

ESTELLE JAKOBSEN

Principal Librarian: Cataloguing

The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been used since the 1970s as a means of uniquely identifying books.

However, the stock of 10-digit ISBNs is rapidly diminishing, due to the increase in publishing around the world. At international level it has therefore been decided to start using ISBNs consisting of 13-digits; this becomes the only official ISBN as from 2007. This naturally has implications for libraries, systems suppliers, publishers, booksellers, etcetera. In South Africa, the national International Standard Number (ISN) Agency at the National Library of South Africa, Pretoria, is the body responsible for ISBN-13.

This 13-digit ISBN differs from the 10-digit ISBN in that it has a prefix of 978 and a different check-digit at the end of the number. It is identical to the number appearing currently below the barcode on the back cover of most new books.

13-digit ISBN barcode ▷

Once the prefix 978 has been used up, the prefix will become 979.

### Before 2007

Book publishers will start well before 2007 printing both the 13-digit and 10-digit ISBN on the verso of the title page, as well as on the book cover if there is no barcode.

For example:

ISBN-13 978-3-88053-108-6  
ISBN-10 3-88053-108-0.

Only the 10-digit ISBN will be printed above the barcode on the back cover of the book, even if both the 10- and 13-digit ISBNs appear on the verso of the title page.

The Library of Congress has already started recording ISBN-13 numbers in their bibliographic records since 1 October 2004. For the next two years (from 1 January 2005 until 31 December 2006), along with other libraries worldwide, all libraries cataloguing on CPALS will be entering both the 10- and 13-digit ISBNs on all new bibliographic records for books. This should also be done in cases where only a 10-digit ISBN appears on the book and no 13-digit number. In PALS there is now a command available to convert a 10-digit ISBN to a 13-digit ISBN. By entering the command CISB (Convert ISBN) followed by a space and a 10-digit ISBN, the 13-digit ISBN can be obtained.

Both ISBNs will be retrievable by doing a normal IS (ISBN) search on PALS. Cataloguers must input the 10-digit ISBN in the 020 field as usual. The 13-digit ISBN is to go in the 024 field (1st indicator = 3; 2nd indicator = blank).

# ???

## 13-digit ISBN

For example OCCPL 900255390:  
020 0789562351  
024 3 9780789562357

Functions like Acquisitions on CPALS will not be affected during the 2005-2006 period, as the 10-digit ISBN is still the official ISBN.

### From 2007

After 1 January 2007, publishers can just delete the 10-digit ISBN from reprints. All new books published will only have a 13-digit ISBN, that is, this will be the only valid ISBN. Publishers will therefore have to convert any unused 10-digit ISBNs to 13-digit ISBNs before these numbers can be allocated to new books. ISBNs on the back cover will appear as in the example below.



◁ ISBN on back cover

From the cataloguing side, 13-digit ISBNs will have to be input in field 020 \$a, but the MARC Office in the United States must still decide how to handle the

existing 10-digit ISBNs. People will definitely still be able to search on these older ISBNs, but it has not been finalised which Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) field to use for this purpose.

Changes will have had to be made to the CPALS Acquisitions and ILL modules by this stage, to enlarge the ISBN field on the ACQ record and ILL borrowing record to accommodate the extra three digits (at present the fields are a fixed length that allows for a maximum of 10-digits).

The whole ISBN-13 saga is still very much a 'work in progress', so the cataloguers will keep libraries updated with regard to any developments. However, if you have any queries, please contact the Cataloguing Section at the Western Cape Provincial Library Service, telephone (021) 483-2418, or you can use the discussion forum on the South African official ISBN-13 web site (see address below).

### References

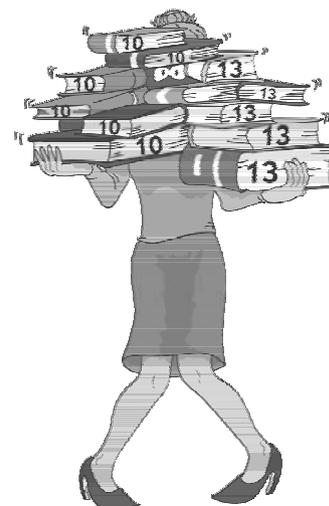
Healy, Michael. *Lucky 13. The Bookseller.* 9 January 2004. pp.28-29.

[www.bic.org.uk/13-digitisbn.html](http://www.bic.org.uk/13-digitisbn.html)

[www.isbn-international.org/en/download/implementation-guidelines-04.pdf](http://www.isbn-international.org/en/download/implementation-guidelines-04.pdf)  
(Guidelines for the implementation of 13-digit ISBNs).

[www.isbn-international.org/en/revision.html](http://www.isbn-international.org/en/revision.html)  
(ISBN Standard revision)

[www.nlsa.ac.za/isbn13.html](http://www.nlsa.ac.za/isbn13.html)  
(National Library of South Africa. Official ISBN-13 website).



2005