
**Information and documentation —
International standard serial
number (ISSN)**

*Information et documentation — Numéro international normalisé
des publications en série (ISSN)*

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Published in Switzerland

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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.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

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

This sixth edition cancels and replaces the fifth edition (ISO 3297:2017), which has been technically revised. The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- the Cluster ISSN concept has been broadened to identify groups of serial titles based on new types of relations;
- the list of resource types eligible for ISSN assignment has been expanded;
- the construction of the ISSN, its machine legibility, and ISSN metadata profile have been detailed;
- the interoperability of ISSN with other identification systems has been specified.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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, system suppliers, distributors and other intermediaries, and publishers and other content producers justifies 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) has been established as the identification code for serials. The ISSN is an opaque identifier where no meaning is to be inferred from the code itself.

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 which is the inter-governmental organization comprising ISO 3297 Registration Authority and ISO 3297 Registration Agencies to which some Registration services have been delegated, including ISSN assignment.

The first three editions of this document 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. The scope of the fourth edition was broadened to cover serials and other continuing resources. The fifth edition removed any reference to the business model from the standard. This sixth edition responds to sector requests by establishing the ability to group and identify related continuing resources into new types of clusters. Furthermore, this document specifies richer metadata elements to allow the communication of additional characteristics of a resource.

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Information and documentation — International standard serial number (ISSN)

1 Scope

This document defines and promotes the use of a standard code (ISSN) for the unique identification of serials and other continuing resources.

Each International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) is a unique identifier for a serial or other continuing resource in a defined medium whether print or electronic.

This document also allows for grouping related continuing resources into clusters identified by a separately-prefixed ISSN as defined in this document.

ISSNs are applicable to serials and to other continuing resources, whatever the business model or modes of distribution (e.g. free, open access, on subscription, etc.) and irrespective of whether the serial is currently in publication, has ceased publication, or publication is planned for the foreseeable future. Continuing resources include whatever the medium of production (print or electronic):

- serials, such as newspapers, periodicals, journals, magazines, conference proceedings, monographic series with no predetermined conclusion, annual or other periodic reports, and
- ongoing integrating resources that are updated, such as loose-leaf publications, updating websites, blogs, institutional repositories, directories and databases.

Monographs, sound and video recordings, notated music publications, audiovisual works, textual works and musical works have their own standard identifiers and are not specifically mentioned in this document. Such items can carry an ISSN in addition to their appropriate identifiers when they are part of a continuing resource.

NOTE This document does not contain any operational guidance for its practical implementation.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1 Metadata

3.1.1

abbreviated key title

specific title established by the ISSN network by replacing each significant word of a key title with the corresponding abbreviation from the List of Title Word Abbreviations managed by the ISO 3297 Registration Authority for ISO 4

Note 1 to entry: See Reference [2] for the List of Title Word Abbreviations.

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Note 2 to entry: Abbreviations are based on ISO 4^[3].

3.1.2

ISSN metadata

descriptive data recorded as part of the ISSN assignment process that provides elements by which the continuing resource is identified and distinguished from other continuing resources

Note 1 to entry: It is updated by the ISSN network when needed.

3.1.3

ISSN Register

official registration database managed by the ISO 3297 Registration Authority containing all ISSN and associated metadata records for those ISSN that have been assigned to date

Note 1 to entry: The database is made available in the ISSN Portal.

3.1.4

key title

unique name established by the ISSN network for a continuing resource, and inseparably linked with its ISSN

Note 1 to entry: The key title can be the same as the title proper of the resource (refer to 3.1.5); or, in order to achieve uniqueness, it can be constructed by the addition of parenthetical identifying and/or qualifying elements to the title proper such as name of issuing body, place of publication, edition statement, etc.

