101 Primer: The Roadmap of Identifiers and the Business Cases for Their Usage

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Overview

- Welcome
- Who is BISG?
- The identifiers that matter to the book industry
- What they do (or don’t)
- The future of identification

Improving the ratio of signal-to-noise in the book industry

BISG’s Vision Statement

To become the book industry leadership organization in a time of great transformation by helping to build and support a new industry network enabling new opportunities for profitable growth.
The ID roadmap

What’s an identifier do?

- Books (products)
- People (authors)
- Abstractions of real things (works)

Which are the important ones to the book industry?

**ISBN-13**

**ISTC**

**ISNI**

The business purpose always trumps...

...because it solves a tangible problem

A short history of identifiers

In the beginning there was . . .
A pragmatic solution to real problems in the supply chain

Linear, linked, transparent, navigable, one dimensional

In 1966 he helped put books on the shelf for W.H. Smith

Professor Gordon Foster
Fellow Emeritus
Founder of the ISBN Standard

Identifies a specific physical manifestation of the book, hardcover, paperback mass market edition, etc.
Assigned to tradable products

The truth about implementation

- Many identifiers are underutilized
- Implementation requires pain and persuasion

The implementation of the ISBN took some persuasion

Identifiers take on meaning when they solve real problems and create real value

“A necessary requirement for selling your publications through booksellers, wholesalers and distributors is the assignment of unique ISBN numbers for each title,” said a powerful retail chain.
Books want to be found

What is an identifier then?

▶ Signal!

Proof of existence: ISBN therefore I am

And identifiers at work evolve with the world around them

“Plenty of numbers, right? Actually, no. We’re running out of ISBNs under this system. The solution is to move to the new, improved 13-digit”
GDSN: A book by the numbers

Product identifier relationships in a synchronized world

The future is now: Do you know where your products are?

And, back to the future . . .

A tool for discovery

Consumer empowerment
What is ISTC?

- The International Standard Text Code
  - now an ISO (21047)
- An identifier for creative textual works
  - prose, poetry, lyrics, screenplays, scripts
- These are abstract entities
  - independent of binding-format-wrapper
- Not a supply-chain identifier for products

One ISTC per work

- On one creative textual work
  - with a single ISTC
- We hang
  - many “manifestations”
    - or products
    - each with an ISBN

What the signal looks like

- A02-2010-31F4CB2C-B
- The magic of hexadecimals...
  - 4,096 available registration agencies
  - each can register up to 4,294,967,296 annually
  - annual capacity 17,592,186,044,416 works
- Anyone (with some authority) can register

Use cases from a publisher

- ISTC links all manifestations of a work—whole or in part—directly and unambiguously.
- ISTC links all collateral material—marketing, promotional, advertising to all manifestations of the work.
- ISTC accounts for sales reporting & royalty reporting rollups as well as subrights income.

More use cases from a publisher

- The Publisher determines that a graphic novel manifestation of a work should carry the same ISTC as the hardcover manifestation of the same work, even though the ISTC User Manual would consider the graphic novel a derivation.
- Clearly define what constitutes a textual work. Is a children’s board book with only illustrations and the numbers 1-10 considered a textual work?
- ISTC is or is not a work identifier?

Use cases from the author

- Who, when and how to request an ISTC registration is clearly defined. Roles and responsibilities are unambiguous.
- All stake holders, large publishers, small publishers and content creators have equal ability to register an ISTC. There are no technical barriers to entry, such as the ability to compile and transmit ONIX messages.
- Registration rules are flexible enough to be clearly applied to the constantly evolving array of digital manifestations.
Use cases from the retailer

- Have one master record with rich metadata for the work, with listings of formats as separate, thus reducing the number of title records that would need to be imported.
- To be able to link all the manifestations of a work across publishers.
  - (This would only be useful for public domain titles that might be published by multiple companies.)

And finally, ISNI

- ISNI – International Standard Name Identifier
- A Creator (Contributor) Identifier
- Purpose
  - Will enable the identification of Public Identities of parties involved throughout the media content industries in the creation, production, management, and content distribution chains.
  - May include authors, illustrators, artists, editors, publishers, collecting agencies, community groups, service organizations, fictional characters, etc.

Getting involved with BISG and identifiers

- BISAC Identification Committee: A center of excellence
- ISBN implementation
- ISBN-13
- Identifiers for e-books
- International Standard Text Code (ISTC)
- ISNI
- GDSN

Thank you!
For more information on BISG, visit our website at www.bisg.org