LEXiCON Webinar Q&A

On Wednesday 21 July 2021 the Construction Innovation Hub and the Construction Products Association (CPA) ran a free webinar on the new industry report and consultation **'LEXiCON Methodology: Creating Relevant Authorities and achieving consensus'**. The recording of the session can be **access here**.

Due to time constraints the panel of speakers were unable to reply all the questions asked by the audience during the session. The following Q&A has been put together to try and address some of the remaining queries.

1. How will LEXiCON determine the Relevant Authority for a family of products?

The proposal is that this will be determined through the remit of supporting trade associations or other founding bodies. In a case where two or more Relevant Authorities have jurisdiction, they will be required to develop agreement between themselves. The process aims to provide signposting to avoid duplication.

2. Is LEXiCON a process, dictionary, or a technology?

The report 'LEXiCON Methodology: Creating Relevant Authorities and achieving consensus' describes and sets out processes for defining the concept and consensus methods of 'Relevant Authorities' (RA) and their Working Groups (WG). The report also supports identification of system requirements to support the stated RA and WG processes.

3. Where will LEXiCON be hosted?

The LEXiCON process should be applicable to systems that are able to incorporate the prescribed processes, and that follow the general principles of integrated data dictionaries. A Hub-based demonstrator will be hosted on a UK-based server as an initial output of the project.

4. Is LEXiCON going to be one of many interconnected dictionaries or is it going to be the main dictionary (master) to which everyone has to connect into?

LEXiCON is intended to be part of a series of interconnected dictionaries. The nature of LEXiCON is such that it will provide additional support to the curation and suitability of product information.

5. How will LEXiCON manage systems where performance comes from the sum of the products?

LEXiCON currently focuses on construction products only. When describing a construction product, we are referring to an object brought to market that may be in the form of a material, product, component or system. In this context, it would be appropriate for the system to have a Product Data Template (PDT) associated with it.

6. Has LEXiCON connected with authorities and forums across other industries with experience of managing such information?

Members of the LEXiCON working group have either had contact with or have worked in some of these other industries, and have brough their experience and learning to bare on the development of LEXiCON.

7. What are the benefits for manufacturers investing in the LEXiCON process (as opposed to digitilising generally)?

LEXiCON recommends a more efficient approach to managing and sharing information about products in an industry agreed and standardised way. It will also help manufacturers streamline their information exchange with many parties utilising a single source of information in a variety of applications – facilitating greater interoperability.

8. Who will be part of the LEXiCON Board? Is the membership of the Board been published and who will regulate it?

The formation, management and membership of the proposed LEXiCON Board is yet to be finalised but will be published upon constitution. Conversely, it is important at this point to recognise the need for, and role of such an entity in the consultation process.

9. A diagram in the LEXiCON industry report suggest the Relevant Authorities (RAs) are part of the LEXiCON Board. Is that true?

It is not true. The rise of this question indicates a need for us to conduct further work to better convey the context and meaning of the image. The proposed role of the Board is to oversee the custodianship, accountability and leadership of the LEXiCON methodology, whilst providing clear guidance on the strategic direction, value and purpose of the approach and its application to wider industry. It will include members from industry and the LEXiCON steering group and must support the formation of RAs and their respective PDTs.

10. How will the data dictionary allow for legacy products?

Revision and version control processes will allow for time stamped Product Data Templates (PDTs). Within the LEXiCON processes, it is proposed that any legacy information held within a Product Data Sheet (PDS), that was completed against a PDT, will remain the responsibility of the manufacturer. LEXiCON intends to support an archiving function for previous versions of PDTs.

11. The process of developing 'PDTs' was promoted five years ago. Why should it work this time?

The concept of using Product Data Templates (PDTs) has been around much longer than five years, with increasing application over time. Trying to effect change and transform industry takes significant effort, resource and time, examples are the use of CAD taking 10 years to be adopted, or the widespread acceptance of BIM for information efficiency which has also taken considerable time. LEXiCON builds on its previous learning and experience and the current public consultation aims to ensure consensus is gained from a wide range of industry stakeholders on an agreed best way forward.

12. Why are you talking about 'PDTs' when ISO 23387 uses the term 'Data Template' more generally?

Product Data Templates (PDTs) are a specific kind of Construction Object Data Template as expressed in ISO 23387 and referenced to ISO 12006-2.

