



Secretariat

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From: The Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments
Subject: REGULATIONS FOR THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Addendum

Use of the International Standard Book Number (ISBN)
and the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)
for United Nations publications

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INTRODUCTION

1. This instruction is intended to convey the decision of the Publications Board that henceforth the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) 1/ are to be used on United Nations publications. The ISBN and ISSN systems and the reasons for deciding to adopt their use, as well as the procedures to be followed in the implementation of the decision to use ISBN and ISSN on United Nations publications, are described below.

2. The ISBN and ISSN are brief, unique and unambiguous identification codes. Each is intended simply to identify a book, in the case of ISBN, or a serial publication, in the case of ISSN. The Publications Board, having taken the advice of specialists in the field, has decided that they should be used henceforth to facilitate the work of the publishers, publishers' agents, distributors, booksellers, librarians and others who deal with publications. It was also considered fitting for the Organization thus to adhere to an international system of non-alphabetic communication.

I. INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BOOK NUMBER

A. Background information

3. The International Standard Book Number identifies one title, or edition of a title, from one specific publisher, and is unique to that title or edition. "Edition" is used here to mean different physical formats of the same book (for instance, paperback or hard-cover editions), as well as printings of the same text in the same format at different times, and different language versions of the same text. ISBN are used for monographs, that is, publications complete in one part, or in a finite number of separate parts.

4. The ISBN has its origins in the organizational requirements of the book trade. The need for an international numbering system to assist in faster, more effective processing of publications, including inventory control, gave rise to the numbering of books on the basis of an international standard set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). 2/ The introduction of the ISBN system occurred in most countries through the co-operation of libraries and publishers' associations. An international agency has been established to assume responsibility for the ISBN system, to oversee the identification of groups and to undertake advisory and promotional activities, namely, the International ISBN Agency, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Potsdamer Strasse 33, P. O. Box 1407, D-1000 Berlin 30.

B. Composition

5. The ISBN consists of 10 digits, composed of the Arabic numerals 0 to 9. 3/ Whenever it is printed, the identifier is preceded by the designation "ISBN". The 10-digit number is divided into four parts of variable length, each part, when printed, being separated by a hyphen. If, for technical reasons a hyphen cannot be used, each part may be separated by a space. In the case of the United Nations, the four parts are:

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first - group identifier	two digits
second - publisher identifier	one digit
third - title identifier	six digits
fourth - check digit	one digit

6. The first part, the group identifier, designates the group of publishers to which the publisher of the title belongs. In the case of the United Nations, the group is international organizations, identified by the digits 92 (by decision of the International ISBN Agency). The second part of the ISBN identifies the publisher responsible for the particular volume. A single publisher identifier, namely 1, will be used for all departments and offices of the United Nations. The third part identifies a particular title or edition of a title and is thus unique to that edition. The fourth part of the number consists of a single digit that provides an automatic check on the correctness of the ISBN. It is worked out by a calculation based on the other nine digits.

7. For United Nations sales publications, other than serial publications described below, the title identifier will be determined and allocated by the Sales Section of the Publishing Division at Headquarters, or by the Distribution and Sales Section of the Publishing Service, United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG). In the third part of the ISBN, or title identifier, the fourth through sixth digits, reference is made to the language and sales category of the publication, in the following manner:

Fourth digit: Language definition

92-1- <u>0</u>	0 = bilingual/multilingual or no text (charts, maps)
92-1- <u>1</u>	1 = English
92-1- <u>2</u>	2 = French
92-1- <u>3</u>	3 = Spanish
92-1- <u>4</u>	4 = Russian
92-1- <u>5</u>	5 = Chinese
92-1- <u>6</u>	6 = Arabic
92-1- <u>7</u>	7 = other languages
92-1- <u>8</u>	8 = Official Records
92-1- <u>9</u>	9 = reserved

Fifth and Sixth Digits: Sales category definition or department/office of origin

92-1-000	00 = Category 1 (DPI)
92-1-001	01 = Category 1, General
92-1-011	11 = UNCTAD
92-1-065	65 = ECLAC (CEPAL)

The seventh through the ninth digits have not yet been assigned particular significance. The tenth is the check digit.

