From: Todd Carpenter  
ISO/TC46/SC9 Secretary


Source: Brian Green, Executive Director, International ISBN Agency

Project(s): ISO 2108, International Standard Book Number

Status:

Additional information:

REQUESTED ACTION
Circulated to P- and O-members, and to technical committees and organizations in liaison for:

☑️ information

☐ discussion at  
[venue/date of meeting]

☐ comments by  
[date]

☐ voting (P-members only by:  
[date]

P-members of the technical committee or subcommittee concerned have an obligation to vote.

With more than 170 countries and 160 national or regional registration agencies in the International ISBN System, membership has more or less reached a plateau with very few new applications for national agencies.

The International ISBN Agency is providing an ongoing programme of regional training courses for agencies leading, it is hoped, to the establishment of regional “self-help” groups and the improvement of bibliographic databases.

The 13-digit ISBN is now totally implemented and the International ISBN Agency has now assigned its first 979 group prefix to France (979-10).


The identification of e-books has become a topic of intense debate. ISO 2108 clearly states that “Each different format of an electronic publication that is published and made separately available shall be given a separate ISBN.” Some major publishers are, however, only assigning an ISBN to the generic e-book file that is then converted by intermediaries into various formats. The result has been multiple formats appearing with a single ISBN, causing considerable confusion to the supply chain. The International ISBN Agency is encouraging publishers to provide ISBNs for each e-book format but is allowing third intermediaries to assign their own ISBNs to e-books where publishers do not provide their own. The International ISBN Agency is investigating whether or not there is a requirement for a separate identifier at the generic release level, comparable to the ISRC or GRiD in the music world.

The Publishers International ISBN Directory (PIID) the annual directory of around 920,000 publishers and their ISBN prefixes edited by the International ISBN Agency and published by de Gruyter, will this year become an online publication with more frequent updates. Individual ISBN agencies can enter and maintain publisher data online as an alternative to sending in batch data.

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