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ISO/TC 46/SC 9 N 296 (revised)

Revised to correct dates of ISBN Panel meeting
2000-09-29

To: Members of ISO/TC 46/SC 9
Selected organizations in liaison

From: ISO/TC 46/SC 9 Secretariat

SUBJECT: Position paper from the U.S. ISBN Agency on developing the ISBN for the digital environment

The attached document is a revised version of the U.S. ISBN Agency's proposal for expanding and adapting the ISBN system to accommodate publications issued in digital form. The first version of this proposal was distributed as part of a presentation by Mr. Albert Simmonds during the TC 46 Open Session in May 2000.

This revised proposal, dated August 2000, will be discussed at the ISBN Advisory Panel's meeting on October 22-24, 2000. It is being distributed to other parties, including ISO/TC46/SC9, for review and comment in advance of that meeting.

Since the issues raised in this proposal will involve changes to the third edition of the ISBN standard (ISO 2108:1992), the Secretariat intends to inform the ISBN Advisory Panel that ISO/TC 46/SC 9 is ready to establish a Working Group to revise ISO 2108 pending the outcome of their discussions.

ACTION REQUESTED:

1. For review by interested parties within ISO's member countries (in particular by national ISBN and ISSN agencies and trade organizations representing the book industry);
2. For comments, if desired. Comments should be submitted via e-mail to all of the following addresses, **preferably before October 22-24, 2000** when the ISBN Advisory Panel meets in Berlin:
 - To the ISO/TC 46/SC 9 Secretariat at: iso.tc46.sc9@nlc-bnc.ca
 - Copied to the U.S. ISBN Agency at: albert.simmonds@worldnet.att.net
 - Copied to the International ISBN Agency at: hartmut.walravens@sbb.spk-berlin.de

Thank you.

With regards,
[original signed by]

Jane M. Thacker
ISO/TC 46/SC 9 Secretary.

Last revised: August 2000

THE DIGITAL WORLD AND THE ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF ISBN

A Position Paper Developed by the US ISBN Agency

RR Bowker, New Providence, New Jersey, USA

Since the last meeting of the International Advisory Panel of ISBN Agencies (October 1999), the US ISBN Agency has sought the advice of industry experts in identifying and proposing ways of dealing with issues facing ISBN in the digital world. The following represents a discussion of our work to date.

This document has been provided to

- The International ISBN Agency Berlin (www.isbn.spk-berlin.de) for consideration by the International Advisory Panel, as well as to the international network of ISBN registration agencies
- ISO Technical Committee 46, Subcommittee 9 (ISO/TC46/SC9: www.nlc-bnc.ca/iso/tc46sc9)
- The National Information Standards Organization (NISO: www.niso.org)
- Book Industry Study Group (BISG: www.bisg.org)
- Book Industry Communication (BIC: www.bic.org.uk)

We will keep our constituency in the United States informed of these developments.

We welcome your input on the further development of these ideas. We would also like to be advised if we have neglected to identify and address any other relevant points.

This document will be discussed at the next meeting of the ISBN Panel (October 2000), after which ISBN International will begin to work with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) on an update to the ISBN standard. (See section VIII of this document.)

(I) ISBN PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED & SOLD AS DIGITAL FILES

The definition of new edition is normally based on one of two criteria:

1. A change in the kind of packaging involved: the hard cover edition, the paper cover edition and the library-binding edition would each get a separate ISBN. The same applies to different formats of digital files.

2. A change in the text, not including packaging art or minor changes such as correcting a spelling error. Again, this criterion applies whether the publication is print on paper or digital.

The basic guidelines for assigning ISBNs to digital files have been established:

1. Format/means of delivery are irrelevant in deciding whether a product needs an ISBN (i.e. if the content itself meets the requirement, it gets an ISBN, no matter what the format of the delivery system).
2. Each format of a digital publication represents a new edition and should have a separate ISBN.

To date the US ISBN Agency has identified the following information regarding digital editions that should receive ISBNs when they contain text-based monograph publications:

FORMAT

EVB = EveryBook
LBS = Librius
MLL = Millennium
PPT = PalmPilot
RKT = Rocket eBook
SBK = SoftBook
GLS = Glassbook
TXT = ASCII Text
HTM = HTML
WPD = Word Perfect
WRD = MS Word
PDF = Portable Document Format
RTF = Rich Text Format
OEB = Open eBook
MSR = Microsoft Reader
MP3 = MP3 spoken word files
WAV = Wave (audio) files
ION = ION Systems Reader

Please note:

FILE SIZE

In KB

WORD COUNT

In real numbers

(II) METADATA

The forms that Bowker uses for collecting information about ISBN products include profiles of the metadata needed by the customers for these products. Certain categories of metadata are always relevant: the title of the product is needed whether the book is printed or on audiotape. But the number of pages is relevant only to the printed version, while running time is relevant to the audio version.

The International ISBN Agency is currently establishing the core metadata needed for both print on paper and digital ISBN products in conjunction with EDItEUR International (www.editeur.org)

(III) AUTHORITY TO ASSIGN ISBNs

The publisher, not the distributor of the files or any other entity in the supply chain, is responsible for the management of the ISBN assignment process. It should be noted that when a distributor acquires the appropriate rights it becomes a publisher.

(IV) THE EVOLVING CONCEPT OF PUBLISHER

The growth of publishing on the Internet has resulted in an explosion of small publishing enterprises that publish a limited number of monographs online. The US ISBN Agency would like to encourage this development, and a policy is evolving that will provide ISBNs to small publishers (of both print on paper and digital monographs) on a cost effective basis to facilitate their entry into the ISBN system.

(V) PRINT ON DEMAND PUBLICATIONS

A special instance of digital files includes those used for On Demand publishing.