Examples of complete ISBN numbers follow.

- 92-1-065001-2 United Nations publication, bilingual, by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- 92-1-611652-1 United Nations publication in Arabic by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

It will thus be possible for those in the book trade to identify the origin, language and category of publication by reference to the ISBN.

C. Position and printing of the ISBN

8. In order to be useful, the ISBN must appear on the publication. The ISBN will be printed on United Nations publications adjacent to the United Nations sales number, on the verso of the title-page or, if that is not possible, at the foot of the title page, and in the tagline on the outside back cover. ^{4/} If it is considered undesirable to have the tagline on the outside back cover, it will appear on the last page of the text, if space permits, or, if not, on the inside back cover.

9. The ISBN should, if possible, be printed in optical character recognition-A typeface (OCR-A), to enable the Organization as well as booksellers and agents to implement computerized inventory control systems for United Nations publications. Use of the machine-readable font would mean optical scanners could record sales or changes in stock.

D. Procedure for obtaining an ISBN for a United Nations book

10. The ISBN for United Nations sales publications will be assigned by the Distribution and Sales Section, United Nations Office at Geneva, for publications produced in Geneva, Addis Ababa, Baghdad, Nairobi and Vienna and for UNICEF books, special cases and exceptions. ISBN will be assigned by the Sales Section, Publishing Division, at Headquarters, for United Nations sales publications produced in Bangkok, New York and Santiago. The ISBN is to be used on all United Nations publications that meet the criteria established in ST/AI/189/Add.17 for sales publications, including Official Records (which also bear ISSN).

11. The following procedure will be followed henceforth for sales publications approved by the Publications Board or its Working Committee. When the manuscript is submitted through Documents Control for processing, the Co-ordinating Unit of the Publishing Division in New York, or the equivalent office at other locations, will request the appropriate sales office to assign an ISBN along with a United Nations sales number and will ensure that the assigned identification number appears on the printed book.

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12. For sales publications other than those in the programmes approved by the Publications Board, i.e., publications of Funds, Programmes, Institutes or Offices that do not report to the Publications Board but whose publications are sold or disseminated by the United Nations, the author unit will be responsible for completing the application form for ISBN (D.38), a supply of which will be kept in the Documents Control, Distribution and Sales Sections, at Headquarters, and in the equivalent offices at other locations. The form D.38 should be sent direct to ISBN Processing, Distribution and Sales Section, United Nations office at Geneva, Palais des Nations Room C.119, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland (telex 28 96 96).

II. INTERNATIONAL STANDARD SERIAL NUMBER

A. Background information

13. The International Standard Serial Number is a brief, unique and unambiguous identification code for serial publications, which does not in itself have any significance. It is used for each part of a serial publication, defined by ISO as follows:

"A publication, in printed form or not, issued in successive parts usually having numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely. Serials include periodicals, newspapers, annuals (reports, yearbooks, directories, etc.), the journals, memoirs, proceedings, transactions, etc. of societies and monographic series."

14. The United Nations will henceforth use ISSN on the publications described by that definition, including all recurrent publications issued on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, or annual intervals or subdivisions or multiples thereof), all Official Records and supplements. The list of United Nations serials published in the Register of United Nations Serial Publications 5/ - a copy of which is available in all Executive Offices, Documents Control units and Libraries of United Nations headquarters locations and regional commission offices - will provide a useful guide to what is meant by a serial publication. If there is doubt about the designation of a publication, the assistance of the Library at the duty station should be sought.

15. The ISSN is administered by the International Serials Data System (ISDS), an intergovernmental organization established in 1972, affiliated with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It operates through a network of national and regional serial centres, linked to the International Centre for the Registration of Serials, 20 rue Bachaumont, F-75002, Paris, France.

