have little or no control over it.

**If you would like more information contact:
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