13. Who will own the Intellectual Property (IP) of a data template?

IP is a complex area. What is clear is that there needs to be clear agreement on who will own what. In most cases, IP is owned either by an individual/organisation (solo ownership) or individuals/organisations (joint ownership). Within LEXiCON the current proposal is for IP to rest with the Relevant Authority (RA) and workgroup that created it.

14. What is the timeline for PDT development and who is responsible for this?

This will depend to some extent on the maturity of a Relevant Authority (RA), its Product Data Template (PDT) requirements, and the availability of resources. Industry has been creating PDTs manually for over a decade, so we understand the time and effort it takes intellectually to create a PDT. The anticipation is that adopting a LEXiCON approach will improve the time taken to create, agree and release a more effective PDT.

15. Is a 'PDS' a 'completed PDT'? Some say that a PDS is a set of data only from the manufacturer's perspective, others say it is a range of questions that need to be answered by an appropriate party at some point along a product's lifecycle.

A Product Data Sheet (PDS) is a version of a Product Data Template (PDT) with the values for a specific product or product range added by the manufacturer. The purpose of producing PDTs is to create a standardised approach to structuring product data. The PDS then forms the set of data about a particular product.

Whilst most of the information about a product will come from the manufacturer, there is an initial need to standardise the information that comes from this source. This doesn't consider information requirements about a product that the manufacturer will simply not know in the context of the product's application across the whole lifecycle. Data Templates are increasingly being seen as a way to communicate information requirements about a product, and as a point of contact between any two parties that require or produce information about the product.

16. Is there an example of a PDT / PDS that would fit the new LEXiCON syntax?

There will be in the future. We aim to complete industry consultation first, in order to gain the best level of consensus possible, then we will work with a small number of early adopters to develop exemplar templates for demonstrating capability of LEXiCON to the wider industry.

17. Do harmonised European standards and their respective Declarations of Performance (DoP) not facilitate some – if not all – of this already?

They do not facilitate all information requirements, with disconnects prevailing between the information produced for such purposes and the information required by designers, maintainers, and operators. Harmonised standards do define some properties within their DoPs that is appropriate for inclusion within a Product Data Template (PDT), but such information is rarely usable as it often refer to a class of performance, not the actual performance. This is in part because of different testing methodologies and assumptions that are prescribed according to how the product is to be marketed, as opposed to how a product is applied.

18. What is going to happen for metrics that apply across a wide range of products? How is an agreed metric for this going to be decided upon?

There needs to be an accepted method of calculation for metrics that span product types e.g. there can be a consensus process for the meaning of Packaging Weight, but the specific variations of the concept of Packaging Weight may have differing methodologies when comparing how products like bricks are packaged and transported in comparison to LED bulbs. It is proposed that each respective Relevant Authority (RA) appropriately define this property according to their area.

19. How will the LEXiCON project dovetail with the Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI)?

The Code for Construction Product Information provides a holistic view to ensure communications around products are clear, accurate, up-to-date, accessible and unambiguous. Whilst it does not prescribe a particular approach to creating product information, it is clear that structured digital Product Data Sheets (PDSs) based on standardised, industry agreed Product Data Templates (PDTs) would go a long way towards meeting those requirements.

20. Is there any collaboration with the work happening with the Building Smart Data Dictionaries and their API?

Yes, as far is practically possible, we have been exploring ways to align the buildingSMART Data Dictionary (bSDD), LEXiCON properties and Globally Unique Identifier (GUIDs).

21. Is LEXiCON aligned with international standards?

LEXiCON is being aligned with international standards including ISO 23386 and ISO 23387. In principle, the possibility of making LEXiCON content available via other data dictionaries aids the transportability of its content internationally.

22. Who should participate in the LEXiCON consultation and what is the deadline for sending responses?

The consultation on the report 'LEXiCON Methodology: Creating Relevant Authorities and Achieving Consensus' is seeking a breadth of feedback from UK Construction industry stakeholders, including designers, constructors, commissioning engineers, architects, and contractors; Relevant Authorities; and UK Manufacturers.

The review period for responses has been extended and will run from Wednesday 07 July 2021 to Thursday 30 September 2021.

To find out more about the consultation please visit: **LEXiCON Methodology Consultation.**