

BIC Breakfast

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The ISBN: Best practice for international book identification

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Overview

- ❑ Introduction – a bit about us
- ❑ Why standards matter
- ❑ Does best practice still matter?
- ❑ A word about “pooling”
- ❑ Permanence
- ❑ Assigning to parts, chapters, etc.



International ISBN Agency



International ISBN Agency

- *Small organisation - in Russell Square, London*
- *Not for profit*
- *Appointed by ISO to be the “Registration Authority for ISBN”*
 - *promote, coordinate and supervise ISBN system globally*
 - *provide guidance to ISBN Agencies and other users*

(UK ISBN Agency is separate – run by Nielsen, Woking)



Why standards matter

What is a “standard”?

provides **rules, guidelines** or **characteristics** for **activities** or for their results, *aimed at achieving the optimum degree of order* in a given context¹.

¹From <https://www.iso.org/deliverables-all.html>



Why standards matter – in the book world

Order =

Easy for data recipients to process

Foundation for metadata

Quickly get books into databases

Supply chain can run effectively and efficiently

Overall benefits and success for all participants

Order ≠

Restriction on creativity



Keeping it flexible

Book is NOT defined in the Standard

- no minimum number of pages
- no defined format (printed or digital or audio, etc.)
- no restriction on author or publisher imagination

Must be: text, available to the public, one-off



New ISBN Standard!

International Standard since 1970

Dec. 2017 – New edition of ISBN Standard



Jan. 2018 - New ISBN Users' Manual and FAQs

- Available free from www.isbn-international.org

- Help with practical questions

- Worked through most problems – so you don't have to!



Does best practice still matter...?

Do you want your books to be discovered?

Do you want to sell more books?

Do you want to analyse sales?



Does best practice still matter...?

ISBNs identify *unique products*

ISBN for *each separate product* – very granular system

ISBNs identify *the publisher and the imprint*

ISBNs identify *the general location of the publisher*

ISBNs are *permanent*

978-0-233-15109-0



A few rules...

“...after the ISBN agency assigns ISBNs to a publisher, that publisher **cannot resell, re-assign, transfer or split its list of ISBNs** among other publishers”.

ISBN Users' Manual 2018



A few rules...

“A publisher operating separate and distinct offices or branches in different places *may* have a registrant element for each office or branch.

...each publication is to be assigned only one ISBN *by the office or branch responsible for the publication.*”

ISBN Users' Manual 2018



A word about “pooling”

- Block identifies your *company* and *where* it is
 - Multinationals need to be careful
- You can associate different imprint names with the same block (keep your ISBN Agency informed!)

978-0-233

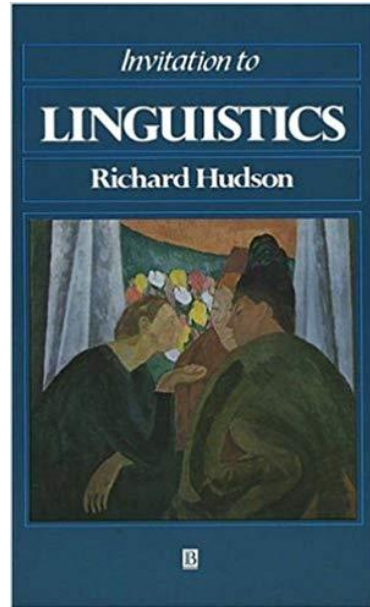


A word about “pooling”

- Taking an example...

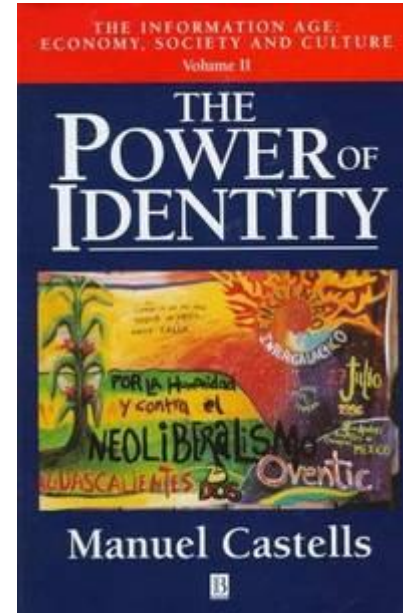


A word about “pooling”



978-0-631

Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK



978-1-55786

Blackwell Publishing, Inc, MA, USA

A word about “pooling”

Multi-site publishers – use **prefix of your place of publication**

This ensures:

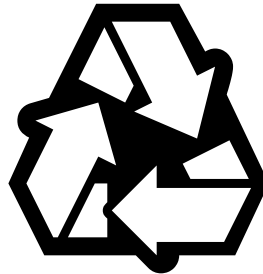
- your publications are associated with the right imprint
- your sales history is correctly maintained

Consistency *matters*



Permanence

- ISBN identifies a publication for all time
 - Only put OP pubs you know will never come back
 - Same ISBN can't identify another book



An ISBN is not  - it just keeps going!

ISBNs are permanent identifiers



Assigning to parts, chapters, etc.

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Assigning to parts, chapters, etc.

ISBNs can identify parts of books *as long as they are available separately in the supply chain*

e.g. chapters, sections, parts

Possible applications – courses

– “mix and match” sets



Thank you...

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