



Are YOU
ready
for the
new
ISBN?

ISBN-10 to change in 2007

With effect from 1 January 2007, the current 10-digit International Standard Book Number (ISBN) will change to a 13-digit number.

In South Africa, the International Standard Number (ISN) Agency based at the National Library of South Africa is responsible for allocating ISBNs to monographic publications. Under the guidance and leadership of the National Library, an ISBN-13 Task Team (in South Africa) was convened to guide and support parties involved in the changeover.

People would ask, why a 13-digit number?

The numbering capacity of the ISBN system is being depleted at a much faster rate than it was anticipated when the system was designed for printed books in the late 1960s. The remedy is to increase the numbering capacity of the ISBN system, so that it remains viable for international trade far into the future.

This will be done by pre-fixing the existing 10-digit ISBN with the three character product code for books - i.e. "978"/"979" and the recalculation of the check digit, which is the last character in the ISBN.

The 13-digit ISBN is the exact equivalent of the Bookland EAN (European Article Number) bar code. Books then already accommodate both the 10- and 13-digit ISBNs since they are embedded in the bar code.

Who will be affected?

The changing of the ISBN will ultimately affect everyone in the supply chain who currently uses the ISBN, such as publishers, booksellers and libraries. This will include the distributors that record and exchange ISBN in manual and automated systems areas. The conversion to the 13-digit system has an impact on design and production departments and editorial, sales, marketing and accounting functions and cataloguing systems.

In South Africa

The representative Task Team was involved in the ISBN-13 change over activities since 2004. This includes input regarding the revision of the standard that specifies the ISBN, *ISO 2108:2005 - Information and Documentation: International Standard Book Number*, which was published in May 2005. This serves as the official ISBN standard from 2007 and beyond. It has also been accepted as a South African National Standard, which is available from the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS).

It is predicted that 13-digit ISBNs will appear in the retail chain **BEFORE** 1 January 2007. In compliance with the specification that both 10- and 13-digit ISBNs should be traceable and retrievable, as stated in the International ISBN Agency's *Guidelines for Implementation*, both the 10- and 13-digit ISBN will be accommodated as follows:

Before 1 January 2007

- The national ISN Agency provides the 10-digit ISBN with an option of converting to the 13-digit numbers.
- Publishers print both the 10- and 13-digit ISBNs on the title page verso (i.e. imprint page) preceded by the phrase "ISBN-13" or "ISBN-10" in the following order:
ISBN-13: 978-0-624-02126-1
ISBN-10: 0-624-02126-2
- Only the 10-digit ISBN displays above the bar code symbol with the Bookland EAN below.
- In systems, the 13-digit ISBN is displayed in the field for the GS1 code (formerly EAN) (because it is still the GS1 code and not an ISBN), while the 10-digit ISBN is input in the valid ISBN field (because the 10-digit ISBN is still the valid ISBN till 31 December 2006).

1 January 2007 onwards

- The ISN Agency assigns 13-digit ISBNs only.
- Publishers only print the 13-digit ISBNs on their monographic publications and replace the 10-digit ISBN in the eye-readable strip above the bar code symbol with the 13-digit ISBN to display as follows:
ISBN 978-0-624-02126-1.
- Systems are now able to incorporate the 13-digit ISBN, displayed in the valid field for an ISBN, while the 10-digit ISBN is input in the invalid ISBN field (because the ISBN standard now specifies the 13-character ISBN and no longer a 10-digit number).

Another important party with specific reference to the retail chain is GS1 South Africa (Global Standards 1), previously known as EAN South Africa. GS1 South Africa is responsible for the standardised application of the bar code number and symbol. As a result of international and national agreements between ISBN and GS1, publishers are still required to consult with GS1 South Africa on the display of bar codes on their publications.

The National Library of South Africa, as the national depository of the published material in the country, has a key collection of South African published documentary heritage and makes it accessible through its work as the national bibliographic agency according to national and international standards. The National Library's good collection enables it to position itself as a leading national library and information centre of excellence in Africa.

