

International Standard Book Number (ISBN) Frequently Asked Questions

Can a publisher have both an ISBN & an ISSN?

Yes, both numbering systems are used for books in a series and with annuals or biennials. The ISBN identifies the individual book in a series or a specific year for an annual or biennial. The ISSN identifies the ongoing series, or the ongoing annual or biennial serial. If a publication has both, each should be printed on the copyright page.

Can the ISBN be represented as a bar code?

Yes. The ISBN is already in 13-digit format and can be represented easily as a bar code. Bar coded ISBNs may assist distributors and retailers in stocking and selling your publication. Your ISBN agency should be able to provide advice on bar code suppliers to help you show your ISBN as a bar code graphic. To maximize the benefits of bar code recognition and scanning speed it is recommended to print the bar code on the lower right of the outside back cover of the publication.

GS1 (the global organization responsible for product identification systems such as bar coding which is used to improve the efficiency of the supply chain) asked me to become a member. Is this mandatory?

No. If you only want to use the ISBN in bar-coded form, you do not have to become a member. However, as GS1 provides other trade-related services, such as electronic address numbers (location codes), EDI (electronic data interchange) formats, etc. you may want to become a member. Check with GS1 for information on their services and for details of current member organizations (www.gs1.org/contact/worldwide.php).

Does the ISBN-13 have any meaning imbedded in the numbers?

The five parts of an ISBN are as follows:

1. The current ISBN-13 will be prefixed by "978";
2. Group or country identifier which identifies a national or geographic grouping of publishers : "971" and "621" is the number for the PHILIPPINES
3. Publisher identifier which identifies a particular publisher within a group;
4. Title identifier which identifies a particular title or edition of a title;
5. Check digit is the single digit at the end of the ISBN which validates the ISBN.

Example:



978 – ISBN Prefix

971 – Philippines

556 – National Library of the Philippines

053 – Title “Impact stories : public libraries’ contribution to the community, volume 2.

5 – Check Digit

In the above case, 2 ISBNs were issued for the particular title for different binding / format:

(hbd) is Hardbound

(pdf) is Portable Document Format

Where should I display an ISBN?

On a printed book an ISBN should be included on the copyright page (also called the title verso page) or at the foot of the title page if there is no room on the copyright page. If there is no bar code, then the ISBN should also be on the back cover or jacket preferably at the lower right. In the case of electronic publications (such as compact discs, online publications), the ISBN must appear on the title display, that is the first display page or on the screen that displays the title or its equivalent (e.g., the initial screen displayed when the content is first accessed and/or on the screen that carries the copyright notice). For eligible educational/instructional films, videos, and transparencies, the ISBN must appear on the credit titles.

If the publication is issued in a container that is an integral part of the publication (e.g., a compact disc, cassette, or diskette), the ISBN should be displayed on any labels included with that container. If it is not possible to display the ISBN on the container or its label, then the ISBN should be displayed at the bottom of the back of any permanent packaging for that container (e.g., the box, sleeve, or frame).

Why do I need to be registered with the National Book Development Board (NBDB)

Per Republic Act No. 8047 or An Act Providing for the Development of the Book Publishing Industry through the Formulation and Implementation of a National Book Policy and a National Book Development Plan, Section 6. Registration of Entities. Persons

and enterprises engaged in book publishing and its related activities shall register with the National Book Development Board.

Who can be a publisher?

The publisher is the group, organization, company or individual who is responsible for initiating the production of a particular publication. Normally, the publisher is also the person or body who bears the cost or financial risk in making a product available. It is normally the printer, but it can be the author of the book if the author has chosen to publish their book themselves.

Do I have copyright protection if I have ISBN?

An ISBN does not convey any form of legal or provide copyright protection on a work. It is essentially a product identifier used by publishers, booksellers, libraries, internet retailers and other supply chain participants for ordering, listing, sales records and stock control purposes. The ISBN identifies the registrant as well as the specific title, edition and format.

Do digital books qualify for ISBN?

In fact, it is of no relevance in what medium a publication is made available. Provided it is text-based, available to the public and a monographic publication not intended to be a continuing resource (serial publication), then it is likely to qualify for ISBN assignment. Downloadable e-books, e-book apps, CD-ROMS or online publications available on the Internet can be considered to be monographic publications.

Do enhanced e-books qualify for ISBN?

When an e-book is available in enhanced form and, as well as text, includes audio, video or other additional content, it will qualify for ISBN. If the e-book is also available separately without these extra elements then these are different products and should therefore have separate ISBNs.

Do I have to identify different formats for digital publications with separate ISBNs?

Yes, whenever anyone in the supply chain needs to identify them separately, then each product needs a unique ISBN. When there are different formats available that operate on different devices or software programs, the end user has to know what format to order. Therefore each different format has to be identified by its own ISBN.

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