

# **ISBN Manual**

**RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY NATIONAL AGENCY (RRRNA) FOR  
INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BOOK NUMBER (ISBN)**

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

ROOM No 13, 4TH FLOOR JEEVAN DEEP BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET  
NEW DELHI-110001  
TELEPHONE NUMBER:011-23341739  
Email: isbn-mhrd@gov.in

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# 1. Background

The ISBN is a unique international identifier for monographic publications. It assigns a number which replaces the handling of long bibliographic descriptive records, thereby saving time and staff costs and reducing copying errors. ISBN is based on ISO 2108:2017. The purpose of ISO 2108:2017 is to establish the specifications for the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) as a unique international identification system for each product form or edition of a monographic publication published or produced by a specific publisher. It specifies the construction of an ISBN, the rules for its assignment and use, the metadata to be associated with the ISBN allocation, and the administration of the ISBN system. ISO 2108:2017 is applicable to monographic publications (or their individual sections or chapters where these are made separately available) and certain types of related products that are available to the public. The purpose of the international standard is to coordinate and standardize the international use of ISBNs to identify uniquely one publication or edition of a publication published by one specific publisher in one specific format. The ISBN denotes a particular monographic publication uniquely and should, therefore, be associated with it from early production stages. An essential instrument in production, distribution, sales analysis, and bibliographic data storage systems in the book trade, ISBN is also of vital importance to library information management.

## 2. Benefits of the ISBN

- The ISBN is a unique international identifier for monographic publications; assigning a number replaces the handling of long bibliographic descriptive records, thereby saving time and staff costs and reducing copying errors.
- Correct use of the ISBN allows different product forms and editions of a book, whether printed or digital, to be differentiated clearly, ensuring that customers receive the version that they require.
- The ISBN facilitates compilation and updating of book-trade directories and bibliographic databases, such as books-in-print catalogues. Information on available books can be found easily.
- Ordering and distribution of books is mainly executed by ISBN; this is a fast and efficient method.
- The ISBN is machine-readable in the form of a 13-digit EAN-13 bar code. This is fast and avoids mistakes.
- The ISBN is required for the running of electronic point-of-sale systems in bookshops.
- Many publishing and supply chain systems are based on ISBN.
- The accumulation of sales data is done by the ISBN. This enables the varying successes of different product forms and editions of publications to be monitored, as well as enabling comparisons between different subject areas and even different publishing houses.
- The national lending right in some countries is based on the ISBN. Such schemes enable authors and illustrators to receive payments proportionate to the number of times that their books are lent out by public libraries.

## 3. Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this Manual, the following terms and definitions apply:

NOTE A definition of “Book” is not included as continuing technological and market developments would rapidly make any definition obsolete.

### 3.1 Check digit

Final character in the ISBN string which is related to all preceding characters in the string by a specified mathematical algorithm and which may be used to verify the accuracy of the ISBN string.

### 3.2 Continuing resource

Publication that is issued over time with no predetermined conclusion and made available to the public in any product form, usually issued in successive or integrating issues which generally have numerical and/or chronological designations.

NOTE Continuing resources include serials such as newspapers, periodicals, journals, magazines, blogs, etc., and ongoing integrating resources such as loose-leaf publications that are continually updated and web sites that are continually updated. Continuing resources do not qualify for assignment of ISBN.

### 3.3 Digital Object Identifier (DOI®)

A DOI name, part of the DOI system which is specified in ISO 26324, is a persistent and actionable identifier of an entity – physical, digital or abstract – on digital networks. A DOI name when compliant with DOI syntax is a string that specifies a unique object within the DOI system

### 3.4 Digital Rights Management (DRM)

Technology based on encryption software used to control access to the content; and which is distinct from the *product form* (3.13) of a specific digital publication

NOTE 1 Different settings may be applied within the DRM software to enforce usage constraints or enable particular additional features.

NOTE 2 A single edition of a publication may be made available through different vendors who each apply different DRM software and/or differing usage constraints.

NOTE 3 “Social” DRM denotes a particular type of DRM in which credentials about the customer are recorded in the product using watermarking technology but which does not enforce any usage constraints. Unless “social” DRM is explicitly stated, references to DRM in this Manual signify DRM technology based on encryption software.

### 3.5 Edition

All manifestations of a publication embodying essentially the same content.

NOTE 1 A single edition of a publication may be published in multiple product forms and, if it is in digital form, with more than one type of DRM software and with differing usage constraints.

NOTE 2 Significant updates, revisions or changes to the content constitute a new edition and are usually numbered on the title page (e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

### 3.6 GS1 prefix

A unique string of three digits issued by GS1 Global Office and allocated exclusively to the International ISBN Agency for the ISBN Standard.

### 3.7 Impression

A print run of a given edition of a book. There may be several impressions/reprints of a single edition. (See “Reprint” below).

### 3.8 Imprint

A trade name or brand under which a work is published

NOTE 1 A publishing company may have multiple imprints in order to target their books at specific markets. (e.g. Harper Collins Educational, Voyager, William Collins are all imprints of HarperCollins and not separate companies)

NOTE 2 In some cases, multiple imprints may be the result of mergers or acquisitions of different companies who wish to differentiate their brands

NOTE 3 An imprint is a name and not only a logo

### **3.9 ISBN**

An International Standard Book Number is an identifier for monographic publications allocated under the aegis of the International ISBN Agency to a registrant in accordance with the specifications of International Standard ISO 2108:Information and documentation - International standard book number (ISBN).

### **3.10 ISBN-A**

A service that allows an ISBN to be expressed in the DOI system by including it in the syntax string of a DOI.

NOTE ISBN-A enables a specific ISBN to become actionable or clickable on the web.

### **3.11 Monographic publication**

Publication conceived as a whole in one part or intended to be completed within a finite number of parts by its publisher/author(s) and made available to the public in any product form.

### **3.12 Print-on-demand publication**

Publication that is printed at the time of a customer order rather than being supplied from existing stock held by the distributor or publisher.

### **3.13 Product form**

The basic physical or digital properties of a publication that differentiate it as a product.

EXAMPLE: The same edition of a publication may appear in the following product forms: hardcover, paperback; CD audio-book; Braille; online e-book.

### **3.14 Product form detail**

Additional clarification or detail further describing the product form of a particular publication.

EXAMPLE: Additional detail may be required in order to describe particular product forms of the same edition of the same publication adequately: jacketed hardcover; trade paperback; .pdf; .EPUB.

### **3.15 Product form feature**

Physical or technical characteristics of a particular publication that give more information about its particular usability and accessibility .

EXAMPLE: Further information may be required about the features of particular product forms of the same edition of the same publication in order to describe them adequately: colour of cover; text font and size; DVD region.

### **3.16 Publisher**

The individual or corporation responsible for all stages in the creation, production, dissemination and marketing of digital or printed publications .

NOTE 1 The publisher is normally responsible for the content and for any financial risk involved in the process.

NOTE 2 Authors may be their own publishers, taking on the above functions themselves; this is known as self-publishing.

### **3.17 Registrant**

Person or organization that has requested and received a valid and genuine ISBN allocated under the aegis of, and according to the rules specified by, the International ISBN Agency to identify a monographic publication. The registrant is usually the publisher of the publication,

but exceptionally may be an intermediary who is acting on behalf of, or in place of, the publisher.

### **3.18 Registration group**

Area of operation defined by the International ISBN Agency for ISO 2108 which may be based on country, language or region.

### **3.19 Reprint**

A second or subsequent print run( impression) of the same edition of a book.

### **3.20 Usage constraint**

Limit(s)of what a user can do with a particular digital monographic publication.

NOTE 1 Usage constraints for a digital publication are usually set within the DRM software.

NOTE 2 If the same content is available separately with different sets of usage constraints then each of these sets will constitute a separate monographic publication.

EXAMPLE: The usage constraints that are set for a publication control whether it is possible to permit text to speech, print a certain percentage of the pages and/or whether it is possible to lend the book to another consumer.

## **4. The Function and Scope of the ISBN**

Recognised in more than 160 countries throughout the world, the International Standard Book Number is a clear identifier that is potentially machine-readable. The ISBN denotes a particular monographic publication uniquely and should, therefore, be associated with it from early production stages. An essential instrument in production, distribution, sales analysis and bibliographic data storage systems in the book trade, ISBN is also of vital importance to library information management.

However, where a product is appropriate to another specific numbering system(such as continuing resources and ongoing integrating resources that qualify for the ISSN, and printed music that qualifies for the ISMN), then that system must be used. If appropriate, such identifiers should be used in conjunction with the ISBN. Further information on other types of identifier is provided in [section 16](#).

ISBNs are assigned to monographic publications, including related products such as publications available as sets or as completed series that are available to the public, whether those publications and related products are available on a gratis basis or to purchase. In addition, individual sections (such as chapters) of monographic publications or issues or articles of continuing resources that are made available separately may also use the ISBN as an identifier. Provided that the publication qualifies for ISBN assignment, it is of no importance in what product form the content is documented and distributed; however, each product form and variation in product form detail and/or product form feature and/or usage constraint should be identified separately.

