

Guidelines for the Implementation of 13-Digit ISMNs

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Introduction

Since its inception in 1993, the International Standard Music Number (ISMN) serves as an identification system for the publishing industry of notated music and trade. An ISMN accompanies a published notation from its production and onwards throughout the supply and distribution chain.

The ISMN system serves as a key element of ordering and inventory systems for publishers, booksellers, wholesalers, libraries and other organisations. It is the basis for collecting data on new and forthcoming editions of notated music publications for directories used throughout the trade. The use of ISMN also facilitates rights management and the monitoring of sales data for the publishing industry.

The revised ISO standard, due to be published in early 2008, represents the first change there has been to the structure of the ISMN since its inception. To facilitate the continued smooth operation of a supply chain using this identifier, all participants in the trade of editions of notated music will need to ensure that their systems are able to accommodate the new number structure without disruption when it is brought into effect in the beginning of 2008. Every system in use that carries the ISMN, internal as well as those used for external communication, will need to be reviewed; as will the display of numbers on publications and in related documentation.

These implementation guidelines do not attempt to solve every possible problem that might arise. Many of the issues that will emerge will only be able to be resolved by individual discussion with users, between trading partners, and with systems providers. These guidelines exist to help those confronting the change to know what it is necessary to achieve by 2008 and give general guidance on how to approach particular issues and identify other sources of guidance (see *Useful Links and Further Sources of Information*, below).

Number structure

The new ISMN will consist of 13 digits: the 3-digit prefix 979 that identifies the notated music industry, followed by the core 9-digit number and the check digit that validates the internal integrity of the whole number. By enlarging the number from 10 to 13 digits starting with 979 and the currently used letter 'M' being replaced by 0 (zero) it will also be identical to the EAN 'Musicland' 13-digit code that already appears encoded in the bar code printed on the back of the notation.

It is essential that all parts of the industry are ready to work with 13-digit ISMNs from early 2008, as all notations published after that date must carry 13-digit ISMNs.

Retrospective conversion

Publishers will need to recalculate all their ISMNs and accommodate the new number format in their systems. This will include ISMNs for all titles in print, probably all or

most out of print titles for which orders or other enquiries might be received, and for all outstanding unallocated ISMNs supplied by local agencies.

Publishers will not be expected to sticker their stock with 13-digit ISMN barcodes as the bar code will remain the same and the Musicland EAN13 printed below the barcode will be the same number as the 13-digit ISMN (although without hyphenation).

Retailers will need to process 13-digit ISMNs for ordering, invoices and other functions from 1 January 2008. Most retailers'/booksellers' systems will already be capable of handling 13-digit product numbers used by the EAN system; the ability to read and process an identical number structure for notations and for other merchandise without the risk of ambiguity should be a considerable benefit. Manual stock control and other systems may require conversions to be made from 10- to 13-digit ISMNs.

Libraries and library systems

Libraries and library system vendors will need to support both existing 10-digit ISMNs and new 13-digit ISMNs.

It is not necessary to retrospectively convert the ISMNs held in bibliographic records, but record formats must be able to hold 13-digit as well as 10-digit ISMNs as soon as possible. When a purchase order is based on a bibliographic record containing only a 10-digit ISMN, the ISMN must be converted to 13-digits in the purchase transaction records.

Existing references to notations citing 10-digit ISMNs will continue to be used by library patrons indefinitely. Patrons must be able to find bibliographic information in library catalogues by searching with either ISMN format for all 10-digit ISMNs and those 13-digit ISMNs, regardless of the form of the ISMN in the bibliographic record. This will require changes to indexes and search interface software.

Libraries that provide for patrons and staff to search other library catalogues and other information sources through a single user interface will need to consider the impact of changes to accommodate 13-digit ISMNs at either end.

Systems that merge and de-duplicate search results from multiple sources using ISMNs will need to allow for different records carrying different forms of the same ISMN. Conversely, libraries whose catalogues are accessible for search via remote client systems will also need to consider the impact of changes to those catalogues.

Libraries will need to consider the effect of changes in both their systems and in remote systems in respect of links to and from a variety of content and services based on ISMNs. These may include catalogue enrichments such as jacket images, tables of contents, summaries and reviews, as well as web-based book retailers, reading list systems, link servers, the corporate portal, the Virtual Learning Environment and access to the full text of e-publications.

Within the administration modules of library systems there may need to be changes such as form field lengths, validation routines and screen and print layouts. Interlibrary loan systems may depend on ISMNs for matching. There may be software that uses ISMNs for matching and de-duplicating bibliographic records when they are imported either online or in batches.

Libraries' systems will need to work with 13-digit ISMNs for all aspects of publication purchasing, including all transactions with booksellers/retailers, by January 2008.

