



## **979-prefixed ISBNs to appear early in 2008**

The International ISBN Agency has announced that ISBNs with a prefix of 979 are likely to start being assigned in the second quarter of 2008.

Up till now, 13-digit ISBNs have all carried the 978 prefix, allowing systems to carry both 10 and 13-digit ISBNs. Once the 979 prefix is introduced there can be no 10-digit equivalent as this could lead to duplication of numbers. It is therefore essential that book trade and library systems are prepared to process the full 13-digit number.

Both country prefixes and publisher prefixes will change in the 979-prefixed range of numbers as the system is being fine-tuned to avoid wastage of numbers. There will also be a move to national prefixes rather than the language-based group prefixes on which the system was based when it was thought out in the late 1960s.

Brian Green, Executive Director of the International ISBN Agency, said "The move to 13-digit ISBNs has been relatively painless with most publishers and distributors operating dual systems during the changeover period. The arrival of 979-prefixed ISBNs means that everyone involved in the book supply, chain including publishers, distributors, booksellers and libraries, will have to make certain that their systems can deal with the full 13-digit ISBN".

### **Notes to editors:**

The ISBN changed from 10 to 13 digits in January 2007 in line with the revised ISO standard (ISO 2108). The reason for the change in the system was to ensure the numbering capacity of the ISBN system. The growth in electronic publishing and the need to number parts of books made available separately means that this capacity needs to be increased.

The 978 and 979 "Bookland" prefixes have been allocated by GS1 (formerly EAN International and UCC) in accordance with a contract between GS1 and the International ISBN Agency. The contract also allows for a further prefix to be allocated if and when 979 is exhausted. The arrangement with GS1 means that the 13-digit ISBN is the same as the GTIN13 (EAN/UCC13) number used on book barcodes.

**N.B.** Numbers starting 979-0 have been allocated to the International Standard Music Number (ISMN) that identifies sheet music.

### **For further information:**

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