Examples of types of monographic publications eligible for ISBN are:

- Printed books and pamphlets(and their various product forms)
- Braille publications
- Publications that are not intended by the publisher to be updated regularly or continued indefinitely
- Audio books (talking books) either on a physical carrier or accessible on the Internet for download or streaming
- Digital publications (e-books) either on physical carriers (such as machine-readable tapes, diskettes, or CD-ROMs) or on the Internet (for download or streaming)

- Digitised copies of printed monographic publications that are available in the supply chain
- Microform publications
- Educational or instructional software, films, videos, DVDs, transparencies either on a physical carrier or accessible on the Internet for download or streaming
- Mixed media publications where the principal constituent is text-based, e.g. book with CD or book with DVD
- Individual articles<sup>1</sup> or issues of a particular continuing resource where these are made available separately (but not the continuing resource in its entirety)
- Art books and illustrated books with a title page and/or text or captions
- e-book apps provided that they have a significant textual content and can be considered a monographic publication and are available to the public. Pictures, moving image and sound may be included
- Maps and atlases

Some examples of the types of material **NOT eligible** for ISBN are:

- Continuing resources<sup>2</sup> treated in their entirety as bibliographic entities (individual issues may qualify for ISBNs)
- Abstract entities<sup>3</sup> such as textual works and other abstract creations of intellectual or artistic content
- Printed or digital materials that are intended for marketing or promotional purposes only such as advertising matter, widgets and the like
- Printed music
- Art prints and art folders without title page and text
- Personal documents (such as a digital curriculum vitae or personal profile)
- Greetings cards
- Music sound recordings
- Software, films, videos, DVDs or transparencies that are intended for any purpose other than educational or instructional
- Digital bulletin boards
- Emails and other digital correspondence
- Games
- Customized or personalised books not intended for general availability
- License key vouchers to access digital monographic publications on the Internet

Some identifiers such as the ISSN and ISMN have precise rules as to the scope of materials that qualify for assignment whereas some other identifiers, such as GTIN-13 for trade items, may be used across very broad product ranges.

As the ISBN is now fully compatible with GTIN-13 this makes it more convenient for retailers to sell products of related interest, that do not qualify for ISBN and which use the GTIN-13 instead, without having to adapt their systems.

<sup>1</sup>Where individual articles are made available separately by a publisher, they qualify as monographic publications and shall be assigned an ISBN. This does not apply in the case of offprint or preprint copies that are ordered by the author(s) of the article for their own distribution purposes.

<sup>2</sup>A publication that is issued over time with no predetermined conclusion. Such a publication is usually issued in successive or integrating issues, which generally have numerical and/or chronological designations. Typical examples include serials such as newspapers, periodicals, journals, magazines, etc., and integrating resources such as updating loose-leaf publications and updating websites.

<sup>3</sup>For example, each separate product form of the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* is eligible for an ISBN, but the novel itself, as an abstract textual work, shall not be assigned an ISBN.



The lists and examples above do not attempt to be entirely comprehensive.

For information about other types of identifier and their applicability, consult [Section 16-ISBN and Other Identifiers](#).

The ISBN is an identifier and does not convey any form of legal or copyright protection.

The assignment of an ISBN to a product does not mean that the product is a book for legal or taxation purposes.

## 5. Structure of the ISBN

Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, national ISBN registration agencies only provide ISBNs that consist of 13 digits, comprising the following elements:

- GS1 element
- Registration group element
- Registrant element
- Publication element
- Check digit

When printed, the ISBN is always preceded by the letters “ISBN”.

The ISBN is divided into five elements, three of them are of variable length; the first and last elements are of fixed length. The each elements should be separated clearly by hyphens or spaces when displayed in *human readable* form:

ISBN 978-93-5300-895-6

or

ISBN 978 93 5300 895 6

Note: The use of hyphens or spaces has no lexical significance and is purely to enhance readability.

The number of digits in the second, third and fourth elements of the ISBN (registration group element, registrant element, publication element) varies. The length of the registration group element and of the registrant element is relative to the anticipated publishing output of the registration group or registrant. When these elements are short in length it indicates that the output of the registration group or the registrant (or both) is expected to be a large number of publications.

### 5.1 GS1 element

The first element of the ISBN is a three-digit number that is made available by GS1, formerly EAN International. Prefixes that have already been made available by GS1 are 978 and 979, but there may be a further prefix allocation made in the future as required to ensure the continued capacity of the ISBN system.

EXAMPLE: 978

### 5.2 Registration group element

The second element of the ISBN identifies the country, geographical region or language area participating in the ISBN system. Some members of the ISBN system form language areas

(e.g., registration group number 93 = Indian language group within GS1 element 978). The length of this element varies but may comprise up to 5 digits.

Registration group elements are allocated by the International ISBN Agency.

EXAMPLE: 978-93

### **5.3 Registrant element**

The third element of the ISBN identifies a particular publisher or imprint within a registration group. The length of this element varies in direct relationship to the anticipated output of the publisher and may comprise up to 7 digits. Publishers with the largest expected title outputs are assigned the shortest registrant elements and vice versa.

Potential registrants apply to the ISBN registration agency responsible for the management of the ISBN system within the country, region or language group where they are based in order to be assigned registrant elements that are unique to them. Once they have exhausted the allocation of ISBNs that is linked to their registrant element, they may be assigned an additional registrant element providing further allocations of ISBNs. ([consult Section 14.4 for further information on allocation of ISBN registrant elements.](#))

EXAMPLE: 978-93-5300

### **5.4 Publication element**

The fourth element of the ISBN identifies a specific edition of a publication by a specific publisher. The length of this element varies in direct relationship to the anticipated output of the publisher concerned and may comprise up to 6 digits. Publishers with the largest expected title outputs are assigned the longest publication elements and vice versa. To ensure that the correct length of the ISBN is maintained, blank digits are represented by leading zeros.

EXAMPLE 978-93-5300-895

### **5.5 Check digit**

The fifth element of the ISBN is the check digit. This is calculated using a modulus 10 algorithm. ([See Appendix 1 for calculation method](#) or contact RRRNA for advice.)

## **6. Application of ISBN**

### **6.1 General**

A separate ISBN is assigned for each separate monographic publication or separate edition or format of a monographic publication issued by a publisher.

A separate ISBN is assigned to each different language edition of a monographic publication.

When a monographic publication is published in manifestation with different product forms and/or product form details, and/or product form features and/or sets of usage constraints that influence the accessibility of the manifestation, each version will also have its own ISBN.

A separate ISBN will not be assigned to an unchanged edition or unchanged reprint of the same publication, issued in the same product form, product form detail, product form feature, with the same usage constraints, by the same publisher or imprint.

## 6.2 Changes to publications

A separate ISBN is assigned if there have been significant changes to any part or parts of a publication in relation to former editions of the publication, or if there are significant changes in the physical or digital characteristics of the publication in the new edition.

This applies for changes to:

- the title and/or the subtitle<sup>4</sup> of a publication
- language
- publisher name or imprint
- author name
- textual content other than minor corrections to misprints
- product form (e.g., from hardback to paperback; from audio book on a physical carrier to audio book available to download)
- product form detail (e.g., from .pdf to EPUB; change of book dimension)
- product form features (e.g., from 'normal' text font to dyslexic text font; from EPUB version 2 to EPUB version 3)<sup>5</sup>
- usage constraints (e.g., from printing allowed to printing not allowed, from single concurrent user to multi-user)

A change to the cover design or colour or to the price of a monographic publication does not require a separate ISBN, although a separate ISBN may be assigned if required by the supply chain (e.g., media tie-in).

## 6.3 Facsimile reprints

A separate ISBN is assigned to a facsimile reprint when it is produced by another publisher or republished under the imprint of a different publisher. A separate ISBN is also assigned if the same publication is published under a different imprint name by the same publisher. If a book is scanned and digitised by an organisation other than the original publisher (e.g., by a library) then the scanned and digitised version is assigned a separate ISBN by the new producer provided that version is made available to the public (as opposed to being purely for archival purposes for example).

## 6.4 Loose-leaf publications and digital equivalents

An ISBN is assigned to a finite loose-leaf publication — that is, a loose-leaf publication or its digital equivalent that is not intended to continue indefinitely.

An ISBN is not assigned to either a loose-leaf publication that is continually updated (integrating resource) or to the individual updated sections.

<sup>4</sup>The assignment of a new ISBN for a change in subtitle would depend on the importance of the change. For example, the addition of "A Kurt Wallander Mystery" as a subtitle would not require a new ISBN.

<sup>5</sup>A change in ISBN is not required in the case of migrating an existing EPUB version 2 to EPUB version 3 if the two versions are not available simultaneously and neither retailers nor customers need to be able to distinguish the two

## **6.5 Multi-volume publications**

Publications may comprise more than one volume, and in these cases an ISBN is assigned to cover the entire set. Where individual volumes of the set are available separately, each volume is assigned a unique ISBN to identify it. The verso of the title page (or an equivalent position in a non-print version) in each case should display the ISBN clearly for the set as a whole as well as the ISBN for that particular volume.

Even if the multiple volume publication is available as a complete set, the assignment of a separate ISBN to each individual volume is still recommended. Doing so will facilitate various stages of transaction processing, including the handling of shipments when not all volumes are simultaneously published or distributed and the supply of replacements in the case of damaged copies.