Librarians and their system suppliers should be co-ordinating with notation suppliers and appropriate trade organisations to establish transitional arrangements as soon as possible. Standard EDI formats such as EDIFACT provide for both ISMN (i.e. 10-digit) and EAN, so both elements could be exchanged for a transitional period. It should be noted that these considerations apply not only to printed notations but also digital and all other materials identified by ISMN.

Although proprietary barcoding of accession numbers (i.e. individual copies) of notations will not change, barcode scanners that are used for data entry or search input of ISMNs from the EAN barcode, which currently output 10-digit ISMNs, will need to be re-programmed.

Timing for the use of 13-digit ISMNs

There is likely to be a fairly long transition period following up to the adoption of 13-digit ISMNs on 1 January 2008; the speed with which the industry moves forward will depend on the requirements of individual trading partners. But by end of 2008, at the latest, the transition to the 13-digit ISMN should worldwide be completed.

The bar code symbol on the back cover of the notation will be unchanged, except that the eye-readable number should be changed for titles published after 1 January 2008 to the full 13 digits preceded by the letters ISMN, with hyphenation retained for clarity. Publishers and printers using their own software for creating bar codes should ensure that it is adapted to this new requirement and should check that third-party suppliers of film masters or electronic bar code data have correctly interpreted this requirement.

Responsibility for changes

Organisations are recommended to review all existing systems – manual and electronic - as soon as possible, develop an action plan and allocate resources as necessary. It is recommended that a senior executive in each organisation be nominated to oversee the necessary transition in all relevant areas. These will primarily affect systems, but they will also impact on editorial processes, sales and marketing, design and production departments as well as royalty and accounting functions in publishing houses.

A possible – but not exhaustive – list of systems that might be affected in a publishing organisation is as follows:

- ISMN allocation;
- product information;
- editorial management;
- production systems;
- e-Book supply systems;
- order fulfilment/warehouse management;
- accounting;
- rights and contracts;
- rights management and royalty systems.

Booksellers will need to review, among other possible areas:

- ordering systems;
- stock control;
- point of sale systems;
- accounting.

Libraries will need to review:

- Acquisitions systems including transaction messages with trading partners
- Cataloguing and other bibliographic data entry systems
- Interlibrary loan systems
- Bibliographic record importing routines
- Barcode scanners
- Local catalogues
- Information portal / metasearch systems
- Interoperability with remote information sources and clients
- System links to and from remote content and services
- Other ISMN-related functions and systems.

Communication with trading partners

Clear decisions, and communication of them, about timing and methods of implementation are crucial to the smooth introduction of the new standard. All organisations are encouraged as part of their own internal reviews to share their implementation plans and timetables with all their trading partners and ensure that those partners are also taking similar implementation measures.

FAQs

What happens to ISMNs that have already been obtained by a publisher but are not yet assigned?

The publisher should continue to use these until they are exhausted but must convert the number formats to the new 13-digit standard, prefixed by 979, and replace the M- by 0- (zero).

e.g. ISMN M-345-24680-5

is converted to

ISMN 979-0-345-24680-5

Will new ISMNs have to be assigned to products that have already been published?

No. Existing ISMNs should be converted from the 10-digit format to the 13-digit format (prefixed by 979) by 2008. This will apply to records for any title for which transactions may occur and should therefore include out of print titles as well as those currently in the catalogue.

For barcoded notations: The ISMN and bar code on notations will not need to be changed until the publication is reprinted as the bar code already represents the EAN13 which is the same number as the new 13-digit ISMN.

May publishers re-use existing 10-digit ISMNs on a new publication adding a 979 prefix?

No. The addition of a 979 prefix to a previously used ISMN does not make a new ISMN and for that reason must not be assigned to a new publication.

Will I be able to communicate with trading partners using 10-digit ISMNs by end of 2008?

By 2008 the ISMN will be a 13-digit number and all mechanical systems will have to be able to accommodate its use in that form. Commercial systems may not support 10-digit ISMNs after that. In the transitional period, however, arrangements may be made between trading partners to support both formats.

Will publishers have to change to 13-digit ISMNs or can they continue using the 10-digit ones?

Publishers will have to change all their systems to accommodate the 13-digit ISMN by end of 2008. It is essential that mechanical systems are adapted by that date to enable communication with trading partners to continue without interruption.

If our company still has lots of 10-digit ISMNs, why do we need to reformat them as 13-digit ISMNs?

The International ISMN standard is changing. The ISMN system drives all trading in the industry internationally and the allocation of ISMN is organised on an international basis.

Should both a 10-digit and a 13-digit ISMN be printed in a publication?

For notations published in 2008 and after only the 13-digit ISMN should be printed. However, for barcoded titles published after 1 January 2008, publishers should print the 13-digit ISMN in eye-readable form above the bar code on the back cover of their publications, retaining the correct hyphenated structure.

Useful links

ISO ISMN Web Page:

http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=43173

International ISMN Agency:

<http://ismn-international.org>