



# 101 Primer: The Roadmap of Identifiers and the Business Cases for Their Usage

Scott Lubeck  
Executive Director  
BISG

NISO/BISG 4th Annual Forum  
The Changing Standards Landscape  
Friday, June 25, 2010

© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

## Overview

- ▶ Welcome
- ▶ Who is BISG?
- ▶ The identifiers that matter to the book industry
- ▶ What they do (or don't)
- ▶ The future of identification



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

Create employment in the book industry for both physical and digital products.

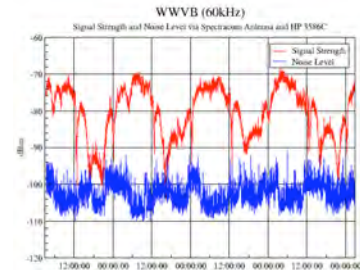


*BISG is committed to the development of effective industry-wide standards, best practices, research and events that enhance relationships between trading partners.*



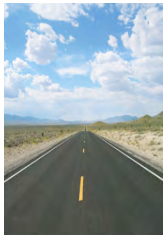
© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

## Improving the ratio of signal-to-noise in the book industry



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

## BISG's Vision Statement



To become **the** book industry leadership organization in a time of great **transformation** by helping to build and support a **new industry network** enabling new opportunities for profitable growth.



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

## The puzzle we're now solving...

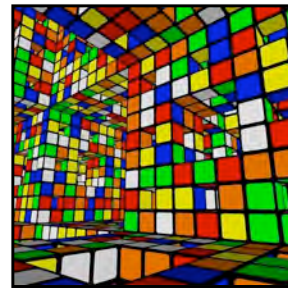
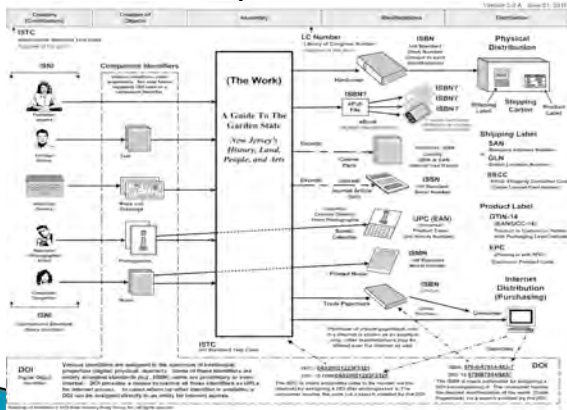


Illustration taken from:  
*The Math Book: From Pythagoras to the 57th Dimension*  
by Clifford A. Pickover, Sterling Publishing



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

## The ID roadmap



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

## What's an identifier do?

- ▶ Books (products)
- ▶ People (authors)
- ▶ Abstractions of real things (works)



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

Which are the important ones to the book industry?

# ISBN-13

ISTC

ISNI



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

The business purpose always trumps...



...because it solves a tangible problem



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



## A short history of identifiers

In the beginning there was . . .



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

## NO-ISBN

**Open Submission: ART Books**  
**Deadline 31. 01. 2010**


Have you recently published an art book without an ISBN?

Is it an art book, the documentation of your work or does it cover art or art theory? Send me your "Gray(s)" art publication/ NO-ISBNs please. 300 books will be exhibited!

Deadline  
31. January 2010

Bernhard Cella

For more information please visit  
[salon-fuer-kunstbuch.at](http://salon-fuer-kunstbuch.at)





© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

## ISBN — International Standard Book Number

A pragmatic solution to real problems in the supply *chain*



© 2009 Practical Innovations

Linear, linked, transparent, navigable, one dimensional

© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



## ISBN — International Standard Book Number

In 1966 he helped put books on the shelf for W.H. Smith



Professor Gordon Foster  
Fellow Emeritus  
Founder of the ISBN Standard

© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



## ISBN — International Standard Book Number

- ▶ Identifies a specific **physical** manifestation of the book, hardcover, paperback mass market edition, etc.
- ▶ Assigned to **tradable** products

© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



## The truth about implementation

- ▶ Many identifiers are underutilized
- ▶ Implementation requires pain and persuasion

© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



16

## The implementation of the ISBN took some persuasion



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



## Identifiers take on meaning when they solve real problems and create real value

“A necessary requirement for selling your publications through booksellers, wholesalers and distributors is the assignment of unique ISBN numbers for each title,” said a powerful retail chain.

© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



## Books want to be found

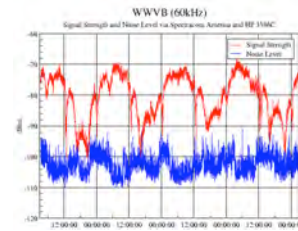
**ANATOMY OF A BOOKSTORE PRICE TAG**

© 2010, The Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

BISG

## What is an identifier then?

► Signal!