## **6.6 Multi-item packs**

Where a multi-item pack consists of more than one product qualifying for ISBN, the pack is assigned a single ISBN. In addition, each item in the pack that qualifies for an ISBN, will have separate ISBNs if they are separately available. Even if the individual items in the pack that qualify for ISBN are not separately available, they may obtain separate ISBNs if required by the supply chain.

Where one qualifying product is made available accompanied by a secondary item that does not itself qualify for ISBN, then one ISBN will be used to identify the pack, and another ISBN to identify the qualifying product if it is also available separately. However, as it is outside the scope of ISBN, an ISBN shall not be used to identify the secondary element if it too is made available separately.

In a pack consisting of an educational software product and its accompanying user and technical manuals, a single ISBN may cover all items if the manuals are necessary in order to operate the software and are useful only as an adjunct to the software. If these manuals are made separately available, then they will be assigned separate ISBNs.

When the main element of a multi-item product is neither a book nor qualifying educational software then, even if a booklet is included as an accompanying element (e.g., an instruction booklet), then the package as a whole does not qualify for an ISBN.

# **7. Assignment issues**

## **7.1 Backlist**

When a publisher joins the ISBN scheme after they have already commenced publishing, they are required to assign ISBNs to all backlist publications and publish the ISBNs in any catalogues that the publisher produces whether these catalogues are in print or digital format. The ISBN must also appear in the first available reprint or reissue of a backlist title.

## **7.2 Collaborative publications**

A publication issued as a joint imprint with other publishers is usually assigned an ISBN by the publisher(s) in charge of distribution. However, it is permissible for each of the co-publishers to assign its own ISBN and display each of them on the copyright page. In such cases, only one of these ISBNs should be displayed as a bar code on the publication.

### **7.3 Publications sold or distributed by agents**

- a. As the ISBN standard states, a particular edition published by a particular publisher receives only one ISBN. This ISBN must be retained no matter where, or by whom, the publication is distributed or sold.
- b. Publications imported by an exclusive distributor or sole agent to which a new title page, bearing the imprint of the exclusive distributor, has been added in place of the title page of the original publisher are to be given a new ISBN by the exclusive distributor or sole agent. The ISBN of the original publisher should also be given.

### **7.4 Acquisition of one publisher by another**

A publisher acquiring another publishing house can continue to use the unassigned ISBNs from the originally assigned registrant element. The Indian ISBN Agency (RRRNA) must be informed of the change of ownership of the registrant element. If books continue to be published under the names of both publishers, then they may have separate registrant elements or share the same one depending upon market practice.

### **7.5 Acquisition of complete stock of and rights in publication**

A publisher acquiring the complete stock of and rights to a publication(s) can continue to use the originally assigned ISBN until the new company reprints or reissues the publication under that company's own ISBN registrant element.

### **7.6 Publishers with more than one place of publication**

A publisher operating in several places that are listed together in the imprint of a publication must assign only one ISBN to that publication.

A publisher operating separate and distinct offices or branches in different places may have a registrant element for each office or branch. However, each publication is to be assigned only one ISBN by the office or branch responsible for the publication.

### **7.7 ISBNs cannot be re-assigned**

Once a registrant prefix and associated block of numbers has been assigned to a publisher, they can assign ISBNs to the publications it holds rights to. However, after assigning of ISBNs, the publisher cannot resell, re-assign, transfer or split its list of ISBNs among other publishers.

### **7.8 ISBNs can never be reused**

Once assigned to a monographic publication, an ISBN can never be reused to identify another monographic publication, even if the original ISBN is found to have been assigned in error. A registrant who discovers that an ISBN has been erroneously assigned must delete this number from the list of usable numbers. The registrant shall also report the erroneous ISBN to RRRNA which will notify the error to the designated third party bibliographic agency.

## **8. Register of ISBNs and accompanying metadata**

The availability of descriptive metadata is essential for both selling and cataloguing books. There is evidence that better metadata results in increased sales. It is the responsibility of publishers/registrants to inform RRRNA of the ISBNs that will be assigned to forthcoming publications. The information shall include the following minimum metadata (descriptive)

elements and shall be compatible with the ONIX for Books product information standards maintained by EDItEUR and its associated organisations:

Data element	Comments	ONIX 3 element(s)	Mandatory (Y/N)
ISBN	In the 13-digit ISBN format, without spaces or hyphens	<ProductIdentifier>	Y
Product form	Coding which indicates the medium and/or format of the product  <i>Physical measurements may also differentiate between two physical products otherwise in the same binding and format.</i>	<ProductComposition> <ProductForm> <ProductFormDetail> <ProductFormFeature>  <Measure> <ProductPart>	Y Y N N  N N
Series	Series title and enumeration when applicable	<Collection> composite	N
Title	The title of the publication, together with sub-title or other title elements where applicable	<TitleDetail> composite	Y
Contributor	Contributor role code(s) and contributor name(s)	<Contributor> composite [Identifier (ISNI) optional]	N
Edition	Edition number ( <b>for editions after the first</b> ), type, and statement	<EditionTypeCode> <EditionNumber>  <EditionStatement>	N Y (after first edition) N
Language(s) of text	Using ISO 639-2/B language codes	<Language> composite	Y
Imprint	The brand name under which the publication is published	<Imprint> composite [Identifier (ISNI) optional]	Y
Publisher	The person or organisation that owns the imprint at the date of publication	<Publisher> composite [Identifier (ISNI) optional]	Y
Country of publication	Using ISO 3166-1 country codes	<CountryOfPublication>	Y
Publication date	The date of first publication under this ISBN. In the ISO 8601 format (YYYYMMDD).	<PublishingDate> composite	Y
ISBN of parent publication	ISBN of the parent publication of which this publication is a part, when applicable <i>Used when an ISBN is registered for a chapter or part or as part of a set or series</i>	<RelatedProduct> composite <RelatedWork> composite	N N
	<i>For digital products, provision is also made for the possibility that the ISBN may be assigned by a downstream intermediary if the publisher has not done so</i>	<RecordSource... elements	N
	<i>Similarly, for digital products, different licence terms (usage constraints) or operating system requirements may differentiate between two otherwise identical products. NB 'Epub' does not imply any link to the IDPF's EPUB file format – it is simply an abbreviation for 'e-publication'</i>	<ProductFormFeature> <EpubTechnicalProtection> <EpubUsageConstraint>	N N N

Note: In some cases the ONIX representation of the ISBN metadata set uses a composite where at first sight it would seem that a simple data element would suffice, or it uses a coded value where only one code is valid. This approach ensures that the ISBN metadata can be specified in an ONIX for ISBN Registration message that is a true subset of current ONIX for Books (ONIX 3.0).

## **9. ISBN for Digital Publications and Educational/Instructional Software**

### **9.1 ISBN for eligible digital publications**

Where a publication is available digitally (e.g., an e-book, e-book app, CD-ROM or publication available on the Internet), it will qualify for an ISBN provided that it contains text and is made available to the public, and that there is no intention for the publication to be a continuing resource. Such publications may also include pictures and sounds.

The following types of digital publications shall *not* be assigned an ISBN:

- Publications that are subject to frequent update and where access is possible to these changes almost immediately such as online databases
- Websites
- Promotional or advertising materials
- Bulletin boards
- Emails and other digital correspondence
- Search engines
- Games
- Personal documents (such as a curriculum vitae or personal profile)
- Schedulers/diaries

### **9.2 ISBN for eligible software products**

An ISBN may be used to identify a specific software product that is intended for educational and/or instructional purposes such as a computer-based training product, provided that it is neither customisable nor requires data in order to function.

All other software products (e.g., computer games) shall not be assigned an ISBN.

### **9.3 Principles for assignment of ISBN to digital publications**

Publications need separate ISBNs if anyone in the supply chain needs to identify them separately.

ISBN is an identifier of monographic publications (books) and related products available to the public. ISBN should not be used to identify files that only pass between publishers and typesetters or e-book conversion services, nor should it identify abstract entities such as textual works (content).

It is important to distinguish between the case of different “products”, which always merit separate ISBNs, and the case when different DRMs or different usage constraints are wrapped with the product at the moment a transaction occurs between the vendor and the consumer. The distinction may not always be obvious. It is also important to remember that separate ISBNs are necessary to avoid ambiguity arising in the supply chain where there are multiple products and multiple parties involved.

End users need to know a) whether the e-book that they are purchasing will work on their device or software and b) what they will be able to do with it (e.g., copy, print, lend, text to speech etc.). This is normally defined by a combination of file format (e.g., EPUB, .pdf) and software known as Digital Rights Management (DRM) which controls, by technical means, the use that can be made of the e-book. Separate ISBNs will facilitate management, dissemination and discovery of that information as well as delivery of the appropriate version of an e-book.

