ISBN-13: A Publisher's Checklist

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3. Should Library of Congress CIP data be adapted to conform to the new ISBN format (i.e., pairs of ISBNs by manifestation) as mandated by the IIA guidelines?

There was strong disagreement on this issue. Some held the opinion that since CIP data had been based on the machine-readable card format for decades and, secondly, since it is indeed “virtual” metadata (i.e., printed in the book, but not part of the content), we should not alter the structure of ISBNs in CIP data to accommodate the IIA prescribed format for ISBN-13 and ISBN-10.

However, after considering the dilemma facing publishers having to print twice as many ISBNs in the book for each manifestation, we reached a compromise.

Interim Compromise

During the interim period from January 1, 2005 through January 1, 2007, pairs of 13- and 10-digit ISBNs would appear in the prescribed format within the CIP data, but if a record contained more than two such pairs of ISBNs, only the first two pairs would appear in the data followed by “[etc.]” This limitation was intended to address space considerations. But, beginning January 1, 2007, CIP data would revert to the traditional format, comprised of only 13-digit ISBNs.

4. When would the necessary revisions to the Library of Congress’ online systems and software applications be completed?

Bibliographic systems and software experts at LC reported that all necessary revisions to online systems and software applications could be completed by July 1, 2004. However, after a series of consultations, our bibliographic partner institutions and the BISAC Metadata Committee agreed to an official implementation date of October 1, 2004. This would allow our partner institutions to adequately prepare their bibliographic information systems for ISBN-13 implementation, and, at the same time, grant publishers sufficient time (i.e., prior to the start of the interim period) to submit CIP and PCN applications containing 13-digit ISBNs for forthcoming books to be published during the interim period. In addition, the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando (mid-June 2004) would provide further opportunity for the various stakeholders to consult with one another regarding any remaining implementation issues. For example, the CIP Division intended to discuss the proposed changes to the CIP data format at the meeting of the CIP Advisory Group.

May 2004

LC began distribution of the official Library of Congress policy statement for implementation of the 13-digit ISBN to constituent groups including publishers, librarians, and LC staff members. Among the intended audiences were: the BISAC Metadata Committee, Library of Congress MARC Distribution Services (MDS) subscribers, Program for Cooperative Cataloging institutions, and the National Library of Medicine (a CIP cooperative cataloging institution). The ISBN-13 policy statement was made available online on the CPSO and CIP/PCN Websites, and summarized in a Library of Congress Cataloging Newsletter article. Library of Congress staff, including catalogers, technicians, and CIP publisher liaisons also received a revised Library of Congress Rule Interpretation (LCRI 1.8), which provides detailed instructions on the new ISBN-13 format and how to record the numbers in the MARC21 record.

October 2004

With all systems and software application updates in place well in advance of the implementation date, the Library of Congress began accepting 13-digit ISBNs. The only issue that has arisen since that time is the question of unpaired 13-digit ISBNs (i.e., without a corresponding 10-digit number). Although Library of Congress catalogers were instructed not to include single 13-digit ISBNs in the bibliographic record, upon further reflection, we decided that a rare occurrence of an unpaired ISBN-13 would still provide valid descriptive information and aid the user in searching for a particular title.

February 2005

During the last four months, more than 500 bibliographic records containing pairs of 13- and 10-digit ISBNs have been created and distributed; the vast majority of them were products of our Electronic CIP program (http://cip.loc.gov/). We anticipate that these numbers will increase dramatically during the next year, particularly as more and more publishers begin to supply 13-digit ISBNs for forthcoming publications via the CIP and PCN programs.


ISBN-13: A Publisher's Checklist

by Greg Giblin (Director of Market Development, STM Division, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.) <gggiblin@wiley.com>

Implementation of ISBN-13 represents a unique challenge to publishers. By January 1, 2007 all publishers must be fully compliant with the new ISBN-13 standard. Systems must be able to work with the new standard and be interoperable internally as well as with trading partners and customers. The purpose of this article is to remind fellow publishers that major changes are afoot and to present some of the key issues involved in making a smooth transition into the new ISBN-13 environment.

Involve All Stakeholders

To publishers, the conversion to ISBN-13 has an impact on the organization that is comparable to that of Y2K in the late 90s. Or for the less dramatic, the addition of a three digit area code to formerly seven digit phone numbers. In order to address the multifaceted aspects of this new standard, publishers need to develop a coordinated global effort that includes compliance and participation of all its respective publishing centers across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Additionally, publishers often have several publishing groups or divisions within their larger organization, such as Trade, Consumer, Professional, Scientific, Technical and Medical, and Higher Education divisions. Cross-divisional collaboration is critical because workflows, reporting systems, distribution channels and trading partners can all vary due to the nature of these respective businesses.

As well, representation is needed from all operational and support areas such as IT, distribution, production, and finance. These groups will be heavily involved in many aspects and phases of the new system’s implementation.

Implement in Phases

In order to successfully migrate to the new standard, publishers need to create a timeline for implementation that addresses all relevant internal and external dependencies. Because the ISBN drives so many of our systems, publishers
Caught in the Middle: The Vendor’s Perspective on ISBN-13

by Wendell Lotz (Vice President, Product Database Development, Ingram Book Group) <wendell.lotz@ Ingrambook.com>

Inevitably, materials vendors bridge the gap between content creators (publishers) and end users (retailers, libraries and library systems). Accurate communication is the key, and during the transition to ISBN-13, the material vendor must accommodate every possible combination/variation on either side. Some have suggested that the transition to ISBN-13 is similar in scope to the Y2K projects we all endured several years ago. At Ingram we believe the project is just that extensive, touching virtually every process that is product-oriented, but that it is eminently achievable with careful and detailed planning. Also, thankfully, the industry’s computers will not blow up on December 31, 2006 nor will the world come grinding to a halt. However, inadequate preparation will result in trading partners sending or receiving the wrong product causing service resolution efforts to ripple throughout the organization.

In order to avoid such costs Ingram began its preparations by convening a team of all the computer applications managers in the early spring of 2004. Because we distribute music, video, and other products which are governed by UPC codes, rather than ISBNs, an early decision made at these planning meetings was to split the project into two phases. The 2004 phase was designed to prepare the organization for Sunrise 2005, the seminal event in retailer history whereby the general retailers of the North American continent were instructed by the Uniform Code Council to be prepared to handle 13-digit identifiers (in the form of EANs) as well as the historical 12-digit UPC.

The process at Ingram was eased somewhat by the use of a surrogate key (a non-ISBN control number) in most systems. As a result of the surrogate key the preparation for EAN, and subsequently ISBN-13, required the addition of a column for a 13-digit entity in the primary databases. Cross-reference tables between the values in the 13-digit column (called “Preferred EAN” in Ingram nomenclature), then allow any 13-digit identifier to be mapped to its surrogate key and legacy processes to take over processing with that identifier in hand.

For vendors that do not use a surrogate key in place of the ISBN, the transition has been or will be more complex.

All the above was accomplished before the fall selling season and, at this writing, we patiently await the first EAN representing a non-book product. Ordering systems, purchase order acknowledgments, electronic invoices and other standard EDI documents can now “talk 13” in all the standard formats such as X.12, EDIFACT, Flashback, TRADACOMs, etc.

The second phase of the Ingram plan will focus on documents that might best be described as communication documents (as opposed to order processing documents). In this phase the focus will be on communicating in both

ISBN-13: A Publisher’s Checklist from page 24

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continued on page 28