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**Information and documentation —  
International standard music number  
(ISMN)**

*Information et documentation — Numéro international normalisé de  
la musique (ISMN)*

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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](http://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](http://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](http://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 third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 10957:2009), of which it constitutes a minor revision.

The changes compared to the previous edition are as follows.

- The introductory texts for [Clause 2](#) (Normative references) and [Clause 3](#) (Terms and definitions) have been revised to be accordance with the current ISO style.
- Notes in the definitions have been modified to "Note 1 to entry" in accordance with the current ISO style.
- [Clause 7](#) has been modified to remove specifics about the Registration Authority and provide the URL to ISO's list of Registration Authorities.
- Throughout the document, references to the ISMN Registration Authority were either made generic or removed.
- [Annex C](#) has been modified to make all references to the Registration Authority generic.
- ISO 21047 and ISMN Users' Manual have been removed from the Bibliography.

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](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

The International standard music number (ISMN) was developed by, and for, the music publishing sector as a separate system to complement the International standard book number (ISBN). The existence of the ISMN as a separate identifier system makes it possible to identify printed and notated music as a distinct category of publication within the global supply chain and to develop trade directories and similar services for the specialized market for music publications. In addition, some features of the ISBN system, such as the inclusion of national and language groupings within the structure of the ISBN and its administration, are not suited to the practices and organization of the music sector where linguistic content does not have the same relevance that it does for textual publications. For these and other practical reasons, the ISMN and ISBN co-exist as separate identification systems.

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# Information and documentation — International standard music number (ISMN)

## 1 Scope

This document specifies the International standard music number (ISMN), which is a means of uniquely identifying editions of notated music. It specifies the assignment of a unique ISMN on such editions to distinguish one edition of a title or one separate component of an edition from all other editions. This document also specifies the construction of an ISMN and its location on editions of notated music.

This document is applicable to editions of notated music. The ISMN can also be used to identify editions of notated music that are presented with other media to form an integrated whole (e.g. an edition that, together with a sound recording, forms a single product).

The ISMN is not suitable for the identification of material in other media that are issued separately, such as sound or audiovisual products (e.g., CDs or DVDs), for which other standards such as ISO 3901 (International Standard Recording Code) and ISO 15706 (International Standard Audiovisual Number) are applicable.

The ISMN is not suitable for the identification of the products themselves (CDs or DVDs), for which the European article numbering (EAN) 13-digit bar code can be used.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 15420, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — EAN/UPC bar code symbology specification*

## 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 <https://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1 check digit

added digit which can be used to verify the accuracy of the assignment of the ISMN through a mathematical relationship to the digits contained in that number

### 3.2 edition

all copies of a *notated music* (3.5) resource produced from substantially the same original input and issued by the same entity or group of entities or a person

Note 1 to entry: This covers material that is for sale, for hire, gratis, or for copyright purposes only.

### 3.3

#### ISMN prefix

prefix consisting of four digits of which the first segment of 3 digits is the product code "979" assigned by the global GS1 (formerly EAN.UCC) product identification system and of which the fourth digit is 0 and defines the contingent reserved for notated music

Note 1 to entry: The European Article Numbering International-Uniform Code Council (EAN.UCC) was a supply chain standards family name, formally the EAN.UCC System. In 2005, EAN changed its name to GS1.

### 3.4

#### item

edition of *notated music* (3.5), or a separately available component thereof

### 3.5

#### notated music

graphical representation of music in any format

## 4 Structure and syntax of an International standard music number (ISMN)

### 4.1 Basic structure and syntax of an ISMN

Starting from 1 January 2008, all ISMN shall consist of a thirteen-digit number (Arabic numerals 0 to 9 only) made up of the following four elements:

- the prefix element 979-0;
- a publisher element;
- an item element;
- a check digit.

EXAMPLE ISMN 9790345123458

When the 13-digit ISMN is presented in bar code on printed music publications, it shall be in accordance with the specifications given in ISO/IEC 15420. Therefore, an ISMN presented in bar code is fully compatible with GS1 data structures, including the EAN 13-bar code.

