

APPLYING FOR ISBNs - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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ISBNs

Which products do and do not qualify for ISBNs?

Before completing your application, you should consider carefully whether the products you are publishing qualify for an ISBN. The following products below will qualify for ISBNs:

- Monographic works (books) that are textual and/or have an instructional content.
- Electronic products such as CDs, downloads, audiobooks etc that have a textual and/or instructional content, i.e. not purely for entertainment.
- Journals published no more frequently than once a year.
- Sets of volumes or packs of books or electronic products with a textual and/or instructional content.

The following products **do not** qualify for ISBNs:

- Serials/periodicals/journals (these are suitable for ISSN)
- Journals, record books
- Videos for entertainment
- Documentaries on video/CD-ROM
- Computer games
- Computer application packages
- Music scores
- Items available to a restricted group, e.g. a course book only available to students on the course
- Websites
- Non text-based publications

Please Note: This list is not exhaustive.

Following a review of the UK market, it is now permissible for ISBNs to be assigned to calendars and diaries, providing that they are not intended for purely time-management purposes and that a substantial proportion of their content is of a textual or graphic nature.

What is an ISBN?

An ISBN is an International Standard Book Number.

What is the purpose of an ISBN?

An ISBN is a product number that is used by publishers, booksellers and libraries for ordering, listing and stock control purposes. It enables them to identify a particular publisher and allows the publisher to identify a specific edition of a specific title in a specific format within their output.

Do we have to have an ISBN?

There is no legal requirement for an ISBN and it conveys no legal or copyright protection. It is a product number.

What can we gain from an ISBN?

If you wish to sell your publications through major bookselling chains, or Internet booksellers, they will require you to have an ISBN to assist their internal processing and ordering systems.

The ISBN also provides access to bibliographic databases, which are organised using ISBN as references. These databases are used by the book trade and libraries to provide information to customers. The ISBN therefore provides access to additional tools that could help sales of your publication.

Where can I get an ISBN?

ISBNs are assigned to Publishers in the country where the Publisher's main office is based. This is irrespective of the language of the publication or the intended market for the book.

The ISBN Agency acts for the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Publishers based elsewhere will not be able to get numbers from the UK Agency (even if you are a British citizen) but can contact us for the details of the relevant Agency.

Who is eligible for ISBNs?

Any Publisher who is publishing a qualifying product for general sale or distribution to the market. By publishing, we mean making a work available to the public.

What is a Publisher?

It is sometimes difficult to decide who the publisher is and who their agent may be, but the publisher is generally the person or body who takes the financial risk in making a product available. For example, if a product went on sale and sold no copies at all, the publisher is usually the person or body who loses money. If you get paid anyway, you are likely to be a designer, printer, author or consultant of some kind.

How long does it take to get an ISBN?

In the UK & Ireland, the Standard Service time is 10 working days. This excludes weekends, Bank Holidays and days when the office is closed. We also offer a Fast Track Service that provides a 3 working day processing period. **The processing period begins when a correctly completed application is received in the ISBN Agency.**

How many ISBNs do I need?

ISBNs are only available in blocks. The smallest block is 10 numbers. **It is not possible to obtain a single ISBN.**

Please choose an appropriate block for your publishing plans. We will pre calculate all of the ISBNs within your sequence in the form of a logbook.

Please note that the ISBN Agency reserves the right to determine the appropriate allocation size that a publisher will receive.

Can I pass on unused ISBNs to other users?

No. The ISBN is broken down into group identifier, publisher identifier and title identifier. This means that all ISBNs in the batch allocated to you will show your publisher identifier, and all products identified by ISBNs from your batch will be considered as being published by you.

How do I pay?

Card or cheque ONLY.

Please return the completed payment form and payment details with your ISBN application form. Please tick the box that relates to the size of allocation and service you require.

Please note we will not be able to process your application if payment does not accompany your form. If you require a Pro Forma invoice with which to raise a cheque, please contact the ISBN Agency directly.

Cheques should be made payable to ISBN Agency.

For Card Payments, you must supply the card number, expiry date, valid from date (and issue number for Maestro).

