
Registration agencies
Since ISBN has been an ISO standard for over 40 years, many countries have already joined the system. However, since the last plenary meeting two further countries have joined – Myanmar and Bermuda. In addition, the agency in Oman formally commenced operations in 2012. There are now 151 national or regional ISBN agencies (covering more than 200 individual countries).

We produce the Publishers’ International ISBN Directory (PIID) which is published by De Gruyter in both printed and online formats. The national ISBN Agencies submit data to us directly for inclusion. The data comprises details of all the allocations made to registrants (publishers) though not of the individual ISBNs from within those registrant elements that the publishers assign to specific publications. In 2012, PIID included almost one million ISBN registrant elements and publisher contact details.

ISBNs and digital publications
Issues surrounding the correct identification of e-books are still a major and very active source of discussion. In February 2013 BISG published a revised version of its Policy Statement: Best Practices for Identifying Digital Products. The International ISBN Agency participated in the working group, and while there is much common ground there are some aspects of the policy that continue to be a disappointment from the Standard’s point of view.

Users’ Manual
The 2012 edition of the Users’ Manual is now available in Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. Further languages are in preparation.

Revision of the Standard
We will consider carefully whether a revision of the standard to incorporate some new definitions, to update examples and to give further instructions on assignment to digital publications is now appropriate. The next Systematic Review is due in 2013, but it may be prudent to commence the process in advance of that.

Database and web developments
The International ISBN Agency is seeking to replace its existing database and public facing website and has appointed a vendor to undertake the development work. This will provide both a much-needed facelift for the ISBN website and also allow us to have a more robust
registrant element allocation tracking database. We will use the changes as an opportunity to encourage more national registration agencies to use our allocation management database rather than to incur the expense of developing their own software. We anticipate that the new database and website will be live from November this year.

**Use of ISBN as part of a website or company name**

It is not possible to “trade mark” ISBN as it is a term that has now passed into common usage. However, we continue to come across websites using ISBN as part of the domain name implying that they are legitimate agencies assigning ISBNs. We have registered a number of domain names recently in order to try to stop this practice spreading further. We will also take action against infringements where the organisation is purporting to be an official agency and to issue ISBNs or to appear to be connected with the International ISBN Agency when it is not.

**Meetings**

Regional meetings took place in Bogotá, Colombia (for the Latin American registration agencies) and in Zagreb, Croatia (for the Balkan registration agencies). The Nordic-Baltic group held a regional meeting in Chisinau, Moldova timed to coincide with the Annual General Meeting of all ISBN registration agencies. There were 57 delegates at the AGM representing 39 registration agencies. Dedicated training seminars took place in Cairo, Egypt and Muscat, Oman.

Stella Griffiths  
Executive Director, International ISBN Agency  
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