- Where a specific qualifying e-book is available in different underlying file formats such as EPUB, .pdf etc., each different format that is published and made separately available is provided a separate ISBN. If the publication is migrating to a new version of the file format (e.g., EPUB2 to EPUB3), then a separate ISBN is essential if both versions are available simultaneously or if retailers and customers need to distinguish the versions.
- Where a proprietary file format or DRM is used that ties a version to a specific platform, device or software (reading system), separate ISBNs should be used for each such version. However, where digital publications are being supplied by a retailer that is the sole provider of e-books in a proprietary format that can only be bought through their own websites (e.g. Amazon Kindle, Apple i-books) and that retailer does not require ISBNs, it may not be necessary to obtain ISBNs for those versions. However, it may be useful to do so for tracking sales or for listing publications in third-party databases of available e-books. If ISBNs are assigned, they should be unique to that version.
- Where a publication is available in the supply chain with more than one specific type of DRM, the same ISBN could be assigned, whether offered by the original publisher or by a vendor later in the chain, provided that the DRM technology does not intrude on the user's experience or enforce different usage constraints
- Where a publication is available in a supply chain in versions with *different usage constraints*, whether offered by the original publisher or by a vendor later in the chain, then each of these versions are unique products that need to be identified by unique ISBNs.
- When the usage constraints are defined during the transaction between the vendor and the customer, (for example, a customer is offered a service that allows a wide choice of usage constraints on demand), then no ISBN will be assigned to the customised publication that is produced.

*Example 1: A publisher produces two EPUB versions of the same book, each with different usage constraints and then distributes them through the supply chain, through different intermediaries. An ISBN is required for each of the specific versions of the product.*

*Example 2: A publisher produces a file in EPUB format and releases this to a vendor who applies two different sets of usage constraints to the EPUB and makes the two versions available separately, as two distinct products. An ISBN is required for each of the specific versions of the product (the ISBN may be assigned by the publisher or by the vendor if the publisher does not do so).*

*Example 3: A vendor offers to the public the possibility to buy an e-book and to select the type of DRM to be applied. In this case, there is no need to assign different ISBNs, since there is no ambiguity in the dialogue between the vendor and the buyer.*

*Example 4: A publisher releases a publication — one version of the publication is available with accessibility features such as enhanced textual description alongside each illustration and one without. Each of the versions must have unique ISBNs in order that the particular attributes are clear to potential buyers and users (especially those looking for accessible publications) and so that the versions are separately identified.*

*Example 5: A publisher offers a limited and pre-defined set of variations of usage constraints for particular publications in the supply chain (e.g., one version that is*



*printable and one that is not, or a choice of a three or six month rental). Each of these are separate publications and require separate ISBNs.*

*Example 6: A publisher offers a large range of variations (e.g., where various different constraint parameters can be chosen from an extensive menu or selection system). Each potential combination need not be given a separate ISBN as effectively these are customised publications produced to order.*

- If publishers are using intermediaries to generate different formats of their e-books, then they should provide separate ISBNs for the intermediaries to assign to each format.

If a publisher will not provide ISBNs to intermediaries for each separate format then intermediaries may assign their own ISBNs. RRRNA will provide ISBN registrant elements to intermediaries for this purpose. In this case ISBNs and related metadata should be reported back to the publisher and to the RRRNA and other bibliographic agencies.

(N.B. The method outlined in this paragraph is not the recommended solution and should only be used in cases where a publisher refuses to assign individual ISBNs to each product).

- When a book is digitised by a library or other organisation and the digital version is made available to the public, then as a new product it should be identified by a separate ISBN, regardless of whether or not there is a charge for access to the digital version.

## **10. ISBN for Print-on-Demand Publications**

For the purposes of ISBN assignment, print on demand is simply a form of print technology.

A print-on-demand publication is printed and bound in response to a specific order from a customer. Such orders are often for single copies of publications that would otherwise be declared “out of print” since normal print runs would not be economical.

If the on-demand version of a publication is in a different product form from the previously published non-on-demand version, (e.g., if a hardback becomes a paperback when it shifts to being on-demand), a new ISBN is required, just as for any other changes of product form. Minor changes to trim sizes in order to comply with the specifications of on-demand printing machines do not require a new ISBN.

An ISBN is normally assigned to a print-on-demand publication when it is made available or listed as available on-demand, rather than when it is actually printed.

A “customised” or “personalised” version of a print-on-demand book, where the customer, not the publisher, dictates the content of the book, and which has a limited availability, will not be assigned an ISBN.

## **11. Course Packs**

A course pack is a physical or digital compilation of different materials and may include book extracts, journal articles, teacher-authored materials and, possibly, multi-media materials. The individual components will be assigned ISBNs only if they are available separately and qualify for ISBNs. The course pack itself will not be assigned an ISBN if it is customised for

an individual end-user. However, if the course pack is made more widely available (e.g., through college bookstores) then it would be assigned an ISBN.

## **12. Small and Self-Publishers**

Self-publishing is the publication of a book (digital or printed) by its author without the involvement of an established publisher. The author takes the financial risk and is responsible for the entire process. The author may outsource all or part of the process to companies that offer these services.

Third-party self-publishing service providers will not normally be assigned a registrant element unless they are also publishers.

Self-publishers should be aware that if a third-party service provider offers to assign one of their range of ISBNs, then that service provider is likely to be listed as the publisher in ISBN-related databases.

If a publication is exclusive to a single platform and not available in the supply chain then an ISBN is not mandatory. However, if the publication is likely to be available in the supply chain (e.g., through booksellers) then it should be assigned an ISBN.

N.B. ISBNs should be obtained from the appropriate ISBN registration agency responsible for the country in which the publisher is based, regardless of the location of any platform or self-publishing service.

## **13. Location and Display of the ISBN on Publications**

### **13.1 General**

The ISBN must appear on the item itself.

In the case of printed publications, the ISBN must appear on the:

- Verso of the title page (copyright page)
- Foot of the title page, if there is no space on the title verso
- Lower section of the outside back cover
- Foot of the back of the jacket, or any other protective case, or wrapper

In the case of digital publications, the ISBN must appear on the:

- Title display; the first display (compact discs, online publications); or on the screen that displays the title or its equivalent (e.g., the initial screen displayed when the content is first accessed and/or on the screen that carries the copyright notice)

In the case of educational/instructional films, videos and transparencies, the ISBN must appear on the credit titles.

If the publication is issued in a container that is an integral part of the publication (e.g., a compact disc, cassette, or diskette), the ISBN shall be displayed on any labels included with that container. If it is not possible to display the ISBN on the container or its label, then the ISBN shall be displayed at the bottom of the back of any permanent packaging for that container (e.g., the box, sleeve, or frame).

The different formats of a digital publication shall be given an individual ISBN if they are made available separately. If the publication is made available in two formats that are always

bundled together for sale, then only one ISBN is required. Where formats are made available separately, all the ISBNs should be listed one below the other on all versions and the abbreviated format should be mentioned in parentheses at the end of its ISBN. In the case of printed editions, if the ISBNs of different formats are known then those formats may also be listed in this way.

Examples: ISBN 978-951-45-9693-3 (hardback)  
ISBN 978-951-45-9694-0 (paperback)  
ISBN 978-951-45-9695-7 (PDF)  
ISBN 978-951-45-9696-4 (EPUB)

The ISBN shall also appear on any accompanying material issued in conjunction with the publication.

The ISBN should always be printed in type large enough to be easily legible (i.e., 9-point or larger).

### **13.2 ISBN in bar coded form**

The rapid, worldwide expansion of bar code scanning has brought into prominence the agreement reached between GS1 (formerly EAN International and the Uniform Code Council) and the International ISBN and International ISMN Agency, which allows the ISBN to be encoded into an EAN-13 bar code. This makes the ISBN an international identifier compatible with the worldwide bar-coding scheme.

Representing the ISBN in an EAN-13 bar code symbology must be done in accordance with ISO/IEC 15420 (bar code symbology specification EAN/UPC) that requires the usage of EAN-13 symbols to be in line with the recommendations of GS1. An EAN bar code consists of thirteen digits.

An example of an ISBN encoded in an EAN-13 bar code symbol is shown below:

ISBN 978-93-80082-88-2

When used in a bar code, the ISBN must be displayed in human readable form immediately above the EAN-13 bar code symbol, preceded by "ISBN".

Example of printing the ISBN in EAN-13 bar code symbology:



The recommended location of the EAN-13 bar code symbol for publications is the lower right quadrant of the back, near the spine.

**Presently Bar Code is not provided by RRRNA.**

### **13.3 Algorithm for generating the ISBN Check Digit**

[See section-A1.1, Appendix](#) for information on calculating the check digit of the ISBN.

## **14. Administration of the ISBN System**

### **14.1 General**

The administration of the ISBN system is carried out on three levels: International & Indian ISBN registration agency and registrant.

