

Compiled by: Irish ISSN Centre, National Library of Ireland, based on various authoritative sources

## WHAT IS A SERIAL?

Serials are print or non-print publications issued in parts, usually bearing issue numbers, issue dates, or both. A serial is expected to continue indefinitely. Serials include magazines, newsletters, newspapers, annuals (such as reports, yearbooks, and directories), journals, memoirs, proceedings, transactions of societies and numbered series and certain electronic publications.

## WHY IS PRESENTATION OF MY SERIAL IMPORTANT?

Your publication may have a wider audience than you think. Besides your subscribers, other readers may want to find your publication in libraries or to order it from a subscription service. Directory publishers and abstracting and indexing services may want to include your title in their directory or product. Readers may want to cite your publication, or articles from it, in their writing. In all cases, having a clear and consistent title, a unique numerical identifier, and clearly presented publication information will make these tasks much easier.

We would recommend to all publishers that any items that they produce should give the following information:

- Title
- Author(s)/editor(s) where relevant
- Place of publication
- Publisher's name and address
- Date of publication
- Volume/part/issue number/date

## WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER IN CHOOSING A TITLE?

Your title should:

- Be unique to avoid confusion with other publications
- Be distinctive
- Be concise
- Have important identifying words at the beginning to help readers find your title in large files and catalogues
- Avoid words indicating frequency, since frequency can change
- Avoid initialisms or acronyms; their filing location is unpredictable

## HOW SHOULD I PRESENT MY TITLE?

- Use unambiguous typography
- Clearly separate any logos, slogans or other text from the title
- Place the organisation's name in a different location from the title
- Clearly distinguish the title from any subtitles
- Present the title in the same way everywhere on an issue and from one issue to another

- Do not modify your title in any way unless you intend a deliberate title change. (A change of typography or addition of cover wording may be misinterpreted by a library as a title change.)

## WHY ARE TITLE-CHANGES A PROBLEM?

- Your hard-earned identity may be lost
- Title changes cost libraries money to re-catalogue and re-shelve the title
- In collections that are shelved by title, your publication may be shelved in different places
- By calling attention to your title, a title change may trigger a library to re-evaluate its need for your serial

## WHAT IF I STILL WANT TO CHANGE MY TITLE?

- Make the change at the beginning of a volume — this helps with re-shelving and binding
- Explain the change to your readers in advance, if possible
- Request a new ISSN (see later)
- Keep the same numbering scheme unless you change the scope of the publication
- Avoid incremental changes; for example, gradually shrinking the old title while gradually enlarging the new title over a series of issues; instead, make a clean break

## WHAT IF MY PUBLICATION MERGES WITH ANOTHER SERIAL OR SPLITS INTO TWO OR MORE TITLES?

- Decide whether one or none of the old titles will be retained and obtain new ISSNs from your ISSN Centre if appropriate
- Tell your readers and your ISSN Centre what is happening
- Merge or split at the beginning of a volume
- Only begin issue/volume numbering again if there is a new title or titles

## WHY SHOULD I NUMBER MY SERIAL AND HOW?

- A consecutive number or issue date or both are very important for identification, recording issues in a check-in system, claiming, etc.
- A numbering system makes it more obvious that the publication is a serial
- Use Arabic numbers in preference to Roman numerals; people will understand them more easily. A commonly-used numbering scheme consists of volume and issue numbers, e.g. Vol.1, no.1
- Avoid double numbering schemes, e.g. Vol.3, issue 1 and no.9

## WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT SUPPLEMENTS AND SPECIAL ISSUES?

- Size them the same as the parent publication
- Indicate whether they update or are to be used with the parent publication
- Indicate whether they are part of the subscription
- Check with your ISSN centre; they may or may not be assigned the same ISSN as the parent publication, depending on their nature

## WHAT IS AN ISSN AND HOW DO I GET ONE?

An ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) is a unique, internationally-used identification number for serial publications. It looks like this: ISSN 1234-5672. ISSNs are assigned by a network of almost one hundred centres world-wide. The Irish ISSN Centre is in the National Library of Ireland (for address and other details, see later).

