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The ISBN Agency and ISBN-13

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The ISBN Agency and ISBN-13

by **John Krafty** (Product Manager, Books In Print®, R. R. Bowker)
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R. R. Bowker has been the **U.S. ISBN Agency** since 1968 and the **Australian ISBN Agency** (through its **Thorpe-Bowker** division) since 2002. An **ISBN Agency** is responsible for the overall administration of the **ISBN** system within its registration group. These responsibilities are:

- to issue notification of the assignment of an **ISBN**
- to create and maintain registers of **ISBNs** and **ISBN** metadata
- to make **ISBN** and associated metadata available to other registration agencies and to users of the **ISBN** system
- to promote, educate, and train others in the use of the **ISBN**

As a member of the **International ISBN Agency**, **Bowker** has been involved in discussions about **ISBN-13** since the late 1990's. The first official planning session on expanding the **ISBN** took place in mid 2000, and continued until the final draft was approved in the spring of 2004.

Bowker-specific preparations began in early 2004. Obviously, this involved technical changes to the many internal and external systems, but also involved the education of publishers in the U.S. and Australia as part of its **ISBN Agency** responsibilities.

In October 2004, **Bowker** sent an email to over 115,000 U.S. publishers informing them of the expansion of the **ISBN** and its implications. **Bowker** also hosts important information about this topic on their **Agency Website** at www.isbn.org, including an **ISBN-13 Conversion Toolkit** at <http://isbn.org/toolkit.html>. The toolkit includes a free online tool which will convert an **ISBN-10** to an **ISBN-13**. Also at no cost, **Bowker** will convert large files of **ISBNs**, via batch. Interested publishers can find more information about this service at: <http://isbn.org/largeconvert/largeconvert.html>.

Of all the questions the **ISBN Agency** receives about the **ISBN-13**, these two are the most common:

Q: Is converting my ISBN-10 to the ISBN-13 as simple as inserting the "978" prefix before the ISBN-10?

A: No. As described elsewhere in this issue, the **ISBN-13** will not only have the **978** prefix preceding the **ISBN**, but the check digit of the **ISBN-10** will be dropped and a new algorithm will be applied to calculate a new check digit.

Q: Will I be assigned the same publisher prefixes for ISBN-13 as I have for ISBN-10?

A: No. **Regional ISBN Agencies** (like **Bowker**) receive their **ISBN** publisher prefix allocation ranges from the international **ISBN Agency**. There is no way to predict that the agencies will receive the same prefix range allocations as in the past.

In April 2005, subscribers to **Bowker's** online (**BIP**) products will see the **ISBN-13** on search results and full display pages. These products will also support searches using either the **ISBN-10** or **-13**. Also at this time, **Bowker** will offer **ISBN-13** conversion services for bookseller and libraries.

The good news is that the **EAN/UCC** has committed to providing future three digit prefixes for the **ISBN**, so there is no immediate threat of running out, at least not in our lifetime! 🍀

against the grain people profile

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John A. Krafty

BORN & LIVED: Born, raised and still live in Bethlehem, PA.

EARLY LIFE: Catholic grade school — need I say more?

FAMILY: Lives with **Jim**, his partner of 14 years.

EDUCATION: BA — Telecommunications, **Penn State University** — 1986. MBA — Finance, **St Joseph's University** — 1995.

FIRST JOB: Newspaper delivery.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Listen to music, read non-fiction, garden, run, bicycle or just enjoy the outdoors!

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Self-centered people.

PHILOSOPHY: You only live once, so you might as well enjoy yourself!

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: The development and launch of *PatronBooksInPrint.com*.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Access to on-demand, pay-as-you-go book content (similar to music and iTunes).

Implementation Timeline for ISBN-13 at the Library of Congress

by **David Bucknum** (Automated Operations Coordinator, CIP Division, Library of Congress) <dabu@loc.gov>

December 2003

The Cataloging in Publication Division at the Library of Congress received a query from a major publishing house requesting permission to

add **ISBNs** in the new **13-digit** format to the **Library of Congress Cataloging-In-Publication (CIP)** data. While informal discussions concern-

continued on page 22