### **14.2 International administration**

The principal functions and responsibilities of the International ISBN Agency are:

- To promote, coordinate and supervise the worldwide use of the ISBN system
- To represent the interests of the ISBN community to other relevant organisations
- To appoint appropriate organisations as ISBN registration agencies and revoke such appointments as necessary
- To define registration groups and their areas of responsibility and allocate them to appropriate ISBN registration agencies
- To determine the definition of registration group rules that govern the length of available registrant elements within each group and ensure that an accurate and comprehensive register of these rules is available publicly at all times
- To allocate ranges of unique registrant elements within the appropriate registration group to ISBN registration agencies and to maintain a complete and accurate register of the registrant elements that have been assigned
- To secure the maintenance of ISBNs and their associated ISBN metadata through ISBN registration agency registers
- To develop, monitor, and enforce policies and procedures governing the operations of ISBN agencies and the process of ISBN registration by those agencies, including any fees associated with that process
- To facilitate the review and resolution of duplicate assignments of an ISBN
- To review and decide on any appeals relating to decisions made by registration agencies
- To develop, maintain, and make publicly available documentation for users of the ISBN system
- To implement and maintain funding arrangements as necessary to support the operations of the International ISBN Agency, including, but not limited to, financial contributions from ISBN registration agencies.

### **14.3 Indian ISBN registration agency (RRRNA)**

The administration of the ISBN system within a registration group is the responsibility of the Indian ISBN registration agency which operates at the national level.

Services include allocation of identification codes and numbers, the granting of access to such codes and numbers, and/or other data or information produced in connection with the implementation of ISO 2108.

The functions and responsibilities of RRRNA are:

- To ensure that continuous service is provided
- To issue notification of the assignment of an ISBN or an ISBN registrant element to the registrant of that monographic publication or publisher name.
- To create, manage and maintain registers of ISBN, ISBN metadata and administrative data in accordance with the policies set out by the International ISBN Agency. (Tasks involving ISBN metadata may be delegated to a designated bibliographic agency provided that compliance is made with these specifications.).
- To correct inaccurate ISBNs and ISBN metadata if proof of such inaccuracy is provided.
- To make ISBN and associated metadata available to other ISBN registration agencies and to users of the ISBN system in compliance with policies set out by the International ISBN Agency.
- To collate and maintain statistical data on its ISBN-related operations and report these at the stipulated intervals to the International ISBN Agency.
- To promote, educate and train others in the use of the ISBN system in compliance with the specifications of the applicable edition of the ISBN standard in force at the time.
- To adhere to the ISBN policies and procedures established by the International ISBN Agency in compliance with the specifications of the applicable edition of the ISBN standard in force at the time.
- To contact publishers who do not assign ISBNs, advise them of the importance and value of assigning ISBNs to all qualifying publications and supply them with full details about how to adopt the standard.

#### **14.4 Registrant/publisher administration**

Registrants are responsible for assigning publication elements to the individual items they publish and for ensuring the application of pertinent regulations. They can apply for and receive a registrant element from RRRNA via online ISBN portal.

The RRRNA will determine the range of publication elements that will be available to the registrant. The range assigned will be determined based on current and anticipated future publication output and is directly related to the length of the registrant element allocated. The registrant should make available all the possible information regarding all the available backlist publications to RRRNA and also advise on the present and future publications, in order to facilitate assignment of a suitably sized registrant element. RRRNA can initially assign a smaller range of numbers than that requested if they are uncertain about the number of likely publications.

The registrant must supply the RRRNA (or its designated local bibliographic agency) with a specified amount of metadata about the publication to which the ISBN is assigned. The

specifications concerning the type and format of the metadata are established by the International ISBN Agency in cooperation with RRRNA ([see Section 8 above](#)).

If an intermediary is assigning either registrants' ISBNs or its own ISBNs, those ISBNs and related metadata should be reported back to the registrant and to RRRNA and other bibliographic agencies.

The registrant shall comply with the procedures of RRRNA. If a registrant/publisher does not comply with the procedures of RRRNA (e.g. fails to provide adequate metadata, resells or transfers ISBNs), it may decline to assign further registrant and/or publication elements until the registrant is in compliance.

## 15. ISBN and GS1

In 1997 an agreement was concluded between the EAN International (EAN), the Uniform Code Council (UCC), the International ISBN Agency, and the International ISMN Agency to foster mutual cooperation. It provides an observer status to respective representatives at one another's general assemblies, suggests consultations, and regulates the numbering of non-printed book material. In February 2005, EAN International and the Uniform Code Council (UCC) came together under the name of GS1.

Contact details:

GS1 Global Office

Blue Tower

Avenue Louise 326

B-1050 Brussels

Belgium

Tel: (+32 2) 788 7800

Fax: (+32 2) 788 7899

Email: [contactus@gs1.org](mailto:contactus@gs1.org)

URL: <http://www.gs1.org>

Contact details for national GS1 organisations: <http://www.gs1.org/contact>

## 16. ISBN and Other Identifiers

### 16.1 DOI

The Digital Object Identifier (DOI®) System is for identifying content objects in the digital environment. DOI® names are assigned to any entity for use on digital networks. They are used to provide current information, including where they (or information about them) can be found on the Internet. Information about a digital object may change over time, including where to find it, but its DOI name will not change.

International DOI Foundation

EDItEUR

United House

North Road

London N7 9DP

UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7503 6418

Fax: +44 (0)20 7503 6418

Email: [contact@doi.org](mailto:contact@doi.org)

URL: <http://www.doi.org>

### 16.2 GTIN

The GTIN (Global Trade Item Number) is a generic term for all the EAN.UCC product identifiers including the EAN-13 representation of the ISBN.

GS1 Global Office  
Blue Tower  
Avenue Louise 326  
B-1050 Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: (+32 2) 788 7800  
Fax: (+32 2) 788 7899  
Email: [contactus@gs1.org](mailto:contactus@gs1.org)  
URL: <http://www.gs1.org/barcodes/technical/idkeys/gtin>

### **16.3 ISAN**

The International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISAN), ISO15706-1 and 15706-2, is a voluntary numbering system and metadata schema enabling the identification of any audiovisual work, including films, shorts, documentaries, television programs, sports events, advertising and also their related versions.

The Registration Authority for ISAN is:

ISAN International Agency  
1A, rue du Beulet  
CH-1203 Geneva  
Switzerland  
Phone: (+41) 22 545 10 00  
Fax: (+41) 22 545 10 40  
Email: [info@isan.org](mailto:info@isan.org)  
URL: <http://www.isan.org>

### **16.4 ISBN-A**

The Actionable ISBN (ISBN-A) is a syntax and service provided by some ISBN registration agencies and powered by DOI® in which an existing ISBN is expressed in the DOI System, providing the ability to link an ISBN to one or more URLs.

International ISBN Agency  
48/49 Russell Square  
London  
WC1B 4JP  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7580 8536  
Email: [info@isbn-international.org](mailto:info@isbn-international.org)  
URL: <http://www.doi.org/factsheets/ISBN-A.html>

### **16.5 ISLI**

The International standard link identifier (ISLI), ISO 17316, specifies an identifier of links between entities (or their names) in the field of information and documentation. These entities can be documents, media resources, people, or more abstract items such as times or places.

There may be some applications between ISLI and ISBN that are developed in the future. Further information will be made available at the appropriate time.

The ISLI system is administered by the International Information Content Industry Association (ICIA):

International ISLI Agency  
International Information Content Industry Association  
2/F, Hongkong Offshore Centre  
No. 28 Austin Avenue  
Tsim Sha Tsui  
Kowloon  
Hong Kong  
Tel: (+852) 92091120  
Email: [service@isli-international.org](mailto:service@isli-international.org)  
URL: <http://www.isli-international.org>

## **16.6 ISMN**

The International Standard Music Number (ISMN) identifies all printed sheet music publications, whether available for sale, or hire, or gratis.

The ISMN is not used for books on music, which receive an ISBN, nor is it used for music tapes, CDs, or videos.

The ISMN is administered by the International ISMN Agency:

International ISMN Agency  
Schlossstr. 50  
12165 Berlin, Germany  
Tel.: (+49 30) 7974 5002  
Fax: (+49 30) 7974 5254  
Email: [ismn@ismn-international.org](mailto:ismn@ismn-international.org)  
URL: <http://ismn-international.org>

## **16.7 ISNI**

The International Standard Name Identifier (ISNI) is an ISO Standard (ISO 27729) whose scope is the identification of Public Identities of parties: that is, the identities used publicly by parties involved throughout the media content industries in the creation, production, management, and content distribution chains. The ISNI system uniquely identifies Public Identities across multiple fields of creative activity. The ISNI provides a tool for disambiguating Public Identities that might otherwise be confused. ISNI is not intended to provide direct access to comprehensive information about a Public Identity but can provide links to other systems where such information is held.

Further information is available from:

EDItEUR  
United House  
North Road  
London N7 9DP  
UK  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7503 6418  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7503 6418  
Email: [info@editeur.org](mailto:info@editeur.org)  
URL: <http://www.isni.org>



## 16.8 ISRC

The International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) is the standard international identifier for sound recordings and music videos (ISO 3901). It numbers each recording of a piece (not the physical item), regardless of the context or carrier on which it is issued. Encoded ISRC provide the means to automatically identify recordings for royalty payments.

The ISRC system is administered by IFPI, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry:

International ISRC Agency  
IFPI Secretariat  
10 Piccadilly  
London  
W1J 0DD  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7878 7900  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7878 7950  
Email: [isrc@ifpi.org](mailto:isrc@ifpi.org)  
URL: <http://www.ifpi.org/isrc>

## 16.9 ISSN

The International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), ISO 3297, is the standard international identifier for continuing resources (i.e. publications that are issued over time with no predetermined conclusion). Such publications are usually issued in successive or integrating issues that generally have numerical and/or chronological designations. Typical examples include serials such as newspapers, periodicals, journals, magazines, etc., and ongoing integrating resources such as loose-leaf publications that are continually updated.

