Attendees:

Alexander James – Product Manager
Bob Shearwood – Marketing Manager
Deborah Brown – Head of UK Sales

Fiona Bowtell – The Open University
Paula Anne Goodall – University of Birmingham
Linda Gilbert – STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory

Apologies:

Alban Smith – Head of Partners and Licensing
Elizabeth Martin – De Montfort University
Alastair Sleat – UWE
Clare Whittingham – Teesside University

BSOL roadmap and development update:

YTD updates include Custom Collection administrator controls and clearer messaging around what content is available to users. BSI are keen to expand further on the type of case studies they do, and more specifically look at potential areas for case studies in the academic market.

BSI is employing a customer driven focus to look at a few key areas:

- User onboarding experience
- Pain points within the product
- How we engage users with content
- Content users expect to see

In terms of content, IEC documents awaiting adoption will be made available in BSOL. Currently only the adopted versions can be accessed, leaving users with a 6-24 month wait depending on the speed of adoption. Investigation has also been made into providing access to final draft versions of standards before the official standard is published.

BSI has added several new features directly into the product to engage more with customers and give users a chance to get in touch and give feedback. BSI have surveys on the home page as one example, and automatic reporting of search terms that give zero results.

As part of the research BSI recently undertook, they found that students still had a lot of confusion around standard terminology and how search results were presented. BSI is therefore looking into presenting the standard scope on the bibliographic page so that students do not need to read through a standard to determine if they need it.

BSI are also looking at the terminology that people use when looking for standards. Some users will be searching under different synonyms and terms that aren't recognised by BSOLs' search engine. BSI wants to improve their search and use this data to drive better discoverability.

BSI fed back on their last research project, focusing on offering personalisation features within BSOL via through individual logins instead of the current company-wide access. It was highlighted that individual access was already common practice through authentication such as OpenAthens, Shibboleth and EZProxy with other products that academic bodies use. Uptake of this option was poor, with less than 1% expected turnout. Additionally, although users interviewed spoke positively of the personalisation features when asked, in practice usage of these features among the individual login users was very low. A decision was then made not to proceed further with this project due to the administrative footprint it caused customers for relatively minor benefits.

It was noted that the personalisation available with SSO implementation would be a far more tenable situation from both the perspective of BSI and Sherif. Furthermore, several academic customers complained that the recent changes to Custom Collections in BSOL were causing frustration due to a lack of personalisation, giving further urgency to the need for an industry-standard solution.

BSI also released further information of how a tiered model approach to BSOL may help better address the needs of the market. The first tier would contain 'quality of life' features that would benefit all users, whereas higher tiers would contain more specialised workflow features that might appeal to PhD students or similar.

BSI shared an update on the pipeline projects. EBooks and market insight were deprioritised following feedback from last meeting. With a new innovation function within the company, BSI is able to quickly validate ideas to determine their feasibility. The new pipeline priority is:

1) Shibboleth

Shibboleth is now the primary objective of BSI. The product team is working with the IT team to deliver Shibboleth alongside their existing OpenAthens solution. UKAMF will be available by the end of Q3 2018, with full Shibboleth access soon after.

2) Recommendations

Utilising the data collected from BSOL usage, BSI is looking into creating recommendations within the platform to facilitate guided discovery of content. Users who have similar patterns of standards use will be recommended standards in the same use case or industry.

3) Standards Status Indicator

Users are typically presented with several versions of a standard in their search results and find it difficult to quickly determine which one they need. BSI is looking into creating an unambiguous answer in natural language that users will be able to see next to each standard in the search results.

BSI also revisited a few problems they are looking to solve for their customers

1) Dealing with a budget – how to ensure BSOL is driving value for money
2) Keeping up with research trends – this is again focusing on real life application and giving students an opportunity to see standards in practical and professional scenarios
3) Accessibility – BSI highlighted their focus on ensuring a product that was accessible for all types of users.

Marketing update

BSI has created several infographics in key sectors such as Cybersecurity and Food, as well as case studies from existing customers. These infographics highlight the usage of standards at different stages of the supply chain and will be made available on the BSOL site.

There has also been a great deal of work done for the T-level project for Further Ed. colleges, in partnership with JISC. Content will be created to support standards teaching in 5 key occupational areas (construction/digital/engineering/design/business admin) with 14 career paths within these areas. A series of webinars will also be produced to support engagement with FE colleges. Currently, pilot content for construction is underway and will be made available shortly.

Academic update

The general feedback from the Sherif representatives was that BSOL usage and engagement is relatively unchanged. Budget is a concern but this is a general issue within the academic space currently, and less of a concern in the STEM space. There are also issues in promoting BSOL internally to staff / students to make them aware they actually have full access to British Standards, especially in areas such as business management or health and social care. The BSI marketing team will help support this by providing more collateral to universities so they can promote BSOL internally, both online and in high-traffic physical locations. BSOL trainers were mentioned as being a very useful driver in adoption and their annual visits were praised.

There was feedback that users found the Expert Commentary BSI provided very useful and it was a shame that production of new material had slowed. BSI had a lot of positive feedback around this but due to production scaling and authorship issues it has currently been paused until a suitable solution can be found.

A gradual shift in technology usage by students was noted, with a greater number of students accessing BSOL via tablet or mobile phone while on-campus/in libraries. There is also very little printed material being used in courses. Responsive mobile-friendly design is therefore a growing concern that will need to be addressed.