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Applying for ISBNs - What you need to know

These guidance notes accompany our ISBN application forms which can be submitted by email or post, but you can also apply directly online: www.nielsenisbnstore.com

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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, DVDs or other media for entertainment
- Documentaries on video/CD-ROM, DVD or other media
- 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 in most cases require you to have an ISBN to assist their internal processing and ordering systems.

However in the case of channel-specific e-books such as Kindle on Amazon, ISBNs are not always necessary. You should therefore check if you only intend to sell through that single channel, what their requirements are.

The ISBN also provides access to bibliographic databases, which are organised using ISBN as references. These databases are used by the book industry 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 NielsenIQ BookData ISBN Agency acts for the UK, Ireland and other British Overseas Territories. 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 organisation 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 organisation 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?

If you purchase your ISBNs online at: www.nielsenisbnstore.com you will receive your ISBNs with a few minutes.

Applications made using our Forms will take up to 10 working days. This excludes weekends, Bank Holidays and days when the office is closed. The processing period begins when a correctly completed application and payment is received in the BookData ISBN Agency.

How long does it take for my book data to be registered?

Once you have your ISBNs you can publish your book straight away. If you complete the BookData Title Information form (page 3 of the application), your book data will be sent to be manually registered on the BookData database. This will take four to six weeks for the first book. BookData's preferred method of receiving title information, and the best way for you to get your data out to customers as soon as possible, is to use the BookData Title Editor service. This is an online service for publishers to add and amend title records. You can register for BookData Title Editor:

www.nielsentitleeditor.com/titleeditor/.

If you encounter any problems, please contact the Publisher Help Desk: Pubhelp.book@nielseniq.com or call **01483 712 450**.

How many ISBNs do I need?

ISBNs are available singly, or in blocks of 10, 100, 1000 and 10,000. Publishers considering a single ISBN should bear in mind that each different format of a book requires a different ISBN. For example, if you are publishing a book in hardback, paperback, Mobi for Kindle and ePub for android, these four different formats will need four ISBNs. In this case an allocation of ten ISBNs will be the most suitable. The ISBN Agency will send your pre-calculated ISBNs in the form of a paper logbook or excel spreadsheet.

Please note that the BookData 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 prefix, registrant element and the publication element, this means that all ISBNs in the batch allocated to you will show your publisher identifier (the registrant element) and all products identified by ISBNs from your batch will be considered as being published by you.

How do I pay?

Visa and Mastercard credit and debit cards and by BACS Transfer.

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 to arrange payment, please contact the ISBN Agency directly.

We do not accept: AMEX, Diners or Maestro.

Bank Transfers: **Citibank, Citigroup Centre, 33 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5LB**
Account Name: **Nielsen Book Services Ltd** Sort Code: **18-50-08** Account No: **13982629**

BACS Payments: **IBAN: GB56CITI18500813982629**
BIC: CITIGB2L

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 or in British Overseas Territories will not be charged VAT on their application. Please ensure that you state the Irish VAT number on your form.

IMPORTANT!

Publisher details WILL AUTOMATICALLY be added to the BookData database, as will your book record once your Title Information Form has been received. Details will also be sent to the British Library.

The data is not made public, it is sent out to BookData's data customers only, such as booksellers and libraries. Please tick the relevant box marked 'N' on page 1 of this form if you DO NOT want data sent to BookData's data customers. If your publisher record has no contact data, orders and queries cannot be sent to you.

The provision of your book data to booksellers and libraries will help you sell more books by making sure customers 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 should appear on your books.

***IMPORTANT:** Registering a publishing name on the ISBN system does not guarantee that the name is unique and does not in itself confer the applicant any exclusive right to use that name. Whilst the ISBN Agency will endeavour to advise the applicant if the proposed publishing name conflicts with one already on the ISBN system, as with any trading name it is the responsibility of the ISBN applicant to ensure that their choice of publishing name will not breach the rights of any other party.*

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 must have a postcode. All correspondence from the BookData ISBN Agency will be sent to the address you provide here. **THIS ADDRESS WILL BE PUBLISHED** in various BookData products such as BookData Online and BookData Record Supply services; which are used by booksellers and libraries, unless you have indicated otherwise on page 1 of the form. If you have indicated a separate distributor this will also be included.

Communication Details

THIS DATA WILL BE PUBLISHED in various BookData products unless you request otherwise. If you are publishing downloadable products from your website 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 the BookData Title Information Forms.

VAT number

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

Please provide area code and subscriber number clearly separated
Email addresses may be personal or general company enquiry addresses.
Email addresses should be given in lower case, unless the system is case sensitive
If you would like us to list your website, please provide address in full

Website

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

Publishing Information

This question is used by the BookData 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.

Payment

Please use one of the payment methods shown on page four of the form. The form will not be processed until payment is received. A bank transfer can take as little as two hours to show online, although it may not be visible in the NielsenIQ daily bank statement for up to three working days.

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.

Your email will be visible in BookData products and services; therefore it should be an email that you are happy for booksellers to contact you on. If you wish to withhold your email from products and services please indicate in the box provided. Your book orders will also be sent to this email address so it is highly recommended that you do not withhold it. If you are publishing printed books a company called MVB will contact you (using the email address supplied) about receiving your book orders electronically. MVB manages a number of electronic order routing services for the UK and Global book trade. Their email address should you wish to contact them is **SalesUK@mvp-online.com**.

How do I complete the BookData Title Information Form?