Name of Cardholder: As printed on the card
Registered Address: Address to which the card company sends your bills
Signature of Cardholder: Does not have to be the same as the signature on the bottom of the form, but **must** be the person whose card is used.

We do not accept AMEX, Diners or, in the case of the Republic of Ireland, Maestro International.

Do I have to pay VAT?

Publishers based in the Republic of Ireland with a valid VAT number or who are based in the Channel Islands will not be charged VAT on their application. Please ensure that you state the VAT number on your form.

IMPORTANT!

Publisher details WILL be added to the Nielsen Book database as will your book record once your Title Information form has been received. Details will also be sent to the British Library.

Please contact the ISBN Agency if you do not want this data made public.

This is to help you sell more books by making sure booksellers and libraries around the world have the most accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information available about your titles.

How do I complete the ISBN application form?

PUBLISHER INFORMATION

Publishing Name

This is the name you will use to publish your work. This can be either a chosen trading name (for example, Bluebell Publishing) or your own name. This name should be consistent throughout the form and on the page samples in the form of a *publisher statement* on the title verso of all your publications. For example: "Published by Bluebell Publishing".

Publishing Address

This should be the street address of the Publisher's editorial office. If you wish to use a PO Box address, this address must appear here. A "c/o" address is *not* acceptable. All UK addresses should have a postcode. All correspondence from the ISBN Agency will be sent to the address you provide here. **THIS ADDRESS WILL BE PUBLISHED** in various Nielsen BookData products such as the *Directory of UK & Irish Book Publishers (published jointly with the Booksellers Association)*, *BookData Online and its Disc and Record Supply services; which are used by booksellers and libraries*. If you have indicated a separate distributor this will also be included.

Communication Details

THIS DATA WILL BE PUBLISHED in various Nielsen Book products unless you request otherwise. If you are publishing downloadable products you **MUST** include a website address.

Name of Applicant

This is the name of the person **based at the publishing address who will be taking responsibility for ISBNs**, assigning numbers to your publications, for keeping records of your publishing output and providing title information to database providers, e.g. by completing Nielsen Book Title Information Forms.

Job title

Please state the position of the above named person within your company, if applicable.

VAT number

Publishers based in the Republic of Ireland or the Channel Islands with a valid VAT number will not be charged VAT on their application. Please ensure that you state the number on your form.

COMMUNICATION DETAILS

These details **must** apply to the publisher and the publisher's address as listed in the previous section. **These details WILL BE PUBLISHED unless you direct otherwise.**

Telephone*/mobile/fax

Please provide area code and subscriber number clearly separated

Email*

Email addresses may be personal or general company enquiry addresses.

Email addresses should be given in lower case, unless the system is case sensitive

Website

If you would like us to list your website, please provide address in full

**denotes a mandatory field; please indicate if you do not have a telephone or email address*

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

This question is used by the ISBN Agency to determine the size of the block of ISBNs that can be allocated to you as illustrated by your future publishing plans. We expect an ISBN allocation to be enough for the number of titles you expect to publish over 2-3 years, but we understand that publishing plans fluctuate as part of the nature of the business. The number you enter here should represent the titles already on a production schedule or the number of titles you realistically expect to deliver to the market in the next 2-3 years.

Some publishers do not use ISBNs on their publications initially, but then reach a stage in their development where they feel ISBNs would be advantageous. In this case, a choice can be made to number titles which have already been published and which are still available, which can affect the allocation required, and therefore the fees payable.

NB. Only those titles that are still available (i.e. in print as opposed to out of print) should be included.

When a block has been exhausted, a publisher can apply for an additional block of numbers. For more information on obtaining additional allocations, please contact the Agency.

Product type

Please indicate all product types, such as books, CD ROMs, maps, electronic books (e-books) etc. that apply to your business.

PAGE SAMPLES

The pages requested should be those from the first publication requiring an ISBN. If you have previous titles to assign ISBNs to, then the pages should be from the publication that has prompted the request for ISBN.

We cannot process your application without page samples, which should include a publisher statement.