The ISSN is administered by the ISSN International Centre:

ISSN International Centre  
5 rue de Turbigo  
75003 PARIS  
FRANCE  
Tel: (+33) 1 44 88 22 20  
Fax: (+33) 1 40 26 32 43  
Email: [secretariat@issn.org](mailto:secretariat@issn.org)  
URL: <http://www.issn.org>

Certain publications, such as yearbooks, annuals, monographic series, etc., should be assigned an ISSN for the serial title (which will remain the same for all the parts or individual volumes of the serial) and an ISBN for each individual volume. If ISBN and ISSN are assigned to a publication they must be both clearly identified.

## 16.10 ISTC

The International Standard Text Code (ISTC), ISO 21047, is a numbering system for the unique identification of text-based works; the term "work" can refer to any content appearing in conventional printed books, audio-books, static e-books or enhanced digital books, as well as content which might appear in a newspaper or journal.

The ISTC is not assigned to physical products or other manifestations of a work. Such physical products (i.e. a printed book, a talking book, or the digital versions of such products) shall be assigned an ISBN.

Further information is available from:

International ISTC Agency  
EDiTEUR  
United House  
North Road  
London N7 9DP  
UK  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7503 6418  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7503 6418  
Email: [info@editeur.org](mailto:info@editeur.org)  
URL: [www.istc-international.org](http://www.istc-international.org)

### **16.11 ISWC**

The International Standard Musical Work Code (ISWC) identifies musical works as intangible creations. It is not used to identify manifestations of, or objects related to, musical works. Such manifestations and objects are the subject of separate identification systems, such as ISRC and ISMN (see descriptions elsewhere in this section).

Example: Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*) would be eligible for an ISWC to identify the work. The many printed scores would each qualify for ISMNs, the libretti and their translations for ISTCs (and ISBNs for the publications thereof); a video of a performance would receive an ISAN, and a sound recording of the opera an ISRC.

Further information is available from the registration authority:

CISAC  
20-26 Boulevard du Parc  
92200 Neuilly sur Seine  
France  
Tel.: (+ 33 1) 55 62 08 50  
Fax: (+ 33 1) 55 62 08 60  
Email: [cisac@cisac.org](mailto:cisac@cisac.org)  
URL: <http://www.cisac.org>

### **16.12 SGTIN**

The Serialized Global Trade Item Number (SGTIN) expands the GTIN/ISBN ([see 16.2 above](#)) to include a serial number that uniquely identifies an instance of a trade item, such as a specific copy of a book. It is used to create an Electronic Product Code (EPC) that can be encoded on Radio-Frequency ID (RFID) tags to track all kinds of objects, including books, through the supply chain.

GS1 Global Office  
Blue Tower  
Avenue Louise 326  
B-1050 Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: (+32 2) 788 7800  
Fax: (+32 2) 788 7899  
Email: [contactus@gs1.org](mailto:contactus@gs1.org)  
URL: [http://www.gs1.org/sites/default/files/docs/epc/TDS\\_1\\_8\\_Standard\\_20140203.pdf](http://www.gs1.org/sites/default/files/docs/epc/TDS_1_8_Standard_20140203.pdf)

### **16.13URN**

Uniform Resource Names (URNs) are persistent resource identifiers.

Their syntax, defined in Internet standard RFC 2141, is:

```
<URN>:= "URN:" <NID> ":" <NSS>
```

where<NID> is the Namespace Identifier and <NSS> is the Namespace Specific String.

The leading "urn:" and Namespace Identifier are case-insensitive.

NID "isbn" has been reserved for the ISBN system: <https://www.iana.org/assignments/urn-namespaces/urn-namespaces.xhtml#urn-namespaces-1>.

According to the template, any URN based on ISBN has the following syntax:

```
URN:ISBN:<NSS>
```

where the Namespace Specific String contains the ISBN with or without hyphens:

```
URN:ISBN:978-92-95055-12-4
```

## 17. ONIX for Books

The ONIX for Books Product Information Message is the international standard for representing and communicating book industry product information in digital form.

ONIX for Books was developed by EDItEUR jointly with the Book Industry Study Group (USA), and Book Industry Communication (UK), and is now used widely across the globe. Continued development of ONIX is now managed by a network of National Groups and an International Steering Committee coordinated by EDItEUR. The latest version at the time of writing is Release 3.0.

For publishers, experience has shown that ONIX for Books brings two important business benefits. As a communications format, it makes it possible to deliver rich product information into the supply chain in a standard form, to wholesalers and distributors, to larger retailers, to data aggregators, and to affiliate companies. And by providing a template for the content and structure of a product record, ONIX has helped to stimulate the introduction of better internal information systems, capable of bringing together all the "metadata" needed for the description and promotion of new and backlist titles. The same core data can also be used to produce advance information sheets, catalogues and other promotional material.

For "downstream" supply chain partners, ONIX for Books means more efficient and rapid loading of up-to-date product information into customer-facing systems, with less need for manual intervention and much lower risk of error.

ONIX for Books has been mapped to MARC21 by the Library of Congress and to UNIMARC by The British Library. It is being used by some national libraries to receive product information from publishers for Cataloguing-in-Publication(CIP) purposes or to enhance Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs).

A specification for a subset of ONIX for Books is available, aimed specifically at carrying the metadata required for ISBN registration. This can be used by publishers to inform ISBN registration agencies about ISBNs they have allocated to their products, when a full ONIX for Books message is unnecessary.

Further information on ONIX is available from:

EDItEUR  
United House  
North Road  
London N7 9DP  
UK  
Tel/fax: +44 (0)20 7503 6418  
Email: [info@editeur.org](mailto:info@editeur.org)  
URL: <http://www.editeur.org/8/ONIX/>

## 18. International ISBN Agency Website

The website of the International ISBN Agency is at URL: <http://www.isbn-international.org>. In addition to information about the ISBN and its governance, it contains contact details and ranges for all the national and regional ISBN registration agencies, tools and resources including links to the Global Register of Publishers (see below) and the ISBN Users' Manual in multiple languages.

## 19. Global Register of Publishers

A dedicated website at [www.grp.isbn-international.org](http://www.grp.isbn-international.org) allows anyone to carry out simple searches and to retrieve basic publisher name and prefix information. More advanced searches, and more detailed publisher contact information is available to users who choose to register. Anyone can register free of charge through the site. The data in the Global Register of Publishers is supplied directly by national ISBN registration agencies and it will be compiled and revised at least annually.

Users cannot amend or create any data on the Global Register since it is purely a read only site, but if you are a publisher and notice any inaccuracies about your own details please contact the appropriate national ISBN registration agency to check that they have the most up to date information.

The Global Register is a free resource and includes:

- addresses and other contact details for publishers in more than 200 countries and territories
- data on over a million ISBN prefixes
- thousands of small and author-publishers

# APPENDIX 1 Check digit calculation

## A1.1 Calculating the Check Digit

N.B. The following information is mainly for system developers. Publishers and ISBN registration agencies should not calculate ISBN check digits manually.

Each of the first 12 digits of the ISBN is alternately multiplied by 1 and 3. The check digit is equal to 10 minus the remainder resulting from dividing the sum of the weighted products of the first 12 digits by 10 with one exception. If this calculation results in an apparent check digit of 10, the check digit is 0.

Use the following steps to calculate the check digit for the ISBN 978-92-95055-12-?

**Step 1:** Determine the sum of the weighted products for the first 12 digits of the ISBN (see following table).

	GS1 element			Registration group element		Registrant element					Publication element		Check digit	Sum
<b>ISBN</b>	9	7	8	9	2	9	5	0	5	5	1	2	?	
<b>Weight</b>	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	—	
<b>Product</b>	9	21	8	27	2	27	5	0	5	15	1	6	—	126

**Step 2:** Divide the sum of the weighted products of the first 12 digits of the ISBN calculated in step 1 by 10, determining the remainder.

$$126 / 10 = 12 \quad \text{remainder} = 6$$

**Step 3:** Subtract the remainder calculated in step 2 from 10. The resulting difference is the value of the check digit with one exception. If the remainder from step 2 is 0, the check digit is 0.

$$10 - 6 = 4$$

Check digit = 4

ISBN = 978-92-95055-12-4

The following mathematical formula is an alternative way of expressing the calculation of the check digit:

$$\text{Check digit} = \text{mod } 10 (10 - [\text{mod } 10 \{\text{sum of weighted products of the first 12 ISBN digits}\}])$$

$$\text{Check digit} = \text{mod } 10 (10 - [\text{mod } 10 \{126\}])$$

Check digit = 4

The sum of the weighted products of the first 12 digits plus the check digit must be divisible by 10 without a remainder for the ISBN to be valid.

Note: The length of the registration group, registrant, and publication elements are variable and may not always be the same as in the example table above. Not all registration group and registrant combinations are valid.