Information on the distribution and management of ISMN prefix ranges is given in the Registration Authority's users' manual.

### 4.2 Prefix element

The first element of a 13-digit ISMN shall be a 4-digit prefix. The first three digits of the ISMN prefix shall be "979", i.e, corresponding to the Bookland code within the GS1 system (see NOTE). The segment containing "979" shall be separated for display purposes by a hyphen from the fourth digit (0) of the ISMN prefix.

NOTE In 1980, the EAN Authority and the International ISBN Agency agreed to assign a specific 3-digit prefix to a fictitious country designated as "Bookland". The numerical country codes "978" and "979" were reserved for this "country" to encode the ISBN. The code 979 was chosen to represent the 13-digit code.

### 4.3 Publisher element

The second element of the ISMN shall be the publisher element. It varies in length from publisher to publisher according to the output of each publisher.

The publisher element shall be assigned by the Registration Authority for this document.



#### 4.4 Item element

The third element of the ISMN shall be the item element. It identifies an edition or an individual component of an edition (e.g., full score, miniature score, set of wind parts, oboe part) in accordance with the specifications given in [Annex A](#). The length of the item element is determined by the length of the publisher element which precedes it.

The item element is normally assigned by the publisher of the printed or other notated music publication.

#### 4.5 Check digit

The fourth and final element of the ISMN shall be the check digit.

The check digit is calculated on a weighted modulus 10 in accordance with [Annex B](#).

### 5 Presentation and location of the ISMN on notated music

#### 5.1 Presentation

When an ISMN is displayed in human readable form (i.e. a form meant primarily to be read or written by a person, in contrast to a form primarily meant to be used by data processing equipment), it shall be preceded by the letters ISMN and each of the elements of the ISMN should be separated from the others by a hyphen as in the following example.

EXAMPLE ISMN 979-0-123-45678-5

#### 5.2 Location and display

**5.2.1** The ISMN shall be printed on the back cover of the item and on the back of the jacket if the item has one.

**5.2.2** If practicable, the ISMN should also be printed with the copyright notice of the edition.

**5.2.3** If it is not possible to print the ISMN in any of these positions, the ISMN shall be printed in some other prominent position on the item.

**5.2.4** When the item is a single sheet, the ISMN may be printed in a prominent position in only one place on the item.

**5.2.5** If the item involves display of content stored in electronic form (e.g. an online item), the ISMN shall appear on the page or screen that displays the title or its equivalent (e.g., the initial screen displayed when the content is first accessed and/or the screen that carries the copyright notice).

**5.2.6** Each volume of a multi-volume set should bear a list of all the ISMNs pertaining to the particular volume and to the set as a whole. An item within a set should also bear a list of the ISMNs for each of the other individual items in the set.

**5.2.7** When the item is an anthology, the ISMN of the anthology shall be distinguished from the ISMN of any individual pieces that are published separately from the anthology.

**5.2.8** If an item bears another identifier as well as an ISMN, these numbers should be printed close to each other. Each international standard number shall be preceded by the appropriate acronym (e.g., the letters ISBN, ISSN, ISRC, ISAN, ISWC, or ISMN).

## 6 Assignment of an ISMN

See [Annex A](#) for the principles for the assignment and use of an ISMN.

## 7 Administration of the ISMN system

The ISMN shall be supervised, coordinated and administered by a Registration Authority whose details can be found at <https://www.iso.org/mara>.

The principal tasks of the Registration Authority shall be as outlined in [Annex C](#).

## 8 Association of an ISMN with ISMN metadata

An ISMN shall be associated with the ISMN metadata and presented as specified in [Annex D](#). The ISMN metadata required shall enable the unique identification of the edition of notated music and shall be kept in a register.

The basic set of metadata required to register an ISMN is given in [D.2](#).

## 9 Implementation guidelines for the 13-digit ISMN

The guidelines for converting the 10-digit format ISMNs to 13-digit format ISMNs are given in [Annex E](#).

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