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ISBN-13 and OCLC: An Interim Solution

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ISBN-13: Key Issues... from page 30

One approach, which is being looked at by several ILS vendors, is to convert all ISBNs in indexes to their 13-digit form and to normalize 10-digit ISBNs in search queries to 13 digits on the fly. ISBNs could occur not only in a specific ISBN index and search option, but also in others such as keywords. Within the ILS, there will be relevant search interfaces in most staff modules as well as the public access catalog (OPAC), including cataloging, acquisitions and inter-library loans.

The same search issues as described above will apply to any software that allows remote applications to search your catalog, typically via the z39.50 protocol. Conversely, many libraries have metasearch tools to search across multiple diverse sources using a variety of protocols. The impact of ISBN-13 on the protocol-handling software will need to be checked and it would be advisable to talk to those targets that support ISBN searching about their plans to implement ISBN-13, to ensure a trouble free transition.

Linking

Increasingly, library systems are linked to and from external content and services. Often, the linking mechanism includes an ISBN, so libraries and system vendors should be checking these and communicating with the content and service providers. Examples include

Enrichments: images, tables of contents, summaries, reviews, etc. accessed from remote services in real time to build results pages

eBooks: the ISBN is probably in the URL when the user accesses the full text

Open URL link resolvers: ISBNs may occur, perhaps for eBooks

Institution portals are increasingly incorporating components of library system functionality, such as the display of "my account" information, where the interaction may involve ISBNs

Learning Management Systems can be linked in either or both directions with library systems, typically extracting bibliographic data from the library system

Reading List and E-Reserve Systems, typically extracting bibliographic data from the library system and being accessed from within the OPAC (e.g., which reading lists is this book on?)

Booksellers systems, possibly linked from the acquisitions module, perhaps to dynamically access price and availability information.

Record Identification and Matching

Most library systems can import bibliographic records, both online and in batches. Typically, incoming records are matched by ISBN (and maybe other elements) against the database to detect duplicates. Similarly, it is common for metasearch systems to deduplicate or merge results from multiple sources; again,

the ISBN plays a major part. These will need to accommodate ISBN-13 and be able to cope with a mixed picture where the same ISBN could occur in both 10-digit and 13-digit forms from different sources.

Phew! Anything else?

Physical union catalogs face the same issues on a larger scale as local library catalogs, needing to take account of ISBN-13 in deduping and in making ISBN revision transparent for search. There may be additional issues regarding holdings notification and updating, which could also affect the contributing library systems, depending on the format and protocol used. Virtual union catalogs face the same issues as metasearch systems.

Systems supporting resource sharing and consortial borrowing use ISBNs. Since these are about interoperability, it is important to communicate with partner organizations as well as to check software, to avoid disruption.

Binding management modules are likely to be affected, and serials management should be checked, since ISBNs can be related to serials in some cases. Other systems using non-MARC

bibliographic metadata might also be affected, such as systems for managing digital content and learning objects.

Finally, don't forget your barcode scanners! Usually, those used for scanning the barcode on the back of the book are programmed to convert the barcode EAN to the 10-digit ISBN. Ideally, scanners used for searching should be re-programmed when indexing and search have been ISBN-13 enabled, and certainly before numbers with prefix 979 appear. For data entry, such as into a MARC record, you should enter 10-digits and/or 13 digits, depending on what is in the book. The optimum time to reprogram scanners for this purpose will be when 13-digit ISBNs start to occur more than 10-digit ISBNs.

Conclusion

The ISBN is a core identifier and enabler in complex library systems. Librarians need to check their systems, plan for change and talk to system vendors, materials vendors, consortial and ILL partners, linked content and service providers and consumers, and anyone else who might be relevant. 🐼

ISBN-13 and OCLC: An Interim Solution

by Glenn Patton (Director, WorldCat Quality Management, OCLC, Inc.) <patton@oclc.org>

The transition to the 13-digit ISBN began at a particularly awkward time for OCLC. Over the past several years, OCLC has been transitioning its database, WorldCat, and the various interfaces to it to new platforms. That work is to be completed in the summer of 2005 at which point the legacy systems will be decommissioned. Since nearly all those legacy interfaces as well as the software used to load records into WorldCat performs some level of structure checking for the ISBN whether the user is searching or editing, OCLC staff quickly reached the conclusion that it would not be a cost-effective use of scarce resources to modify the legacy systems to accommodate the ISBN-13.

For this interim period until the new systems can be modified to handle the ISBN-13, OCLC asks that users input 13-digit ISBNs in MARC21 field 024 (Other Standard Identifier) with a 1st indicator value of "3" which designated them as European Article Numbers (EANs) as they indeed are. For records that are loaded into WorldCat from our various trading partners (including the Library of Congress), OCLC's loading software moves ISBN-13s from

MARC field 020 to field 024. The software also generates and adds a 10-digit ISBN if one is not already in the record.

For searching purposes, OCLC indexes ISBN-10s and ISBN-13s (along with a variety of other standard numbers) in a keyword-based Standard Number Index. OCLC also provides an ISBN index but, for this interim period, this is limited to ISBN-10s only.

OCLC staff realize that this interim solution is not an ideal one and we are putting a priority on making the necessary changes as soon as possible after the system migration effort ends. Full information about the interim solution can be found on the OCLC Website at <http://www.oclc.org/news/announcements/announcement96.htm>. Updated information will also appear there as plans are finalized. 🐼

Future Dates for Charleston Conferences

	Preconferences and Vendor Showcase	Main Conference
2005	2 November	3-5 November
2006	8 November	9-11 November
2007	7 November	8-10 November