In a traditional book format, the pages we require are the *title* page and the *title* verso. The *title* page is a page near the front of the book, which contains the **Title**, **Author** and **Publisher**. The *title* verso is the back of this page. The *title* verso usually contains copyright information, publishing history (if this is not the first edition of the book), *publisher statement* and ISBN. Please see the Example Title page and Title Verso on the application form. The publisher statement clearly defines who the publisher is, and should appear in all publications. The form of publisher statement we recommend you use is a sentence that begins "**Published by...** (Insert your publisher name here)."

The name of the publisher in the *publisher statement* should be the same as that given in the Publisher Information Section of the form. If the names quoted are not consistent, we will need to contact you or return your form for amendment.

If you are not publishing a traditional book, please enclose any sample with the title and publisher statement, such as the insert for a CD.

DECLARATION

This is our guarantee that this is a genuine application. The signature/position should be that of the person named in the Publisher Information section as the ISBN Applicant.

We cannot process applications that are not signed and dated.

HOW WE SEND YOUR ISBNs

ISBNs and the supporting documentation are sent by email. Lists of numbers are emailed to you in Microsoft Excel format, and the supporting documentation is emailed in PDF. If you want a printed version posted to you, an additional charge is made for allocations of 100 ISBNs or more.

How do I complete the Nielsen Book Title Information Form?

This section will be passed to Nielsen Book and your first title will automatically appear on the database of books in print. This data is supplied to booksellers, publishers and librarians around the world as a range of subscription services.

Please complete all sections relevant to the publication for which you are applying for ISBNs.

Please note: the fields marked with asterisks must be supplied, even if in a provisional form only. Your application will not be processed if they are incomplete.

1 – ISBN

The ISBN Agency will insert this when your application has been processed.

* Date of Publication

This is the date (approximate if necessary) you expect to release your product to market. Please supply at least the month and year of publication.

*2 – Price in £

The retail price must be quoted in £ sterling. If the item is free of charge, please indicate this on the form.

3 – Binding / Format

The type of covering e.g. hardback, paperback, leather, jewel case. If the title is not a book, please indicate the format e.g. audio cassette, CD-ROM etc. If your book is a download you must supply an URL on page 1. For ebooks/downloads, you must show the format and file type.

4 – Name(s) of Author(s) and other Contributor(s)

Please give only the authors and contributors who appear on the title page of the publication. If more than three contributors are responsible for the book, only the first three names need to be given. Please give date of birth if known.

5 – Translator(s)

Please provide the surname first. Please also provide language from which translated. If the book is not wholly written in the stated language, then details of the other language should be supplied.

*6 – Title and Sub-Title

The full title and sub-title (if any) should always be given as presented on the title page and not abbreviated or truncated in any way. If the book has a volume or part number, or in the case of an annual, a year of issue, then this should be given as part of the title.

*7 – Size

Please give the height x width of the publication in millimetres.

8 – Number of pages

The total number of pages should be given, including any with Roman numerals.

9 – Number of volumes

For multi-volume works, please note the number of separate parts.

10 – Number and type of illustrations

Please indicate number and type of illustrations, including charts, line drawings, photographs, diagrams and figures.

*11 – Edition

Unless a publication has previously been published, this will be a first edition.

12 – Running time in minutes

Please supply for audio cassettes, CDs and DVDs only.

13 – Series details

The publication may be the start of a series of similar titles. If so, enter the general series name. Only the series names present on the title page should be supplied.

*14 – Short Description

Please supply a short description to enable your book to be classified correctly.

15 – Fiction type

Only applies if the publication is a work of adult fiction. Indicate with an X the type of fiction applicable to your publication.

*16 – Readership Level

Please indicate with an X the level of readership for which your title is intended.

*17 – Name and address of publisher

The Nielsen Book Title Information form will be detached from the rest of your ISBN application so it is essential to enter the publisher's name and address again here. Name and address details must be consistent wherever you enter them.

*18 – Name and address of Distributor

If you are using another company to deal with your orders and hold the stock of your book, their contact details, including their email address should go here. This is not a retailer who sells the book to customers, but someone who is responsible for your stock and fulfils orders from other organisations. If you do not have a distributor, please leave this area blank.

NB if you self distribute you will automatically be set to receive your orders (TeleOrders) from booksellers via the Nielsen BookNet Online Order Collection Service. However, to do this we require an email address.

