

Product Coding Committee Objective

- To assist consumers in navigating book departments at retail stores and electronic catalogs or the World Wide Web to make purchasing decisions.
- To set standard category codes for all publishers and retailers in an effort to reduce the cost and improve the efficiencies of doing business for the entire industry.

Overview

The Book Industry Standards and Communications (BISAC) codes are subject-based. The Book Industry Study Group (BISG) is responsible for maintaining the BISAC Subject Heading and Merchandising Themes lists and for providing guidance for the implementation and use of the lists by publishers, retailers, and other interested parties. The BISAC Subject Headings List is a standard used by many companies throughout the supply chain to categorize books and Bibles based on subject content. The subject codes applied to a book or Bible can then be used to determine where the work is shelved in a brick-and-mortar store or the genres under which a product can be searched in an internal database or on the World Wide Web.

Implementation

There are two lists that have been transitioned from CPC to BISAC: books and Bibles. Users are asked to select book categories from the Christian Industry BISAC Sublist to promote meaningful data recording. All Bible categories have been integrated into the Christian Industry BISAC Sublist.

1. Assign a person or team with marketing or editorial background to make the category assignments for the entire backlist. Important to the process is that this person or team is familiar with the product for which category codes are selected.
2. Determine the appropriate code(s) to be assigned to each book or Bible by comparing the subject of each product with the Christian Industry BISAC Sublist and definitions. Categories must be selected from the BISAC Sublist which contains a selection of book categories and a complete list of Bible categories.
3. Develop a list (use a spreadsheet or include the information in data tracking systems) of ISBNs, titles, and the assigned categories to assist in maintaining and updating the category information as needed.
4. Category assignment for new titles should be made during product development.
5. The visual representation of the category should have the following characteristics:
 - a. Completely spelled out
 - b. The main topic upper case; the remaining codes mixed case as shown in the BISAC list
 - c. Printed on the back of the book just above the EAN bar code
 - d. Right justified

- e. On one single line
- f. Each category separated by a space-slash-space

Example: RELIGION / Christian Life / Spiritual Growth
BIBLES / New International Version / Study

- 6. Add a subject category as each product reprints and/or a new cover is designed.

Implementation to Catalogs and Product Listings

- 1. Determine how to provide this information to each of the industry participants. This might be done via mail, fax, email, electronic file, or sales representative. Be sure to add the new product category for each new title to the information distributed to these users.
- 2. Forward the list of category assignments to those in the industry who maintain a list of products such as distributors, retail chains, dot coms, and electronic product catalog or database managers.
- 3. Some data consumers will have the ability to store more than one BISAC category for each book or Bible, therefore one or two other codes may be assigned. Assigning multiple categories would provide additional key words for a search engine to find a product among a list of alternatives. *Secondary categories may be selected from the entire BISAC list as it will not be used for data tracking purposes.*

Book Example:

- 1. RELIGION / Christian Life / Family
- 2. FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS / Parenting / Stepparenting

Bible Example:

- 1. BIBLES / Multiple Translations / Study
- 2. Bibles / New International Version / Study

- 4. Be consistent when assigning categories and communicate them to your customers in as many ways as possible. This will help to get the right book to the right consumer.

Code Change Requests

- 1. Request New BISAC Category (brand new category)
 - a. Submit an email request to leslie.mosher@zondervan.com using the Product Coding Change Request form found at www.cpsg.org.
 - i. Include a description or definition to help the BISG committee make the best decision.
 - ii. Remember that new code requests must have a minimum of 100 title count. This threshold can often be achieved by moving titles from a larger category.
 - iii. New codes and code revisions must be subject based, not format or theme based.
 - b. Seek approval from the CRSC Product Coding Committee.
 - i. An email petition will be made. Only dissenting opinions need reply.
 - c. Approved requests will be submitted to BISG.
 - i. Approved changes will be distributed to CRSC members via an updated sub list.

2. Request BISAC Category Sub List Change (currently exists on BISAC list)
 - a. Submit an email request to leslie.mosher@zondervan.com using the Product coding Change Request form found at www.cpsg.org.
 - b. Seek approval from the CRSC Product Coding Committee.
 - i. An email petition will be made. Only dissenting opinions need reply.
 - c. Approved changes will be distributed to CRSC members via an updated sub list.

Note: BISAC code changes must be approved by the BISG subject committee and then approved by the BISG Board. Often board approval is not requested until there is a significant collection of codes since revisions to the master list have extensive implications.