3.1.5

title proper

chief name of a continuing resource as it appears on the title page or title page equivalent or other relevant part of the continuing resource

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3.2 Stakeholders

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3.2.1

applicant

organization or individual that has requested an ISSN to identify a continuing resource under the aegis of, and according to the rules specified by the Registration Authority

3.2.2

Internet Assigned Numbers Authority

IANA

nonprofit private corporation that oversees global IP address allocation, autonomous system number allocation, root zone management in the Domain Name System (DNS), media types, and other Internet Protocol-related symbols and Internet numbers

3.2.3

Internet Engineering Task Force

IETF

open standards organization which develops and promotes voluntary Internet standards, including the standards that comprise the Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP)

Note 1 to entry: The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) issues Requests for Comments (RFC) which are formal documents drafted by committees and subsequently reviewed by interested parties.

3.2.4

ISSN network

inter-governmental association comprising ISO 3297 Registration Authority and ISO 3297 Registration Agencies to which some registration services have been delegated, including ISSN assignment

3.2.5**publisher**

organization or individual whose activity is to commission, create, collect, validate, host and distribute information in printed and/or in electronic form

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.2.3.15, modified — Notes to entry have been omitted.]

3.3 Resources identified**3.3.1****continuing resource**

publication, in any medium, that is issued over time with no predetermined conclusion and made available to the public

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.4.1.05]

Note 1 to entry: Continuing resources include serials and ongoing integrating resources.

Note 2 to entry: An electronic continuing resource is either a resource available on a tangible medium (e.g. disc, flash drive) or a resource accessed by connection to a communication network and by means of hardware and software connections (e.g. online).

Note 3 to entry: Electronic continuing resources can originate in digital form or be retrospectively digitised.

3.3.2**continuing resource edition**

distinct continuing resource issued simultaneously or not simultaneously with one or many editions of that resource, usually with the same title proper

Note 1 to entry: Each edition is intended for a specific audience or use; examples include language, geographic, frequency editions.

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3.3.3**integrating resource**

publication, either finite or with no predetermined conclusion, that is added to or changed by updates that do not remain discrete and are integrated into the whole, and made available to the public in any medium version

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.4.1.06, modified — The example has been omitted.]

Note 1 to entry: Only integrating resources with no predetermined conclusion (i.e. ongoing) are continuing resources eligible for ISSN assignment.

3.3.4**journal**

periodical in any medium version devoted to disseminating original research and commentary on current developments in a specific discipline, sub-discipline, field of study or profession, published over a period of time, or article by article online

3.3.5**medium version**

means used to convey the information or content

Note 1 to entry: The medium can be tangible (e.g. print, CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, tapes, flash drives) or intangible (e.g. websites, online databases, downloadable files).

3.3.6**monographic series**

group of separate books related to one another by the fact that each book bears, in addition to its own title proper, a collective title applying to the group as a whole

Note 1 to entry: The individual book may or may not be numbered in the series.

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Note 2 to entry: Monographic series are not to be confused with multipart monographs which are complete in two or more volumes or series intended to be completed within a finite number of parts/volumes and therefore not eligible for an ISSN.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.4.1.27.02]

3.3.7

periodical

serial generally characterized by variety of contents and contributors, both within one issue of the publication and from one issue to another

Note 1 to entry: Each issue is usually composed of more than one intellectual contribution (article, essay, review, note, etc.).

Note 2 to entry: A periodical has no predetermined conclusion.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.4.1.28.02]

3.3.8

serial

publication in any medium version, issued in successive parts, usually having numerical or chronological designations, and intended to be continued indefinitely, whatever its frequency of publication

Note 1 to entry: Publications of limited duration (e.g. newsletter for a one-time event) that have some characteristics of serials such as successive issues and/or numbering can be considered as serials.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.4.1.28.01]

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3.4 Identifiers and locators

3.4.1

cluster ISSN

ISSN assigned to group continuing resources related to each other

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EXAMPLE Titles available in print and electronic medium versions, titles available in several language editions.

3.4.2

Global Trade Item Number

GTIN

unique number from a standard code used internationally to identify products and packaging units

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.2.5.12 — Notes to entry have been omitted.]

3.4.3

ISSN

International Standard Serial Number

standard code assigned by the ISSN network for the unique identification of serials and other continuing resources in a defined medium version

Note 1 to entry: The term ISSNs can be used to refer to more than one ISSN.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.2.5.03, modified — Notes to entry have been edited.]

