

The 13-digit ISBN has officially arrived. Industry-wide implementation is starting this month and is set to be completed by January 2007.

The following are key points you should bear in mind as the implementation period begins.

### **Reference Web Sites**

There are several websites that provide comprehensive information. The first is the International ISBN Agency which is responsible for the transition. Their web site is [www.ISBN-international.org/revision.html](http://www.ISBN-international.org/revision.html). The second is the Book Industry Study Group (BISG) found at [www.bisg.org](http://www.bisg.org). BISG is an organization of book retailers, wholesalers and distributors who work to develop common standards for the industry. Companies such as Barnes & Noble and Ingram belong to this organization, as well as NBN. BISG has an extensive overview on their site about ISBN 13. When you enter the site, click on the ISBN-13 area listed on the left side of the page. Both sites have several sections devoted to the changeover to the ISBN 13 and will answer your detailed questions. In addition, there is a short article on the Publishing Marketing Association site, [www.pma-online.org](http://www.pma-online.org), outlining the change.

### **Quick Overview**

The ISBN is being converted so that all product is sold internationally with the same type of item number. This will include mass market outlets, such as Wal-Mart, Target, and grocery stores that currently use a different item number to sell books (a UPC code).

You may be surprised to learn that you already have the 13-digit ISBN number on your books currently in print. It appears underneath the barcode. This number starts with 978, then includes the first 9 digits of your ISBN and the final number of the new ISBN is a check digit whose calculation is based on the first 12 digits of the new ISBN. (There will soon be a place on the web to do this calculation.)

The 978 prefix has been reserved for any ISBNs which you have already purchased and will also be used on any ISBNs purchased between now and January 1, 2007. After that date, Bowker will issue ISBNs under the new standard and, at some point, the first three digits on the ISBN will change over to 979 as Bowker runs out of 978 ISBNs. As of January 1, 2007, the current prefix for your publishing company will no longer be valid. As Bowker needs to, they will be reissuing prefixes with 979 as the first three digits and will not issue the same prefixes to the publishers who already had them. So, for example, Taylor Trade Publishing has a prefix of 087833, but after January 1, Bowker could issue that prefix to another publisher.

The appearance of the ISBN with dashes between the numbers will not change. The only change you will need to make is to add a dash after the 978. So for example, current ISBN 1-873671-00-8 becomes 978-1-873671-00-9. Bowker and BISG both plan to put up a site allowing you to calculate your new ISBN with a 978 prefix by entering the current 10 digit ISBN. In the meantime, whoever prepares your barcodes can calculate the new ISBN quickly by going into their barcode program and setting up that ISBN. The number underneath the bar code that starts with 978 is your new ISBN number.

### **Impact on ALL Publishers**

For publishers, whose books are sold through NBN and not through any other warehouse, the impact is minimal. You will, however, have to make a few changes:

- (1) put the new ISBN on the back of the book above the bar code
- (2) put the new ISBN on the copyright page
- (3) begin marking your cartons with the new ISBN
- (4) begin to submit title information to NBN with the new ISBN when we request it

The transition period for these changes begins in January 2005 and ends on January 1, 2007. In the interim, you can put both the ISBN 10 and ISBN 13 on the back of the book and the copyright page. It is strongly suggested that if you expect the book to backlist after 2007 that both ISBNs be put on the book for print runs through 2006. Once you start printing the book in 2007, the only ISBN that goes on the book is the new 13-digit ISBN. Any frontlist product published after January 1, 2007 should have the 13-digit ISBN only.

Samples of how to lay out the ISBNs on the back of the book and on the copyright page are shown on the BISG site in the area marked: *What's Happening and When? The Timelines*. Please note that the sample barcode included does NOT have the U.S. price listed by the barcode in addition to being embedded in the barcode, but this is a recommendation we have made to our publishers based on a standard set by Barnes & Noble. Please DO list the U.S. price in addition to embedding it in the barcode.

### **Additional Requirements for Publishers Who Sell on Their Own**

Publishers who sell books to customers directly (in addition to those sold through NBN) will have to make some additional changes, the same changes NBN is making to its system.

- (1) Convert transmissions of data to trading partners to send either format until January 1, 2007, when all transmissions will be in the ISBN 13 format. The transmissions will be mutually agreed upon (both parties have the ability to work with the same format).
- (2) Accept transmissions of data from accounts in either format. Again, implementation will vary as accounts are ready to accept the new format.
- (3) Change internal records so the new ISBN shows on:
  - a. Title records and related databases
  - b. Invoices
  - c. Order Processing
  - d. Receiving
  - e. Returns processing
  - f. Order fulfillment
  - g. Registration agency transactions, such as Books in Print
  - h. Accounting and royalty statements
  - i. Catalogs
  - j. Forms exchanged with trading partners
  - k. Electronic formats exchanged with trading partners

I hope this was helpful and we'll certainly work with you closely through the transition.

If you have any immediate questions, please contact me at [kmattscheck@nbnbooks.com](mailto:kmattscheck@nbnbooks.com) or at 717-794-3800 x3513.