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International ISBN Agency
Agence Internationale ISBN
Agencia Internacional ISBN
Международное агентство ISBN

*International Standard Numbering System for Books, Software,
Mixed Media etc. in Publishing, Distribution and Library Practice*



ISO 2108 International Standard Book Number – Report of the Registration Authority (International ISBN Agency) to TC46

The International ISBN Agency continues to meet its obligations as the registration authority for ISO 2108:2005.

Registration agencies

Since ISBN has been an ISO standard for over 40 years, many countries have already joined the system. A new agency based at the National Library of Rwanda is not yet operational, though we hope that it will be soon. We have also recently received expressions of interest from Iraq, Somalia and Yemen in setting up national ISBN agencies though these are at a very early stage.

Publishers' International ISBN Directory (PIID)

In previous years we produced the Publishers' International ISBN Directory (PIID) which was published by De Gruyter in both printed and online formats. (This publication was available at a fee). The national ISBN Agencies submitted data to us directly for inclusion in the directory comprising 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 2014, PIID included the ISBN registrant elements and contact details of 1.1 million publishers from 221 countries and territories. Our contract with De Gruyter has now ceased and the last edition of PIID was published in late 2014.

Global Register of Publishers (GRP)

To replace the PIID publication, the International ISBN Agency has developed a free, online searchable resource – the Global Register of Publishers (www.grp-isbn-international.org).

The Global Register went live in October 2014 and collates information provided by many of the 151 national ISBN agencies around the world about the publishers that have received ISBNs or ISBN prefixes. Anyone can use the GRP to look up the details of any publisher who has received an ISBN allocation and for whom the data has been made available by the relevant national ISBN agency. A limited amount of information about the publisher is available without further obligation; more advanced searches and more detailed publisher contact information is available to users who register at no cost using the simple, online form. The GRP contains details for 1.55 million publishers.

Users' Manual

The Users' Manual is now available in 16 languages as well as English: Albanian, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Danish, Dutch, Estonian, French, German, Hungarian, Persian, Portuguese, Russia, Serbian, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish. Further languages are in preparation.

Revision of the Standard

The ISBN Standard was due to come up for Systematic Review in 2013, but at the TC46/SC9 plenary meeting in Paris in June 2013 the International ISBN Agency proposed that the Standard should be

revised since it was already clearly justified for a number of reasons including developments in digital and multi-media products. This proposal was agreed and a resolution to that effect was passed at that meeting.

The Working Group comprises thirty six experts and one organisation in liaison. The project is on the 3 year track. The Convenor of the Working Group is Stella Griffiths, Executive Director of the International ISBN Agency.

So far the Working Group has met 7 times by WebEx, and held a face to face meeting during the TC46 Plenary week in Washington in 2014. There will be a second face to face meeting during the TC46 Plenary week in Beijing in 2015 at which it is hoped that comments to the Committee Draft will be available for discussion.

The Committee Draft was opened for ballot on 3 February and will close on 3 April, with the DIS due towards the end of the year.

Liaison

The International ISBN Agency has category A liaison status with TC46 and with TC46's Subcommittees SC4 and SC9.

Linked Content Coalition (LCC)

The International ISBN Agency became a member of LCC in December 2014. The LCC is a consortium of standards bodies that represent important identifiers not just in publishing but in the audio-visual and photographic industries as well. Its aim is to act on matters of common interest between different standards bodies, ultimately to "facilitate and expand the legitimate use of content in the digital network through the effective use of interoperable identifiers and metadata."

Meetings

For the Balkan ISBN registration agencies, a regional meeting took place in Cetinje, Montenegro in May 2014 and for the Arab world a regional meeting took place in Amman, Jordan in June 2014. In 2014 our Annual General Meeting took place in Istanbul with both ISMN and ISSN also holding their meetings during the same week and at the same venue. In addition, delegates from the China ISBN Agency visited the International ISBN Agency in December 2014. We are hoping to arrange a meeting of South East Asian registration agencies in September 2015 and there is also likely to be a meeting of the CERLALC agencies (Latin America).

Stella Griffiths
Executive Director, International ISBN Agency
March 2015