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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 3297 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 9, *Identification and description*.

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 3297:1998), of which the entire text has been reorganized and rewritten. This edition clarifies and confirms that different media versions of a continuing resource are assigned different ISSN. In recognition of the increasing need in the digital environment to collocate as well as differentiate media versions, this edition of this International Standard introduces a functionality, the “linking ISSN” (ISSN-L), for the purpose of supporting services that offer search and delivery functionality across all media versions.

## Introduction

The need for a brief, unique and unambiguous identification code for serials and other continuing resources is internationally recognized. The exchange of information among libraries, abstracting services and other content users; suppliers, distributors and other intermediaries; and publishers and other content producers imposes the requirement for a standard code. Communication between the different organizations transcends national boundaries and therefore requires an international code which is numeric, since no single alphabet is used by the majority of producers and users of serials. In response to these requirements, the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) was established as the identification code for serials.

The International Serials Data System (ISDS) was established as an inter-governmental organization within the framework of the UNESCO/UNISIST program to be the designated authority for controlling the assignment of ISSN. In 1993, the ISDS became the ISSN Network.

The first three editions of this International Standard pertained only to serials. However, in 2002 a new category of resources, “continuing resources”, was defined by the library community to encompass new kinds of resources, such as updating databases, as well as traditional serials. Thus the scope of this fourth edition has been broadened to cover serials and other continuing resources.