For further information about the National Library of South Africa, visit the website on

<http://www.nlsa.ac.za>.

Frequently asked questions on ISBN-13

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

New ISBNs will not have to be assigned to products that have already been published. Publishers should convert the existing ISBNs from a 10-digit to the 13-digit format by January 2007. This applies to records for out of print titles as well as those currently in a publisher's catalogue. The ISBN and the bar code on books will not need to be changed until the book is reprinted as the bar code already represents the EAN 13, which is identical to the new 13-digit ISBN.

May a publisher re-use the existing 10-digit ISBN on a new publication by adding a 978 prefix?

A publisher may not re-use the existing 10-digit ISBN on a new publication by adding a 978 prefix as this does not make a new ISBN.

Will we be able to communicate with the trading partners using the 10-digit ISBNs after 1 January 2007?

After 1 January 2007, the ISBN will be a 13-digit number and all electronic systems will have to be able to accommodate that form. Commercial systems will not support the 10-digit ISBN after 1 January 2007. During the transitional period, arrangements may be made between the trading partners to support both formats.

What happens to the ISBNs 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.

EXAMPLE:
ISBN 1-873671-00-8

is converted to
ISBN 978-1-873671-00-9

Will publishers have to change to the 13-digit ISBN or can they continue to use the 10-digit ISBN?

Publishers are encouraged to convert to the 13-digit ISBN not later than 1 January 2007. This will ensure that the ISBNs remain unique when the additional 979 prefix comes into use at a future date. Technical systems must be ready for the 13-digit ISBN to guarantee that communication with the trading partners continues without interruption.

If our company still has lots of 10-digit ISBN available, why do we need to change to the 13-digit ISBN?

Converting unused supply of the 10-digit ISBN to the 13-digit ISBN facilitates the integration of the ISBN data in trade applications. Changing the existing supply of unused ISBN allows systems throughout the supply chain to handle the ISBN data. This conversion is already taking place every time a 10-digit ISBN is printed in the bar code on a publication. To create the bar code, the 978 GS1 prefix is inserted before the ISBN and the check digit is recalculated, converting the 10-digit ISBN into a bar code that is identical to the ISBN 13-digit format.

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

For books published after 1 January 2007, only the 13-digit ISBN should be printed. To ease the transition process, publishers are recommended to begin printing both the 10- and 13-digit ISBNs on the verso of the title page of a publication as soon as possible. Those titles published after 1 January 2007, publishers should print the 13-digit ISBN in eye-readable form above the bar code symbol on the back cover of their publications, retaining the correct hyphenated structure of those ISBNs.

Will our company get the same prefixes in the new 979 range as we have in the 978 range?

There is no fixed relationship between the two ranges of prefixes. One of the reasons for the current shortage of the 10-digit ISBNs is that prefixes were allocated too generously in the past, resulting in some publishers having more numbers than required. ISBN agencies will seek to assign smaller blocks of numbers in the future.

How are the ISBNs assigned to e-books?

The revised ISBN standard specifies that the ISBN system applies to any form of monographic publication, including e-books. Each different format of an e-book should be assigned its own ISBN. This is important to the supply chain. In the same way that the ISBN distinguishes between the hardcover and paperback edition of a title, the supply chain also needs the ISBN to distinguish between each of the different formats in which an e-book can be ordered and sold.

Further reading on the 13-digit ISBN

ISBN-13 in South Africa
<http://www.nlsa.ac.za/isbn13.html>

ISBN standard revision
<http://www.isbn-international.org/en/revision.html>

Guidelines for the implementation of the 13-digit ISBNs
<http://www.isbn-international.org/en/download/implementation-guidelines-04.pdf>

Frequently asked questions about changes to the ISBN:
<http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca/iso/tc46sc9/wg4.htm>

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