- If the title of a serial changes, a new ISSN must be assigned
- The ISSN assigned to a particular title should never be used for any other serial title
- Different regional language and media (print/electronic) editions of a serial each require their own ISSN

## WHY WOULD I WANT AN ISSN?

- To distinguish your title from any others with which it might be confused
- To help libraries, distributors, and others who handle large numbers of serials to identify your serial unambiguously
- To help users to search automated files
- To use it to construct a barcode

## WHAT ARE SOME OTHER STANDARD CODES USED ON SERIALS?

### ISBN (International Standard Book Number)

- Is the book counterpart of an ISSN
- An ISSN and an ISBN can both be used on annuals and on books in series. (The ISSN identifies the overall serial; the ISBN identifies the particular year, or monograph, in the serial or series.)

### Barcodes

- Used on serials to enable scanned check-in, checkout and inventory control

The EAN (International Article Number) barcode is the form most commonly used in Ireland and in Europe. ISSNs are used to construct the EAN barcodes printed on serials.

## HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO PRESENT MY SERIAL?

For a thorough treatment of issues highlighted in this leaflet, see Serial publications: guidelines for good practice in publishing printed journals and other serial publications, published by the United Kingdom Serials Group, <http://www.uksg.org/>. This item may be out of print. For

online publications see  
<http://www.niso.org/workrooms/pej>

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

### ISSNs :—

- **Irish ISSN Centre**, National Library of Ireland, Kildare St, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6030209/6030264  
e-mail: [issnirl@nli.ie](mailto:issnirl@nli.ie)

### ISBNs :— for books and books in series :—

- ISBN Agency, 3rd Floor, Midas House, 62 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6LQ, England  
Tel: 00 44 01483 712 215 (9.00am to 5.00pm)  
Fax: 00 44 01483 712 214  
e-mail: [isbn.agency@nielsen.com](mailto:isbn.agency@nielsen.com)  
[www.isbn.nielsenbook.co.uk](http://www.isbn.nielsenbook.co.uk)

### ISMNs :— for printed music, whether a part, a score, or an element in a multi-media kit. :—

- UK ISMN Agency, Music Publishers Association, Att.: Ms. Hannah Baker, 6th Floor, British Music House, 26 Berners Street, London W1T 3LR  
Tel: 00 44 20 7637 4052 Fax: 00 44 20 7637 3929  
e-mail: [hbaker@mpaonline.org.uk](mailto:hbaker@mpaonline.org.uk)  
[www.ismn-international.org/](http://www.ismn-international.org/)

### Barcodes :—

for general technical information; for items which do not have ISSNs or ISBNs :—

- GS1 (formerly EAN) Ireland, The Nutley Building, Merrion Road, Dublin 4.  
Tel: (01) 2080660 Fax: (01) 2080670  
e-mail: [info@gs1ie.org](mailto:info@gs1ie.org) [www.gs1ie.org](http://www.gs1ie.org)  
for detailed recommendations :—

for periodicals in general :—

- PPA, Second Floor, 35-38 New Bridge Street, London EC4V 6BW.  
Tel: 00 44 20 7404 4166 Fax: 00 44 20 7404 1167  
e-mail: [info@ppa.co.uk](mailto:info@ppa.co.uk) [www.ppa.co.uk/](http://www.ppa.co.uk/)  
for newspapers :—
- The Newspaper Society, 292 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1AE.  
Tel: 00 44 20 7632 7480  
e-mail: [ns@newspapersoc.org.uk](mailto:ns@newspapersoc.org.uk)  
[www.newspapersoc.org.uk](http://www.newspapersoc.org.uk)

### Copyright :—

- Irish Copyright Licensing Agency, 25 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6624211 Fax: (01) 6624213  
[www.icla.ie](http://www.icla.ie)

### General :—

- Magazines Ireland, 25 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 6675579 [www.magazinesireland.ie/](http://www.magazinesireland.ie/)
- Publishing Ireland/Foilsíú Éireann (formerly CLÉ), 25 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 6394868 [www.publishingireland.com](http://www.publishingireland.com)

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