To find out more *click* here.

*19 – Orders address

If different from publisher/distributor, otherwise leave blank.

Please note: the fields marked with asterisks *must* be supplied, even if in a provisional form only. Your application will not be processed if they are incomplete.

Other Useful Information

Listing Publications

Bibliographic resources such as *BookData Online* list ISBN and publication details. This information includes titles, authors, classifications, availability and prices. These databases are essential to retailers and libraries especially when helping customers to find certain publications. Listing your title is a free service offered by Nielsen Book (further details will be supplied after ISBN registration).

In addition BookData Online offers booksellers and libraries worldwide the ability to search, select using BookScan sales ranking and order – a one stop service improving efficiency in the supply chain. There is a range of BookData Information services available for publishers, distributors, booksellers and libraries. For more information visit the marketing website: www.nielsenbookdata.co.uk.

BookNet e-trading Services – for self distributing publishers

Our BookNet e-trading services allow publishers and distributors to exchange orders, order acknowledgements and financial information with bookselling clients. Allowing you and your trading partners to trade electronically and achieve real savings.

BookNet has a range of transaction services for publishers and distributors – for more information visit the marketing website: www.nielsenbooknet.co.uk.

BookScan retail sales data

The BookScan service is the world's largest continuous book sales tracking service operating in the UK, Ireland, Australia, US, Italy, Spain, Denmark, South Africa and New Zealand.

Nielsen Book collects total transaction data at the point of sale directly from the tills and dispatch systems of all the major book retailers. This ensures that very detailed and highly accurate sales information on which books are selling, and at what price, is available to the book trade. Booksellers and libraries have access to a range of services either direct using a BookScan service or via a BookData information service. It is therefore essential that you provide the fullest information possible about your titles so that the Nielsen Book range of services can help you sell your titles more widely.

For more information on the range of BookScan services visit the marketing website: www.nielsenbookscan.co.uk.

For more information on Nielsen Book's services, including the Registration Agencies, please visit our marketing website: www.nielsenbook.co.uk.

Barcodes

Most bookshops have now installed electronic point of sale (EPOS) systems, which enable them to keep track of their sales and to re-order books by scanning the barcode. Some retailers refuse to accept books that are not bar coded. Although the barcode will be derived from the ISBN, *the agency does not issue them*. Probably the best person to speak to about bar coding is your printer, who may have the software required to convert the ISBN into a barcode. Alternatively, you can refer to www.bic.org.uk, which lists some barcode suppliers in the PDF download called 'BAR CODING FOR BOOKS'.

GS1UK

is the regulating trade body for EAN/UCC bar coding in the UK and provides EAN barcodes for products that **do not qualify for ISBNs**.

Tel: [Freephone 0800 178 8799](tel:08001788799)

Email: info@gs1uk.org

Music Publishers Association

allocates International Standard Music Numbers (ISMNs) to music scores.

Tel: [020 7839 7779](tel:02078397779)

Email: info@mpaonline.org.uk

ISSN Centre

allocates International Standard Serial Numbers to serial publications, magazines and journals that are published more frequently than once a year.

Tel: [01937 546959](tel:01937546959)

Email: issn-uk@bl.uk

Legal Deposit Office

Publishers have a legal obligation to send one copy of each of their publications to the Legal Deposit Office within one month of publication.

Tel: [01937 546267](tel:01937546267)

Email: legal-deposit-books@bl.uk

CIP (Cataloguing-in-Publication)

Publishers supply details of forthcoming titles. From this information computerised records containing ISBN, author, title, publisher, date of publication, price etc., are created. By contributing data in advance of publication to the programme, publishers gain direct access to the library book-buying market.

Tel: [01387 702252](tel:01387702252)

Email: info@bibdsl.co.uk

Copyright

gives rights to the creators of certain kinds of material to control the various ways in which their material may be exploited. In many cases, the author will have the right to be identified on his or her work and to object to distortions and mutilations of the work.

UK Intellectual Property Office (previously Copyright Directorate) for general enquiries:

Tel: [0845 9500505](tel:08459500505)

Email: enquiries@ip.gov.uk