If you complete the BookData Title Information Form (page 3 of the form), the form will be sent to be manually registered on the BookData database. This will take four to six weeks for the first book to appear on the BookData database.

BookData's preferred method of receiving title information, and the best way for you to get your data out to customers as soon as possible, is to use the BookData Title Editor service. This is an online service for publishers to add and amend title records. Once you have your ISBNs, you can register for BookData Title Editor: www.nielsentitleeditor.com/titleeditor/. If you encounter any problems, please contact the Publisher Help Desk: Pubhelp.book@nielseniq.com or call **01483 712 450**.

Book data registered on the BookData database is supplied to booksellers, publishers, libraries and other data users around the world via a range of subscription services. This data is not available to the general public.

Illegible forms will be returned to you and may delay your application.

Glossary

1 – ISBN

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

*2 – 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.

*3 – Price in £

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

*4 – 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 either indicate the retailer e.g. Kindle, i-store, or supply an URL on page 1. For e-books/downloads, you must show the format and file type e.g. Kindle, e-pub, PDF, etc.

5 – 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.

6 – Translator(s)

Please give the name of any translator(s) that will appear on the actual book.

7 – Language of translation

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.

*8 – 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.

*9 – Size

Please give the height x width of the publication in millimetres. This is not needed for e-books.

10 – Number of pages

The total number of pages should be given, including any with Roman numerals. This is not needed for e-books.

NB. If your book is an e-publication, fields 9 and 10 may be left blank.

11 – Number of volumes

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

12 – Number and type of illustrations

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

***13 – Edition**

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

14 – Running time in minutes

Please supply CDs, DVDs and downloads only.

15 – 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.

***16 – Short Description**

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

17 – Fiction type

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

***18 – Readership Level**

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

***19 – Name and address of publisher**

BookData Title Information form will be detached from the rest of your ISBN application so it is essential to enter the publisher's name again here. The name must be the same as that on page 1.

***20 – 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.

If your distributor is one of the larger ones, it is likely BookData will already have the details on record, so you can add just the name, e.g. Hachette Distribution, Gardners, Lighting Source, TBS, Turnaround, YPS, CreateSpace and Lulu.

NB if you self distribute you will automatically be set to receive your orders electronically from a company called MVB. MVB will contact you (using the email address supplied) about receiving your book orders electronically.

For more information email: salesUK@mvb-online.com.

***21 – Orders address**

If different from publisher/distributor, otherwise leave blank.

***22 – Publishing Market Rights**

Please show the territories for which the exclusive publishing rights for the title are currently owned. If you have not sold rights to publish this title to another organisation, then you own the market rights for all the territories listed and you should mark the form 'Worldwide'. If you have sold the right to publish in another territory then you should indicate the territories where you will retain the rights to publish this ISBN.

Other Useful Information

Listing Publications:

Bibliographic resources list ISBN and publication details. This information includes titles, authors, classifications, availability and prices. The BookData bibliographic database is an essential resource as the information is supplied to retailers and libraries worldwide via a range of information services to your customers. The BookData Metadata services are especially helpful for book buyers to find certain publications. Listing your title is a free service offered by BookData (further details of BookData's other services will be supplied after ISBN registration). We recommend that you register to use our publisher service BookData Title Editor as the best means of ensuring your book information is available to your customers in a timely, accurate and comprehensive manner. For further information or to register go to: **www.nielsentitleeditor.com/titleeditor/**.

BookData Metadata Services:

Our BookData Online service offers booksellers, libraries and publishers worldwide the ability to search, select and see their results by NielsenIQ BookScan sales ranking. BookData Enhanced is a subscription service that enables publishers to add enrichments to their title records, increasing discoverability. Our Book2Look widget enables publishers of all sizes to use a 'look inside' widget to share their content with the book buyers on the Internet and via social media. There is a range of services available for publishers, distributors, booksellers and libraries. For more information visit the website: **www.nielsenbookdata.co.uk** or email: **sales.book@nielseniq.com**.

BookData Research Services:

The NielsenIQ BookScan service is the world's largest continuous retail sales tracking service operating in 17 territories. BookScan 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. BookScan provides publishers of all sizes information on the market that will aid your decisions from commissioning to stock replenishment. BookData Research also has a wide range of consumer data, providing valuable information on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Publishers, booksellers and libraries have access to a range of services from BookData. It is therefore essential that you provide the fullest information possible about your titles so that the BookData range of services can help you sell your titles more widely. For more information visit the website: **www.nielseniq.com/bookdata-measure** or email: **infobookresearch@nielseniq.com**.

***Please Note:** Our services are all on separate platforms so you will be allocated a unique user name and password for each service.*

Bar codes

Most bookshops have electronic point of sale (EPOS) systems, which enable them to keep track of their sales and to re-order books by scanning the bar code. Retailers can refuse to accept books that are not bar coded. Our Barcode service can generate a barcode from your book's 13-digit ISBN, guaranteeing that it is unique. You can easily purchase barcodes via our online store.

Alternatively, you can refer to **www.bic.org.uk**, which lists some bar code 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 bar codes for products that **do not qualify for ISBNs**.

Tel: **Freephone 0808 178 8799**
Email: **support@gs1uk.org**

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

Tel: **+44 (0)20 7580 0126**
Email: **info@mpagroup.com**

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

Web: **www.portal.issn.org/**

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.

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: **+44 (0)1387 702251**
Email: **info@bdslive.com**

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: **0300 300 2000**
Email: **information@ipo.gov.uk**