16. Each serial registered with ISDS is assigned one unique ISSN and a standardized form of title called the "key title". The assignment of ISSN is done by national centres for serials published in a given country and by the International Centre for the Registration of Serials for serials published by international organizations. It has already assigned ISSN to some 250,000 serials, which are listed in the ISDS Register of Serials. The Register is augmented at the

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rate of some 35,000 titles per year. ISSN for the United Nations have been assigned to all serials in existence up to the end of 1984; these are published in the Register of United Nations Serial Publications and its supplements. The Register will be updated at regular intervals.

17. Only one ISSN can be assigned to the title of a serial, irrespective of the variations of title that may appear in the issue itself (for example, different forms of the title on the cover, spine and title page) and regardless of the various forms of title that may be allocated to the serial in information services or libraries. Each true change of title, however, and each language edition of a serial, has its own unique ISSN.

B. Composition

18. Each ISSN consists of eight digits, composed of Arabic numerals from 0 to 9. Since ISSN may be used in conjunction with ISBN, a distinction is made in the way it is printed: the number is always preceded by the letters ISSN and it is given in two blocks of four digits, separated by a hyphen, thus:

ISSN 1234-5679

The last is a check digit and may sometimes be an X. 6/

C. Position and printing of the ISSN on publications

19. The ISSN should be printed on a United Nations serial publication, adjacent to the sales number, if there is a sales number, but in any case on the verso of the title-page, or at the foot of the title page, if that is not possible, and in the tagline on the outside back cover. 4/ Certain serial publications, such as annual reports, yearbooks, or monographs in an indefinite series, should be allocated an ISBN as well as an ISSN. In such cases it is recommended that the two appear together, each distinguished by its prefix, as in the following example:

British Standards Yearbook 1982

ISBN 0-580-12147-X
ISSN 0068-2578

The printing standards outlined in paragraph 9 above apply equally to ISSN.

D. Procedure for obtaining an ISSN for a United Nations serial publication

20. For United Nations serial publications, the ISSN may be found listed in the Register of United Nations Serial Publications or its supplements. 7/ Copies of the Register and its supplements (and revisions, as they become available) may be consulted in the libraries or Documents Control units of United Nations offices or in the Executive Office of each department or office.

21. For all new serial publications, or new language versions or new titles of existing serials - those not found in the latest Register of United Nations Serial

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Publications or its supplements - an ISSN should be obtained by the department or division writing to the International Centre for the Registration of Serials, 20 rue Bachaumont, F-75002, Paris, France, enclosing the application form for ISSN (D.39), copies of which may be obtained in Documents Control units and Executive Offices, along with a photocopy of the cover page and the title page (attached to the request, if possible; otherwise forwarded when available).

III. IMPLEMENTATION

22. This instruction is to take effect on 1 January 1985. From that date on, every non-serial sales publication must be identified as a sales publication on the form submitted with it to the Documents Control unit, by which processing is requested (the D.2 at Headquarters), so that an ISBN will be properly assigned to the book. For each issue of a serial publication, the ISSN, taken from the Register or its supplements, must be included on the form submitted with it to the Documents Control unit, whereby processing is requested.

Notes

1/ In accordance with the decision of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the acronyms ISBN and ISSN will be used for both singular and plural, depending on the context.

2/ ISO recommendation 2108-1978.

3/ X is used instead of 10 where 10 would occur as a check digit.

4/ The placement of sales numbers is dealt with in ST/AI/189/Add.2, paras. 4-8, 12.

5/ The Register was produced "as a joint effort of the organizations of the United Nations family by the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems" (verso, title page) and published in 1982, ISBN 92-9048-085-8.

6/ For further details, please refer to ISO recommendation 3297-1975.

7/ The work of the IOB is now being performed by the Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Information Systems (ACCIS), which expects to issue a new, revised edition of the Register in due course.