Please contact your national ISBN registration agency who will be able to assist you with calculating your ISBNs either by providing pre-calculated lists of the ISBNs or by providing software to enable you to calculate your own ISBNs.

Note: The calculation method for 10 digit ISBNs is available from the International ISBN Agency's website <https://www.isbn-international.org/>.

## Frequently Asked Questions about ISBN :

### ***Why should I use an ISBN?***

If you are a publisher or bookseller it may be in your own interest as you want to sell books. If your books cannot be ordered and distributed by ISBN and if they are not listed in Books in Print-type listings you may find that your books do not sell. People will assume your books do not exist, and even if they do know they exist they may consider it too much of a bother to handle them since they will need to do so using full title and manual ordering.

### ***Do I need to have an ISBN?***

The international ISBN system does not impose any legal requirement to have an ISBN, and the ISBN conveys no legal or copyright protection.

### ***Do books need an ISBN if they are not going to be sold?***

It is desirable that all books made publicly available, whether they are available for sale or on a gratis basis, are identified by ISBNs.

### **What is the structure of an ISBN?**

See chapter 3 of this manual

An ISBN is a 13-digit number consisting of 5 parts:

1. **GS1element:** Identifying the ISBN community, issued by GS1, currently 978 or 979.
2. **Registration group element:** Identifying the particular country, geographical region or language area participating in the ISBN system. This element may be between 1 and 5 digits in length.
3. **Registrant element:** Identifying the particular publisher or imprint. This element may be up to 7 digits in length.
4. **Publication element:** Identifying the particular edition and format of a specific title. This may be up to 6 digits in length.
5. **Check digit:** the final single digit that mathematically validates the rest of the number.

### ***Where do I get an ISBN from?***

All books published in India are eligible to get ISBN from Raja Rammohan Roy National Agency (RRRNA) for ISBN, Ministry of HRD, India. The International ISBN Agency does not issue ISBNs (except to multi-national NGOs). ISBNs are available from the appropriate local agency for the region or country where the publisher is based. If you are applying for ISBN as a company or organisation it is immaterial in which country your company or organisation is **registered**, it is the location where your company or organisation is **based and operates from** that is the important criterion. If you have more than one site, possibly

in more than one country, then ISBNs should be obtained based on where the headquarters of your organisation is situated. It also does not matter in which country your publications will be printed, manufactured, marketed or distributed – **only your location as publisher determines where you should obtain ISBNs.**

***I am publishing in India, but may I obtain my ISBNs from a different agency?***

No. All publishers should apply to the appropriate agency that is responsible for the country in which they are based. If you have genuine reasons that may prevent you from applying to the Indian agency, then you should contact the International ISBN Agency for advice in the first instance but you should not contact another ISBN agency instead.

***I am publishing a book in a foreign language. Should it have an ISBN of the country in whose language the book is written?***

No. It is the country in which the publisher is based which determines the group identifier, and not the language of the text.

**Who is a publisher?**

See para 2.16 of this manual.

***I am not a publisher; can I still obtain an ISBN?***

Yes. For our purposes, a publisher is the group, organisation, company or individual who is responsible for initiating the production of a publication. Normally, it is also the person or body who bears the cost/financial risk in making a product available.

***My printer offered to arrange an ISBN for my book. Is that OK?***

Usually the printer is not the publisher, but someone who takes an order from the publisher to print the book. Of course the printer can help the publisher with the ISBN application forms but it is required that the ISBN registrant element and the ISBN are registered in the name of the genuine publisher, to ensure the traceability of the publication in databases after it has been published.

***I am an author/self-publisher and want to publish my (e-)book by means of a self-publishing platform. The platform has given the book an ISBN from its own ISBN registrant element. Is that OK?***

In that case the platform will be considered the publisher. This is not recommended practice. If you later break the relationship with the platform and decide to distribute your book elsewhere, you will need a new ISBN of your own. It is therefore better to obtain an ISBN of your own from the start. RRRNA can assign ISBNs from ranges reserved for small publishers or even assign single ISBNs.

**What does a publisher have to do to obtain ISBNs?**

Please visit [www.isbn.gov.in](http://www.isbn.gov.in). Also please go through section 2 of this manual. You have to prove that you are publishing from India. In case you are a commercial publisher, we will also ask you about your publishing plans for the next few years. All applicants who are finally allotted ISBN are also asked to submit the metadata of the books for which ISBN has been allotted.



***What requirements do publishers have to meet in order to participate in the ISBN system?***

Publishers should comply with the implementation guidelines including the scope and assignment rules for ISBN. Publishers must supply to the RRRNA registration agency with the minimum set of metadata elements belonging to the ISBN as described in the ISBN standard and manual. Please see para 8 of the manual to understand the requirement of supplying the metadata.

***What happens if I have used all the numbers in my ISBN registrant element?***

An additional registrant element can be assigned – allowing for a larger output if necessary. This is an additional registrant element and not a replacement.

***I use ISBNs for internal purposes/publications that I do not wish to make available to the public. Do I still have to report them and submit metadata to the ISBN registration agency?***

Yes. RRRNA has to keep a complete ISBN register in order to carry out the proper administration of the ISBN system in compliance with the guidelines of the ISBN standard.

If you do not submit the metadata of these ISBNs you might end up in the situation of having used up the complete capacity of your ISBNs, yet the ISBN Agency refuses to give you an additional registrant element because in the Agency's records they are not used up at all.

***Fees/costs for obtaining an ISBN from RRRNA***

Currently it is free.

***Display of ISBN including Barcoding***

See para 13 of section 1 above.

***Where should I display an ISBN?***

On a printed book an ISBN should be included on the copyright page (also called the title verso page) or at the foot of the title page if there is no room on the copyright page. If there is no bar code, then the ISBN should also be on the back cover or jacket preferably at the lower right. In the case of electronic publications (such as compact discs, online publications), the ISBN must appear on the title display, that is the first display page or on the screen that displays the title or its equivalent (e.g., the initial screen displayed when the content is first accessed and/or on the screen that carries the copyright notice). For eligible educational/instructional films, videos, and transparencies, the ISBN must appear on the credit titles.

If the publication is issued in a container that is an integral part of the publication (e.g., a compact disc, cassette, or diskette), the ISBN should be displayed on any labels included with that container. If it is not possible to display the ISBN on the container or its label, then the ISBN should be displayed at the bottom of the back of any permanent packaging for that container (e.g., the box, sleeve, or frame).

***Can the ISBN be represented as a bar code?***

Yes. The ISBN is already in 13-digit format and can be represented easily as a bar code. Bar coded ISBNs may assist distributors and retailers in stocking and selling

your publication. Your ISBN agency should be able to provide advice on bar code suppliers to help you show your ISBN as a bar code graphic. To maximise the benefits of bar code recognition and scanning speed it is recommended to print the bar code on the lower right of the outside back cover of the publication.

***GS1 (the global organisation responsible for product identification systems such as bar coding which is used to improve the efficiency of the supply chain) asked me to become a member. Is this mandatory?***

No. If you only want to use the ISBN in bar-coded form, you do not have to become a member. However, as GS1 provides other trade-related services, such as electronic address numbers (location codes), EDI (electronic data interchange) formats, etc. you may want to become a member. Check with GS1 for information on their services and for details of current member organisations ([www.gs1.org/contact/worldwide.php](http://www.gs1.org/contact/worldwide.php)).

**E-publications (digital publications)**

See para 9 of section 1 above.

***Do digital books qualify for ISBN?***

In fact, it is of no relevance in what medium a publication is made available. Provided it is text-based, available to the public and a monographic publication not intended to be a continuing resource (serial publication), then it is likely to qualify for ISBN assignment. Downloadable e-books, e-book apps, CD-ROMS or on line publications available on the Internet can be considered to be monographic publications.

***Do enhanced e-books qualify for ISBN?***

When an e-book is available in enhanced form and, as well as text, includes audio, video or other additional content, it will qualify for ISBN. If the e-book is also available separately without these extra elements then these are different products and should therefore have separate ISBNs.

***Do I have to identify different formats for digital publications with separate ISBNs?***

Yes, whenever anyone in the supply chain needs to identify them separately, then each product needs a unique ISBN. When there are different formats available that operate on different devices or software programs, the end user has to know what format to order. Therefore each different format has to be identified by its own ISBN.

***I sell the same e-book in EPUB format but it is available with different usage constraints– in one edition you can copy and print and in the other edition you cannot. Do I need two ISBNs?***

Yes, because these are features that have an effect on what the user can do with the publication (text-to speech, copying, printing, use on more than one device etc.) and the end user has to choose between the versions based on what he or she wants to do with it.

***I sell an EPUB and the buyer can choose from a very wide variety of features and combinations of features when he buys the book. Do I have to give an ISBN to the product that is purchased?***

No, because in this case we are talking about a customized product where the usage constraints are defined by the user during the purchase. The customized product does not qualify for ISBN at all because it is potentially unique.

***I offer an EPUB for different rental periods and the buyer can choose from different rental periods at different prices. Do I HAVE to give an ISBN for each set of renting periods?***

You CAN choose to do so, if it accommodates the requirements for identifying the specific combination of EPUB, rental period and price in the supply chain.

