



# International Workshop Agreement

**IWA 44**

**Global Media Identifier (GMI) for  
distribution channels and brands**

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# Contents

Page

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>1 Scope</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Normative references</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4 Construction of a GMI</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 General characteristics	4
4.2 Representation of the GMI	4
<b>5 GMI Check Digit</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1 General characteristics	5
5.2 Procedure for calculating the check digit unit	5
5.3 EXAMPLE	5
<b>6 GMI kernel metadata elements</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7 GMI extended metadata elements</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8 GMI assignment</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>9 GMI interoperability with other IDs</b>	<b>7</b>
9.1 Interoperability with DOI	7
9.2 Interoperability with QR Codes	7
<b>Annex A (normative) Metadata elements</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Annex B (informative) Governing and operating the GMI</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Annex C (informative) Integrity, transparency and security of GMI</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Annex D (informative) Guidelines and best practices for potential usage of the GMI by external parties</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Annex E (informative) Media data taxonomy</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Annex F (informative) Workshop participants</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>28</b>

## 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 document 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)).

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International Workshop Agreement IWA 44 was approved at a workshop hosted by the German Institute for Standardization (DIN), in association with the Global Media Registry (GMR), held in Berlin, Germany, in January 2025.

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).

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## Introduction

In July 2023, the Global Media Registry (GMR) and the German Institute for Standardization (DIN) submitted a proposal to the Secretariat of the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB) for the development of an ISO International Workshop Agreement (IWA).

The foundation of this IWA workshop was approved by the ISO members in November 2023. To ensure that the broadest range of interested parties worldwide participated in the workshop, an invitation letter was circulated to all ISO members and other potential stakeholders on 2023-11-16 and registration to the workshop was possible until 2024-02-23.

This document was discussed and approved at a series of workshops held between February 2024 and January 2025. This included an internal commenting phase as well as a public consultation phase.

Global Media Identifiers (GMI), as covered by this document, are a tool to enhance the integrity of the online news ecosystem. Among other things, it helps to harmonise and improve the effectiveness of respective signalling along the distribution chain to facilitate content indexation and recommendation by online platforms (e.g. search, streaming and social media). In addition, the deliverables of this document can be used by all other stakeholders that engage with mass media and content distribution online, such as providers/operators of advertising technology, and public sector actors (e.g. regulatory authorities).

The aim of the GMI is to establish source identity, for example, between channels operated by the same editorial unit across platforms, news media websites and their social media presence. Such an interoperable system of GMIs is crucial to safeguarding the integrity of news and information ecosystems, which is relevant when publishing, accessing, and managing content online. Additional parties engaged in this information ecosystem such as individuals (influencers, bloggers, or independent journalists), as well as third-party aggregators and other distributors, can be considered for GMI assignment.

GMIs are part of an open and scalable infrastructure of identifier systems and indicators that aim to safeguard the transparency, responsibility and accountability of online content and its sources. The purpose of this document is not to replace existing standards and indicators, but to add a holistic and global framework with a view of harmonising them.

The functioning of our shared information space depends on digital infrastructure and platforms. Their protocols and algorithmic-driven recommender systems determine how content can be accessed by users online. In order to function properly, these recommender systems require up-to-date criteria by which content is included, promoted or even excluded based upon inclusion lists of trustworthy sources of content, or exclusion lists of bad actors.

The unique key of the GMI is designed to provide signal transparency and integrity in a neutral way and is assigned to media outlets (which means all distribution channels and brands of a content provider), so that the industry, regulators, audiences and other stakeholders can unambiguously identify the respective source of information, for example, in order to trace back and identify its ultimate beneficial owner.

Identifiers of media are not a new idea. Most, if not all, major stakeholders concerned (such as social media platforms and search engines, the advertising sector and public actors, such as national regulators, and academic researchers) already use their own identifiers to index media companies, their outlets, brands and channels, but those lists are often incomplete and not harmonized. The GMI is an effective and transparent alternative or complement to these diffuse attempts. It mitigates related risks by facilitating harmonization both vertically (e.g. between platforms and signal providers) and horizontally (e.g. amongst platforms and ad-tech). This reduces errors, speeds up the processes, and prevents the mismatches and mix-ups that are common in this space.

Many countries and transnational entities are currently in the process of updating their regulatory frameworks to better reflect the realities of the online environment, safeguard transparency and protect the rights of users. Assigning news sources with GMIs can enable key players to more effectively comply with this kind of regulation. Some examples from the European Union (EU) context are the Digital Services Act that requires online services to take effective mitigation measures against online risks, and the Copyright Directive which obliges online platforms to pay rights holders for their content. The European Media Freedom Act foresees a protected status for news media publishers and their accounts on social media.