© 2010, The Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

BISG 20

## Proof of existence: ISBN therefore I am



BISG

## And identifiers at work evolve with the world around them



Publisher: Butterworth-Heinemann  
ISBN: 9780750687119

© 2010, The Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

BISG

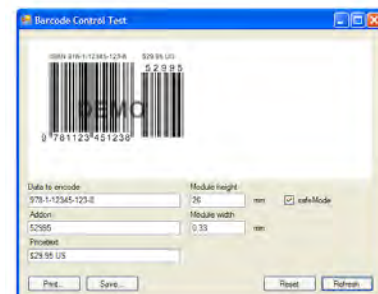
“Plenty of numbers, right? Actually, no. We’re running out of ISBNs under this system. The solution is to move to the new, improved 13-digit”



© 2010, The Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

BISG

## Key to global reach: Control Code EAN 13 / ISBN 13 with Source Code 1.02



© 2010, The Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

BISG



## What is ISTC?

- ▶ The International Standard Text Code
  - now an ISO (21047)
- ▶ An identifier for creative textual works
  - prose, poetry, lyrics, screenplays, scripts
- ▶ These are abstract entities
  - independent of binding-format-wrapper
- ▶ Not a supply-chain identifier for products

## One ISTC per work

- ▶ On one creative textual work
  - with a single ISTC
- ▶ We hang
  - many “manifestations”
  - or products
  - each with an ISBN

<http://www.bisg.org/contentweb/papers/the-international-standard-text-code-istc-a-work-in-progress/>



## What the signal looks like



- ▶ The magic of hexadecimals...
  - 4,096 available registration agencies
  - each can register up to 4,294,967,296 annually
  - annual capacity 17,592,186,044,416 works
- ▶ Anyone (with some authority) can register

## Use cases from a publisher

- ▶ ISTC links all manifestations of a work—whole or in part—directly and unambiguously.
- ▶ ISTC links all collateral material—marketing, promotional, advertising to all manifestations of the work.
- ▶ ISTC accounts for sales reporting & royalty reporting rollups as well as subrights income.

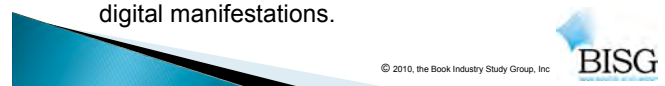


## More use cases from a publisher

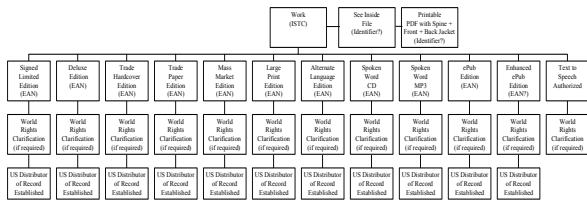
- ▶ The Publisher determines that a graphic novel manifestation of a **work** should carry the same ISTC as the hardcover manifestation of the same work, even though the ISTC User Manual would consider the graphic novel a derivation.
- ▶ Clearly define what constitutes a textual **work**. Is a children's board book with only illustrations and the numbers 1-10 considered a textual work?
- ▶ ISTC is or is not a **work** identifier?

## Use cases from the author

- ▶ Who, when and how to request an ISTC **registration** is clearly defined. Roles and responsibilities are unambiguous.
- ▶ All stake holders, large publishers, small publishers and content creators have equal ability **to register** an ISTC. There are no technical barriers to entry, such as the ability to compile and transmit ONIX messages.
- ▶ **Registration** rules are flexible enough to be clearly applied to the constantly evolving array of digital manifestations.



## Use cases from the retailer



© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



37

## Use cases from the retailer

- ▶ Have one master record with rich metadata for the work, with listings of formats as separate, thus reducing the number of title records that would need to be imported.
- ▶ To be able to link all the manifestations of a work across publishers.
  - (This would only be useful for public domain titles that might be published by multiple companies.)

© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



## And finally, ISNI

- ▶ ISNI – International Standard Name Identifier
- ▶ A Creator (Contributor) Identifier
- ▶ Purpose
  - *Will* enable the identification of Public Identities of parties involved throughout the media content industries in the creation, production, management, and content distribution chains.
  - *May* include authors, illustrators, artists, editors, publishers, collecting agencies, community groups, service organizations, fictional characters, etc.

© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.



40

## Getting involved with BISG and identifiers

- ▶ BISAC Identification Committee: A center of excellence
  - ISBN implementation
  - ISBN-13
  - Identifiers for e-books
  - International Standard Text Code (ISTC)
  - ISNI
  - GDSN



Thank you!

For more information on BISG, visit our website at [www.bisg.org](http://www.bisg.org)

© 2010, the Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

41