

# **Guidelines for local ISBN agencies on the Implementation of 13-digit ISBNs**

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## Introduction

The revised standard for ISBN has now been published by ISO. This revision represents the first change there has been to the structure of the ISBN since its introduction over thirty years ago and will mean that the length of the number will be extended to 13 digits. The worldwide implementation date for the 13-digit ISBN is **1 January 2007**.

These guidelines for local agencies exist to provide local ISBN agencies with an outline schedule of the changes, a checklist of issues that will need to be considered and answers to some anticipated questions.

The guidelines do not attempt to solve every possible problem that might arise and it is important that they are read in conjunction with the following documents:

- ISO 2108: 2005, *Information and documentation — International Standard Book Number (ISBN)*
- ISBN Users' Manual – *International edition (Fifth Edition)*
- Guidelines for the Implementation of 13-digit ISBNs

In addition, further sources of guidance are suggested (see *Useful Links and Further Sources of Information*, below).

## Timeline for the implementation of 13-digit ISBNs

**Already available from [www.isbn-international.org](http://www.isbn-international.org)**

- Guidelines for the Implementation of 13-digit ISBNs.
- Publication of revised version of ISBN Users' Manual.

**January 2006 – 31 December 2006** – Agencies continue to assign 10 digit ISBNs but should also provide information as to how the ISBNs may be converted to 13 digit equivalents using the conversion software on the ISBN-International website.

**By January 2006** – Each local agency notifies forthcoming changes in ISBN system including information in appropriate, local language(s) to publishers, booksellers, wholesalers, distributors and libraries based in the respective agency's area of responsibility.

**1 January 2007**

- All agencies of the ISBN system assign ISBNs in 13 digit form only.
- All new publications and reprints made available on or after this date should display ISBNs in 13 digit form only.
- All publications should be ordered by quoting ISBN in 13 digit form.

**Post January 2007** – International Agency announces release of further EAN prefixes as allocations under 978 are exhausted.

## Checklist for agency preparations for the implementation of 13-digit ISBNs

- **Assess quantity of prefixes still available under current allocations and advise International Agency urgently of any shortages**
- **Assess local agency readiness for 13-digit ISBN implementation**
  - how easily can your systems be changed to assign, calculate and record 13-digit ISBNs?
  - (assuming that the agency does this currently for 10-digit ISBNs) how will your agency provide pre-calculated lists of ISBNs in 13-digit format to publishers joining the system in the future? ***N.B. The ISBN-13 conversion software on [www.isbn-international.org](http://www.isbn-international.org) can help you produce these lists.***
- **Plan, test and implement required agency system and procedural changes**
- **Prepare local translation of key documents**
  - International Users' manual
  - Guidelines for the Implementation of 13-digit ISBNs
- **Investigate feasibility of providing software or other automated assistance for publishers to assist with conversion**
- **Plan and execute communication programme to publishers, booksellers etc**
  - information and updates to local agency website on the forthcoming changes
  - prepare, print and distribute information packs

## Frequently-asked questions

### How will 10-digit ISBNs be converted to 13-digit numbers?

- The EAN prefix 978 will be added to all existing 10-digit ISBNs now in use or yet to be allocated by national agencies. 13-digit ISBNs are validated using a different check algorithm and as a result it will no longer be possible for “X” to appear as a check digit. 13-digit ISBNs will be validated using a weighted modulus 11 algorithm and effectively the resultant number will be the same as that which appears beneath the bar code now when 10 digit ISBNs are correctly converted to machine-readable format.

### Who is responsible for conversion of the 10-digit format to the 13-digit format?

- Each national agency will be responsible for ensuring that publishers within their territories are fully informed of the changes. Agencies must provide publishers (and other interested participants in the book industry such as booksellers, libraries etc) with clear instructions to enable them to convert ISBNs currently in 10 digits into 13 digit format. It may not be appropriate or practicable for all agencies to supply publishers with software to enable them to perform the conversion automatically. However, where an agency provides the conversion of ISBNs into 13 digit format, a fee may be charged for this service.

### Is software available from the International Agency for use by the national agencies to make the conversion?

- Yes. Multilingual conversion software is available on the ISBN-International website at:  
<http://www.isbn-international.org/converter/converter.html>

### From 1 January 2007, how should local agencies issue publisher identifier elements?

- From this date, all agencies should allocate ISBN ranges to publishers including the appropriate EAN prefix (currently 978). Thus a prefix that would previously have been advised as:

0-14

will in future be notified as:

978-0-14

Agencies may choose adopt this format at any time but compliance must be by 1 January 2007 at the latest.

**Must national agencies exhaust all existing 10-digit ISBN blocks before requesting the 13-digit ranges with the EAN prefix 979?**

- Yes.

**Should publishers continue to use their 10-digit allocations after January 1, 2007?**

- Yes. However, the 10-digit numbers must be converted to 13-digit by the addition of the EAN 978 prefix. Publishers will be required to exhaust their 10-digit ISBNs before the national agencies issue them new 13-digit numbers.

**How will national agencies know that a publisher has exhausted its 10-digit blocks?**

- The publisher must provide metadata for all of its 10-digit ISBNs to the national agency before it will be assigned a 13-digit block. This is a good opportunity for agencies with bibliographic databases to capture required information.

**Will agencies with publisher databases/directories be required to show assigned prefixes in both old and new formats?**

- Yes. Publisher prefixes should be shown in both 10-digit and the new 13-digit formats.

**Will the 13-digit ISBN with EAN prefix 979 be issued by the International Agency before January 1, 2007?**

- It is not expected that this will happen. The International Agency would need to address special circumstances should they arise.

**What should national agencies do to inform publishers of the 13-digit revision?**

- Agencies should post the revision data on their websites. The agencies should undertake mailings to notify publishers. They should also use industry-related publications and organizations to alert publishers.

**When should national agencies begin to inform publishers?**

- Agencies should notify publishers as soon as possible because publishers will be required to make major changes to their databases and systems to accommodate the 13-digit ISBN.

## **Useful Links and Further Sources of Information**

ISO ISBN Web Page (including progress report on the ISO ISBN standard)  
<http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca/iso/tc46sc9/wg4.htm>

Frequently Asked Questions about changes to the ISBN  
<http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca/iso/tc46sc9/isbn.htm>

International ISBN Agency (including ISBN Users' Manual)  
<http://www.isbn-international.org/>

Information about EAN.UCC GTIN  
<http://www.ean-int.org/products.html>

EDItEUR  
<http://www.editeur.org>