***Do I have to identify “master files” with a separate ISBN?***

When publishers provide a master file to a conversion service, this master file does not need its own ISBN. The publisher will need to assign ISBNs to the different versions that the provider creates, and that will be available to end customers.

***I am selling identical e-books through different e-book platforms like Amazon and Apple. Each platform puts the files into its proprietary format. Do I have to give them separate ISBNs?***

That is not necessary if the e-book platform supplies the e-books in a format that can only be bought through their own website, and the e-book platform itself does not require ISBNs. However, the publisher can choose to give ISBNs for its own purposes such as for tracking sales. In that case each ISBN should be unique to the version that is distributed by each separate platform.

***I offer an e-book conversion service for publishers. What happens if they want us to convert to different versions and the publisher did not assign separate ISBN for each version?***

Publishers should provide their conversion service with all the ISBNs that they will need to identify each of the versions that they will produce. If a publisher will not provide ISBNs to intermediaries for this purpose then, as a last resort, intermediaries may assign their own ISBNs. ISBN agencies will provide ISBN registrant elements to intermediaries for this purpose. In this case, ISBNs and related metadata should be provided back to the publisher and to the ISBN agency and other bibliographic agencies.

***I am migrating the e-books that I publish to a new version of their file format (EPUB2 to EPUB3). Do I need to give them new ISBNs?***

You do not need to give them new ISBNs when the books are no longer available in the old file format, and there is no difference in the user experience between the old version and the new version. In case both versions are on the market simultaneously, and/or the new version has different features, you will need separate ISBNs to identify both versions properly for the end user and the supply chain.

***I am migrating the e-books that I publish to another type of DRM. Do I need to give them new ISBNs?***

When you migrate to a type of DRM that changes the user's experience of the e-book you will need a new ISBN. E.g. when you migrate from no DRM to digital watermarking or another type of "social" DRM which does not intrude significantly on the user's experience, you do not need to assign separate ISBNs. When you migrate from no DRM to Adobe DRM, it means that the device on which you can read the e-book has to support Adobe DRM, and implies that you cannot read the book on just any device. In this case, you will need to assign separate ISBNs.

**Print on demand, webpages, series**

See para 10 of this manual.

***Does a print-on-demand publication get an ISBN?***

Yes. Print on demand is just a method of very short run printing.

***Does a customised print-on-demand publication get an ISBN?***

Generally, no. Publications that are available only on a limited basis, such as customised print-on-demand publications with content specifically tailored to a user's request shall not be assigned an ISBN. If a customised publication is being made available for wider sale, e.g. as a college course pack available through a college book store, then an ISBN should be assigned.

***I have a homepage on the internet. Does it require an ISBN?***

No. Publications that are intended by the publisher to be regularly updated or continued indefinitely (such as journals, magazines, newspapers, updating loose-leafs, updating websites) shall not receive an ISBN.

***How are ISBNs allocated to multi-format/multi-volume works?***

An ISBN must be allocated to the whole set of volumes of a multi-volume work; also, if the individual volumes of the set are sold separately, each volume must have its own ISBN. Even when each volume is not sold separately, the allocation of an ISBN to each volume is advisable. It facilitates the handling of returns (damaged volumes) and eliminates the possibility of confusion over specific volumes. Each volume should list all the ISBNs.

***When a publisher assembles a set of books to sell as a special offer, may they assign an ISBN to the set?***

If the ISBN is required to identify the set in the supply chain for marketing and ordering purposes then an ISBN may be assigned

***When a distributor assembles books from different publishers in a set, may they assign an ISBN from their own range to the set?***

As above, if the ISBN is required to identify the set in the supply chain for marketing and ordering purposes then an ISBN may be assigned, although use of a GTIN should be considered.

***I am publishing a course pack. How do I use ISBN?***

See para 11 of this manual

If the course pack will be available to the public (i.e. it is not restricted to the students on a particular course at a particular institution) you should assign an ISBN to the course pack as a whole. If any part is available separately, a separate ISBN must be allocated to each such part as well.

***I am publishing a series of titles. Do I need an ISBN or an ISSN?***

The series may receive an ISSN (provided it is envisaged as continuing indefinitely), while the individual items, if made available separately, may receive ISBNs.

***I publish books but also calendars, stationery, toys and many other items. As the ISBN only identifies books, what can I do about the rest?***

This material can be numbered by other numbering systems, such as GTIN (Global Trade Item numbers which can be represented as bar codes). Modern scanning equipment reads and processes the different kinds of bar-coded numbers.

***Is it possible to reassign ISBNs when the books to which they were allocated are out of print?***

No, an ISBN identifies a given title and its edition and binding for all time. Even if out of print, it will still exist in some shops, and will certainly still exist in libraries.

***Can I reassign ISBNs when the books to which they were allocated were never published at all?***

No.

***Does a price change require a new ISBN?***

No.

***Does a change of format require a new ISBN?***

Yes, different formats need different ISBNs in order, for example, that a customer who wants to buy a book in hardback rather than paperback can be confident that they will receive the correct format.

***Does a change of author's name require a new ISBN?***

Yes - for example when an author decides to use their own name rather than a pseudonym.

***I am revising a book. Does it require a new ISBN?***

A (substantial) change of text requires a new ISBN, and if revisions have been made then the reverse of the title page should state that the book is a revised edition, and the new ISBN should be printed there.

***Does a reprint without change of text or binding require a new ISBN?***

No, the original number must be retained, provided the publisher remains the same.

***I would like to issue a new ISBN for marketing reasons. Is this permissible?***

No, if there is no change of text, format or binding which would justify a new ISBN. However, a separate ISBN may be assigned if required by the supply chain (e.g.,

when a media tie-in version of the jacket is available at the same time as the original version or when there is a choice of colour for the binding, as may be the case with bibles).

***I am reprinting a book with a price change. Is a new ISBN required?***

No, a price change does not require a new ISBN.

***Do I need a new ISBN when I am reprinting a book with a new title?***

Yes, a new title requires a new ISBN.

**Co-publication, merging of publishers**

*Please see para 7 of this manual.*

***I am publishing a book with another publisher. Whose ISBN should appear on the book?***

In the case of a joint publication, both publishers are entitled to have an ISBN on the book. It should be made clear which number identifies which publisher.

However, if only one publisher is to hold stock and distribute the publication, then it is recommended that the ISBN of the publisher who is responsible for distribution appears in bar-coded form on the back cover of the book.

***I am taking over another firm which already has an ISBN registrant element. All future books will be published under my name. Can I renumber all the other firm's titles?***

Not until they are reprinted under your own publisher name or imprint and carry your publisher name.

**In our country the book-trade works mostly without computers. Do I nevertheless need ISBNs?**

*You are advised to take ISBNs as it offers following benefits-*

- *It replaces handling of long bibliographic descriptive records, thereby saves time, and reduces staff costs & copying errors.*
- *Correct use of the ISBN allows different product forms and editions of a book, whether printed or digital, to be differentiated clearly, ensuring that customers receive the version that they require*
- *Ensures visibility of the books.*

**Which agency allots ISBN in India?**

Raja Rammohun Roy National Agency (RRRNA) is the sole agency which allots ISBN in India.

**I am publishing a book in a foreign language. Should it have an ISBN of the country in whose language the book is written?**

ISBN should be applied to the National Agency of the country where the Publisher is based.

**Will people in other countries be able to search for my books in search engines in those countries? If not, how can I make this possible?**

List of allotted ISBN is available on ISBN portal (url is isbn.gov.in), under the 'Notification' field.

**I have the ISBN of a book and I want to contact the publisher. How can I retrieve information about the publisher from the ISBN?**

The information about the publishers is available with the RRRNA and can be obtained from the agency. This will only work in the case of books that have ISBNs issued from the India ISBN Agency. If, on the other hand, the ISBN is for a book that is not from an Indian publisher, then you can try searching in the Global Register of Publishers at [www.grp.isbn-international.org](http://www.grp.isbn-international.org).

**My company's postal address, telephone number, email address or website address has changed. Do I have to notify my ISBN Agency?**

Yes, you can update the desired information after logging into your ISBN account.

**I am moving my company to another country. Can I continue numbering my books with my current ISBN registrant element?**

Fresh ISBN should be obtained from the national agency of the country where the Publisher has shifted.

**I have stopped publishing, do not sell my books anymore and will not use my ISBNs any longer. Do I have to notify my designated ISBN Agency?**

The publisher should notify about discontinuation to RRRNA.

**I am applying under Author's category, will I get a separate block of ISBN?**

No, the Authors/Editors who self-publish books, are allotted only one or two ISBNs from a block, which is shared with other unrelated publishers.

**I am an Indian citizen but I live permanently in another country, can I apply for ISBN with RRRNA?**

As per the International ISBN Agency's norms, the Publisher should be based in the country in which he/she is applying from. You are advised to contact the appropriate national agency: <https://www.isbn-international.org/agencies>

**How does RRRNA decide the size of ISBN block to be allotted?**

For existing publishers, ISBN block is allotted, based on the consumption of the previous allotted ISBNs. For new publisher, block of 10 ISBN is allotted.

**How long does it take to process an ISBN application?**

The standard service time is at least 2 working days

