IT MIGHT BE THE GIANT IN THE ROOM,
BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SCARY

What is metadata? What differentiates great metadata from merely good? Do you really need to worry about it? As a publisher, how much of a difference does metadata really make to your bottom line?

Here's an introduction to metadata that answers these questions and more. It's a little manual of tips and tricks that will help you understand the important points of metadata for publishing and get you started on improving your own.

We hope you find it helpful, and if we can aid you in anything else, please feel free to visit us at onixsuite.com for more information.

onixsuite™
by GiantChair

LET'S TALK ABOUT
METADATA

onixsuite™

THERE'S A LOT OF NOISE THESE DAYS ABOUT METADATA, DO I NEED TO LISTEN?

METADATA IS VERY COMPREHENSIVE

It's all the information about your book, starting with basic things like title, author, ISBN and publication date. It includes formats (like paperback or digital editions), the size of the physical book, all the way down to the number of illustrations. You can think of metadata in much the same way as a library catalog card. Without this important identifying information traveling along with it, a book is likely to get lost.

As you can imagine, it's extremely important for distributors and retailers to have this information, but as readers increasingly rely on internet searches and digital devices to find products that interest them, metadata is becoming even more important. Without it, your titles can be difficult for readers to find and even more difficult to purchase. In fact, without good metadata, your books can be virtually invisible.

At Onixsuite, we care a great deal about making your metadata the best it can be, but it's important to understand exactly what that means. What is great metadata? Does it really make a difference to your sales?

WHAT IS GREAT METADATA?
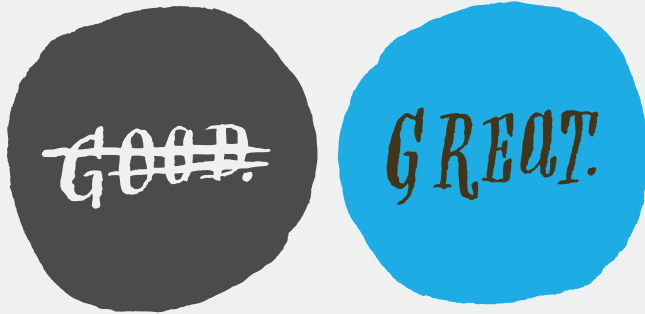
All metadata is not created equal. Bad or erroneous metadata might mean missing fields or simply poorly-formed files. Sending poor metadata can have a negative impact on you as a publisher. There are certain pieces of information that absolutely must be included when you send your data to retailers and distributors. Without this key data, trading partners may change or create information about your products that is often incorrect, or worse still, refuse to list them at all.

A starting list for good metadata is made up of the following components:

Even if all of the above is included in your metadata, **it still isn't the best it can be**. Good metadata has the potential to be made great by enhancing it with additional information like rich product descriptions, press reviews, tables of content, excerpts and more.

Enhancing your metadata can help improve your titles' visibility on partner sites. In addition, more thorough, accurate information helps potential readers make the decision to purchase your books.

DOES GREAT METADATA REALLY

MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
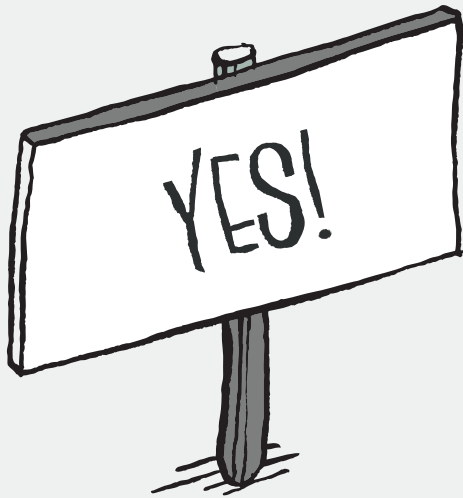
ABSOLUTELY.

HOW MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

In a recent study by Nielsen,[1] ISBNs that have all the components of good metadata got a significant boost in sales over those that did not:

473%

MORE LIKELY TO SELL

This boost was seen **online as well as in bookstores**, indicating that metadata is important no matter what the venue. Great metadata (including rich descriptions, reviews, and biographies, for example) got an even bigger boost than titles that only had the basics. Providing great metadata from the get-go also ensures that retailers and distributors can process your information faster and more accurately, making new items or changes to your titles appear more rapidly on trading partners' sites. All this can lead to a large boost in revenue, as titles are easy to find, consistent, current, and correct.

1.http://www.isbn.nielsenbook.co.uk/uploads/3971_Nielsen_Metadata_white_paper_A4(3).pdf

HOW DO I GET MY METADATA
OUT THERE?

the cloud

One of the most common methods of transmitting metadata in the book industry is via XML. XML is a computer markup language that can be read both by other computers and by the human eye; it can be structured in different ways and is perfect for sending data in a pre-defined format. The book industry uses the ONIX standards for structuring XML. ONIX for Books is the international standard for representing and communicating book industry product information in electronic form.

Unless you know XML and Onix you'll need some help in getting your metadata out there, and we can help. Onixsuite not only allows you to distribute your data, it also lets you know where you have missing information and areas to improve. Best of all, it's in the cloud, which means that you can access all your information from anywhere you happen to be, on any computer or device with internet access. You'll rest assured that your data is safe and secure behind our protected servers.

Let us know if we can help you with any other questions, and please visit us at onixsuite.com to sign up or for more information.

RESOURCES & FURTHER INFORMATION

Book Industry Study Group (BISG)

The Book Industry Study Group is a national, not-for-profit U.S. book trade association with the mission of creating a more informed, empowered and efficient book industry. BISG maintains the BISAC categorization standard, as well as best practices for metadata senders and receivers.

URL: www.bisg.org

Book Industry Communication (BIC)

BIC is the book industry's independent supply chain organization located in the UK. BIC maintains the BIC Basic standards, the BIC Standard Subject Categories and discount codes, and promotes the adoption of ONIX as the book trade's standard for the transmission of rich product data.

URL: www.bic.org.uk

EDItEUR

EDItEUR is the international group coordinating development of the standards infrastructure for electronic commerce in the book, e-book and serials sectors. It is responsible for the ONIX standard.

URL: www.editeur.org

Nielsen Metadata White Paper

Nielsen has released its research on the link between metadata and sales in a White Paper to demonstrate the benefits of enriched data on book sales. The paper is the first of its kind, and provides a detailed snapshot of the problems and possibilities facing the publishing industry today.

URL: ww.isbn.nielsenbook.co.uk/uploads/ 971_Nielsen_Metadata_white_paper_A4(3).pdf