3.4.4

ISSN-L

Linking ISSN

cluster ISSN designated by the ISO 3297 Registration Authority to enable collocation or linking among the different medium versions of a continuing resource

3.4.5**PID****Persistent Identifier**

unique identifier that ensures permanent access for a digital object by providing access to it independently of its physical location or current ownership

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.2.5.25]

3.4.6**URI****Universal Resource Identifier**

compact sequence of characters that identifies an abstract or physical resource

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.1.9.20]

3.4.7**URN****Uniform Resource Name**

persistent, location-independent, resource identifier used for recognition of, and access to, characteristics of the resource or the resource itself

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.1.9.22]

4 Construction of ISSN and cluster ISSN

The characters that comprise an ISSN, whatever the prefix, are defined as code points from ISO/IEC 10646.

NOTE The code points referenced above can be represented without ambiguity in all commonly used character sets.

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An ISSN shall consist of eight characters as follows:

Position	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Character	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	C

where:

- N is a digit from the code points in the range U+0030 to U+0039 (the Arabic numerals 0 to 9), and
- C is a check digit being either a digit from the code points in the range U+0030 to U+0039 or the Latin capital letter X (code point U+0058).

The check digit shall be calculated from the other seven digits on a modulus 11 basis with weights 8 to 2, using X in lieu of 10 where 10 occurs as a check digit, as calculated in [Annex A](#).

EXAMPLE

22656405

14549042

Since ISSNs are likely to be used in the same context as codes designed for other purposes, when an ISSN is presented for human perception, it should, to avoid confusion, be preceded by the prefix including ISSN (U+0049, U+0053, U+0053, U+004E) and a space (U+0020) and divided into two groups of four characters, separated by a hyphen (U+002D).

EXAMPLE

ISSN 1792-4219

ISSN 2336-1956

5 Assignment of ISSN — Principles

5.1 An ISSN shall be assigned only by a member of the ISSN network upon request from an applicant or as part of internal library processing such as legal deposit and digitization projects.

5.2 A request for an ISSN may be made to the ISSN network by any individual or organization that needs to identify serials and other continuing resources, e.g. a publisher or their representative, a library, a content provider, a preservation organization.

5.3 A request for an ISSN shall be accompanied by a copy of or access to the earliest issue of serials or the current iteration of integrating resources.

5.4 A request for an ISSN shall be accompanied by metadata about the continuing resource to which an ISSN is to be assigned. Metadata supplied by applicants should be accurate and verifiable.

5.5 At the time of registration by the ISSN network, each continuing resource is assigned a unique key title that links permanently to the ISSN.

5.6 Each distinct continuing resource in a particular medium version should be assigned only one ISSN.

5.7 When a continuing resource is published in different editions or medium versions, a unique ISSN and key title should be assigned to each edition or medium version whether or not they have the same title proper.

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5.8 A new ISSN should be assigned, and a corresponding new key title should be established when the continuing resource undergoes a major change in title or other major changes. The ISO 3297 Registration Authority shall determine, the rules which specify when a new ISSN is required following changes to a continuing resource. In formulating these rules, the ISO 3297 Registration Authority shall take into consideration other relevant bibliographic standards regarding continuing resources.

5.9 Once an ISSN has been assigned to a continuing resource, it should not be altered, replaced or reused for another publication.

5.10 The assignment of an ISSN to a continuing resource shall not imply any meaning or legal evidence with regard to the ownership of rights to that publication or its contents. The ISSN itself is not owned by the applicant and is not changed solely because of a change of publisher or place of publication.

5.11 The assignment of an ISSN to a continuing resource does not imply the ISSN network endorses the content of this continuing resource, nor does it imply any mark of quality about the continuing resource.

6 Establishment of the key title and the abbreviated key title

6.1 The key title is established or authenticated by the ISSN network.

6.2 The key title is based on the title proper. For serials, the issue used to establish the key title is the first issue or earliest available issue at the time of registration. For integrating resources, the key title is based on information appearing on the current iteration. The title proper of the resource becomes the key title if this title is unique in the *ISSN Register* at the time of registration. If this title proper is not unique, the key title is the title of the resource, to which a parenthetical qualifying term is added (such