## **ISSNs and BAR-CODES**

ISSNs (International Standard Serial Numbers) can only be assigned to **true serials**, i.e. publications that are intended to be **continued indefinitely**, and which usually bear a date or issue number. <u>Every serial title must be issued with a different ISSN</u>. <u>If a serial changes its title a new ISSN is necessary</u>. A change of date on a publication, including annuals, is not a change of title. 'Once-off' publications use ISBNs (International Standard Book Numbers).

An ISSN is an 8-digit number, written in two groups of 4 digits, separated by a hyphen and preceded by the letters ISSN (in capitals) and a single space. (In some cases the last digit may be the letter X, and not a number.) **Even when an ISSN is used in a bar-code it should also be printed in full on the publication in some prominent place.** 

An ISSN can be used to build a bar-code, now desired by many wholesalers and retailers. The string of 13 digits, from which the bar-code is generated, begins with **977**, is followed by the **first seven** of the eight **digits of the ISSN**, followed by **two digits** known as 'sequence variants', followed by **a** specially calculated **check-digit**. The sequence variants normally start as 00, and are increased by one each time the price changes. (For "one-off" special priced issues a sequence variant of 99 should be used.) The check digit also changes as the result of a change in the sequence variants.

This, main, part of the bar-code identifies the title. If the title changes you must apply for a new ISSN.

An extra piece of bar-code, called the 'Add-on', which changes with each issue, is needed to distinguish between the individual issues. This is generated from a 2-digit number.

If the frequency is between annual and monthly, then the month number is used, e.g. 01 for January, 02 for February, 06 for a June/July issue.

In the case of a publication that appears more frequently than monthly, this number is the International Standard Week Number, i.e. 01, 02, ... 53.

If a title is published daily, or at a frequency between daily and weekly (e.g. twice a week), the appropriate week number is used for the 'Add-on'. The first sequence variant, in the main part of the bar-code, is used, as above, to indicate a price change. The second sequence variant is used for the day number (Monday = 1, Tuesday = 2 etc). The check-digit will also change.

The 'Add-on' for annuals consists of the last digit of the year, always followed by 5 (e.g. 1999 = 95, 1999/2000 = 95, 2000 = 05, 2001 = 15, 2001/2002 = 15, 2002 = 25, 2002/3 = 25, 2003 = 35).

Some guidelines are also available for extra or special issues and for temporary price changes.

The following two companies both produce bar-codes, either on microfilm master, disk or label; there may well be others:

Holfeld Graphics, Johnstown Lane, Dun Laoghaire. Tel: (01) 2855233; Fax: (01) 2853061 e-mail: customercare@holfeldgraphics.com Web: www.holfeldgraphics.com

IMS Barcoding Services, Dublin & Cork. Tel.: 087 9031012. e-mail: imsbarcodes@eircom.net. Skype: mike\_olden\_365 Nationwide. Web: www.imsbarcodes.com.

The publication *Best Practice Guidelines for Bar Coding and Issue Numbering of Magazines, Partworks & Collectibles and Promotional Vouchers* may be downloaded from the following web address: http://www.ppa.co.uk/cgi-bin/go.pl/publication/details.html?uid=46. As this is a UK publication, references to some agencies have to be converted to their Irish equivalents.

For information on bar-coding items which do not have ISSNs or ISBNs or for general technical information on bar-codes contact:

GS1 Ireland, The Nutley Building, Merrion Road, Dublin 4 Tel: (01) 2080660; Fax: (01) 208 0670; e-mail: info@gs1ie.org www.gs1.ie

May we also take the opportunity to remind you of the obligation placed on Irish publishers by the Legal deposit clause (Section 198) of the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000, and previously under the Copyright Act, 1963, and related Acts, to send a copy of all publications to certain libraries, including this one.

Irish ISSN Centre

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