The following are categories of On Demand publications that have been identified jointly by the Managing Agent of Book And Serial Industry Communications (BASIC: www.bisg.org) and the US ISBN Agency (www.bowker.com/standards/ or www.isbn.org/):

1. A copy of some edition of a title reproduced on demand via rudimentary photocopy, the text of which is exactly the same as the edition copied, while physical aspects of the book are different.
2. A copy of some edition of a title, reproduced on demand via the new reproduction technology, by a publisher that has bought On Demand rights to another publisher's title.
3. A copy produced via the new technology by an organization other than the publisher on behalf of the publisher (e.g., no rights have changed hands), where the On Demand

edition takes the place in the market of the publisher's printed edition in the same format (e.g. trade paper to trade paper).

4. A copy produced by the publisher.
5. A copy produced by a retailer.

Of the above, categories “1” and “2” should be given a new ISBN. This ISBN should be applied by the rights holder of the On Demand edition, who may or may not be the original publisher.

It is recommended that EDItEUR devise a subset of On Demand metadata as part of the core ISBN activity currently underway.

(VI) THE USE OF ISBNs TO IDENTIFY PARTS OF MONOGRAPHS AND ONGOING PUBLICATIONS

Given the proliferation of the sale and distribution of discrete parts of monographic publications (chapters, etc.), the US ISBN Agency recommends the amendment of the ISBN standard to allow for the assignment of ISBNs to these subsets when they are put into the supply chain by their publishers.

Note: We do not see any conflict between the use of the ISBN (ISO 2108) as the assigned identifier for monographic publications that have entered the supply chain independent of their original appearance as parts of larger works and the NISO standard:

Book Item and Content Identifier (BICI--which identifies parts of monographs that are not independent of their original package.) For further information on the BICI, please see

<http://www.niso.org/standards.html#Drafts>

(VII) THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD TEXTUAL WORK CODE

Over the past few years the music and movie industries have been engaged in developing identifiers for works. These codes have potential uses both in rights management processes and in e-commerce. It has been deemed necessary to establish a similar kind of work code for text creations, as well. This code is being developed by the International Organization for Standardization Technical Committee 46/Subcommittee 9 (ISO TC 46/SC 9.) The US Agency will keep its constituency informed of the progress of this activity.

(VIII) EXPANSION OF ISBN TO THIRTEEN DIGITS: PROPOSAL FROM BASIC

For many years publishers have created Bookland EAN bar codes for their products. These codes are created by adding the prefix “978” to the beginning of the ISBN and updating the check digit. The 978 prefix is one of two prefixes allowed for use in the international book-publishing sector by contract with EAN International Brussels (www.ean.be) and the Uniform

Code Council, Lawrenceville, New Jersey (www.uc-council.org). (The other prefix, 979, has been used to date only for published sheet music.)

For the past two meetings of the International Advisory Panels of ISBN Agencies (1998 and 1999), there has been a discussion of utilizing this bar code scheme as the basis for expanding the ISBN to thirteen digits. The Managing Agent of Book And Serial Industry Communications (BASIC), the New York based publishing industry standards organization has led this discussion, at the invitation of the Director of the International ISBN Agency. The essence of the proposed scheme is that all ISBNs currently in circulation, and all those issued until the supply of ten digit ISBNs runs out, will be considered "978" ISBNs. Then we will begin to reissue the same ISBNs, but with the prefix "979", thus insuring their uniqueness.

There are several reasons that argue in favor of this development:

1. It will incorporate the numbering of sheet music (via the ISMN) into the overall ISBN scheme.
2. It will make the ISBN compatible with both the EAN and U.P.C. codes.
3. It will greatly increase the pool of ISBNs available to publishers.

It has been proposed that we do away with both the country/regional identifier and the publisher identifier, turning the ISBN into a completely "dumb" number. This change would also greatly increase the number of ISBNs available for product numbering. This change will lead to problems in managing ranges of ISBNs given to publishers unless a management scheme based on logical divisions is set up. The US Agency (see proposal below) is in the process of setting up such a scheme.

The following timetable has been proposed for the development of the thirteen digit ISBN:

October 1999-April 2001:	Consideration of the proposal by the International Advisory Panel and by ISO
May 2001:	Approval of the modified standard by ISBN
January 1, 2005:	All organizations in the ISBN chain to be thirteen digit compliant

It should be noted that the Uniform Code Council is following this same timetable for requiring that everyone in the North American supply chain be able to accommodate at least a thirteen-digit item identifier in his or her computer systems.

(IX) EXPANSION OF ISBN TO THIRTEEN DIGITS: PROPOSED ADDITION TO THE BASIC PROPOSAL (FROM THE US ISBN AGENCY)

- The US Agency recommends that the International ISBN Agency petitions EAN/UCC for at minimum one 2 digit prefix (preferably more), thus allowing for a gain of at least one order of magnitude over the BASIC proposal.

(X) ACTIONABILITY/ RESOLVABILITY

Identifiers such as ISBNs and ISTCs become actionable when utilized in the context of resolver systems such as the Handle System and Open Names Services. The US ISBN Agency is committed to insuring that the identifiers under its stewardship remain compatible with such systems.

CONCLUSION

It is the US Agency's hope that this paper leads to a discussion that – in the end – creates a more durable ISBN for the future. Please feel free to comment.

Thank You.

The US ISBN Agency
15 August 2000

E-MAIL ADDRESSES FOR COMMENTS

Comments on this paper should be sent to all of the following e-mail addresses:

- To the U.S. ISBN Agency at: albert.simmonds@worldnet.att.net
- To the International ISBN Agency at: hartmut.walravens@sbb.spk-berlin.de
- To the ISO/TC 46/SC 9 Secretariat at: iso.tc46.sc9@nlc-bnc.ca