Nielsen Book
Jonathan Nowell

Order, chaos and the ISTC
Agenda

• What is the ISTC
• Measurement & Discovery
• Order out of Chaos
What is it?

ISTC  0A9-2008-00000007-C

- International Standard Text Code - ISO standard for identifying textual works independently of any specific publication

- “Textual work” may refer to a piece of prose, lyrics, poetry, script or other text-based creative/intellectual work

- “Textual work” = the significant content (or pieces of content) in a publication

- May be assigned to a whole work or a part of a work, according to what needs identifying

- Only basic metadata is captured, solely to distinguish one work from another
Why do we need to identify “the content”?  

- Agents, publishers and rights agencies:  
  – Need to accurately administer copyrights and publishing licences  

- Retailers and consumers:  
  – Want to discover works … as opposed to manifestations of the work  

- Measurement:  
  – Need to aggregate sales data to measure the value of a work or multiple manifestations  

- Libraries:  
  – Need to collocate multiple publications of the same work and/or avoid acquiring duplicates in the first place  

- Identifying the content is important in the print world … but it is an essential force for order to the digital world
Identifying content is not easy

• The *same work* is often published under *different titles*

• *Different works* are often published under the *same title*

• Even specifying the title *and* the author may be imprecise:
  • Search for “Great Expectations” on Amazon = 778 hits…
  • Search for “Great Expectations” + “Dickens” = 378 hits (including critical essays, adaptations, scripts, performances, collections, abridged, revised, retold, illustrated)

• Titles *and/or* content may be “localized”: e.g., “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone” $\approx$ “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone”

• Works that are “almost identical” may need collating or differentiating, depending on the situation
ISTC structure & capacity

- “ISTC” only precedes the code for display purposes
- 4-digit “year element”
- Hyphens or spaces are for display purpose only & are not part of the ISTC value
- 3-hexadecimal character “registration agency element”
- 8-hexadecimal character “work element”
- Hexadecimal Check digit

ISTC 0A9-2008-00000007-C

- Structure of the code allows over 4,000 registration agencies
- Each agency could register over 4 billion ISTCs annually
- Theoretical capacity to register over 17 trillion ISTCs per annum
Once upon a time in 1968 there was one little ISBN …

- ISBN coding led to Barcodes on books led to EPoS led to BookScan sales tracking
- UK ISBN Counts
As it was – Wilbur Smith Monsoon
The beginning of change - 2003

- Blue Horizon 9780333761359
  Mar-03
- Blue Horizon 9781405021180
  Mar-03
- Blue Horizon 9780312278243
  May-03
- Blue Horizon 9780333761397
  Oct-03
- Blue Horizon 9780330376310
  May-04
Fast Forward to Twilight
## E-books – The future is now

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BookScan Test E-book Panel
Stephenie Meyer E-books by Country of Purchase

- Breaking Dawn
- Eclipse
- New Moon
- Twilight

Countries: GB, US, NO, FR, BE, CI, LU, IC
In Summary

3 format ‘Wilbur Smith’ to a 24 (plus) with Twilight (UK only)

Cross territory complexity

E-book development
Like the ISBN \textbf{was} so the ISTC \textbf{is} all about

DISCOVERY
Discovery means sales (or loans) ... If you can’t find it you can’t buy it (or borrow it)

But discovery can only be effective if we find ways of discovering more of what we want ...and less of what we don’t want

This is getting harder ... there is more stuff out there
When does discovery happen?

• When a bibliographic database is being searched for the metadata record that represents your title, for example:
  – At an online book retailer
  – In the catalogue within a library management system
  – In the database of a bibliographic data aggregator
Author: Vikas Swarup
Title: Slumdog Millionaire

With the whole nation watching Jamal Malik is just one question away from winning...

Format: Paperback

Author: Vikas Swarup
Title: Slumdog Millionaire

Former tiffinboy Ram Mohammad Thomas has just correctly answered twelve questions in a TV quiz-show...

Format: Paperback

Author: Vikas Swarup
Title: Slumdog Millionaire

Read by Kerry Shale, this beautiful award winning audio communicates Vikas’ words and narrative to life...

Format: Audio-CD
Former tiffinboy Ram Mohammad Thomas has just correctly answered twelve questions in a TV quiz-show…
How will the ISTC world look in…

• The near future: phase I

  – Publishers supply ISTC in their ONIX for books records

  – The majority of ISBN records have an ISTC field

  – Databases are still organised by product, each represented with an ISBN, but accurately linking editions and formats is possible
What benefits in phase I?
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<td>ARGOSY BERT EASON GARD</td>
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<td>1 Apr 2005</td>
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How will the ISTC world look in…

• The slightly further away future: phase II

  – Publishers still supply ISTC in their ONIX for books records

  – Sites have been reorganised with the ISTC as the key so the work is the main item

  – Derived works have the original work ISTC on the ONIX for books record
Slumdog Millionaire

Vikas Swarup (Author)

ISTC OA9-2010-14H3K211-3

Description: Former tiffinboy Ram Mohammad Thomas has just got twelve questions correct on a TV quiz-show to win a cool one billion rupees. But he is brutally slung in prison on suspicion of cheating. Because how can a kid from the slums know who Shakespeare was, unless he is pulling a fast one. In the order of the questions on the show, Ram tells us which amazing adventures in his street-kid life gave him the answers. From orphanages to brothels, gangsters to beggar-masters, and into the homes of Bollywood’s rich and famous, Ram’s story is brimming with the chaotic comedy, heart-stopping tragedy and tear-inducing joyousness of modern India.

BIC Subject & Qualifiers: Modern & contemporary fiction (post c 1945) (FA)

E4Libraries Subject: General (GEN)

Dewey: 823.92 (DC22)

BISAC Subject: FICTION / General (FIC000000)

Readership Level: General (US: Trade)

ISBN | Format | Imprint
--- | --- | ---
| | ISBN13: 9780552775359 | |
| | Imprint: Black Swan | |
| | Format: Papertack | |
| | Distributor: TBS The Book Service Ltd | |
| | Wholesaler: ARGOSY BERT EASON GARD | |
| | Date Published: 2 Jan 2009 | |
| | Price: £ 7.99 | |
| | Availability: Available | |
| | BookScan UK Postn: 10462 | |

ISBN | Format | Imprint
--- | --- | ---
| | ISBN13: 9780552772501 | |
| | Imprint: Black Swan | |
| | Format: Papertack | |
| | Distributor: TBS The Book Service Ltd | |
| | Wholesaler: ARGOSY BERT EASON GARD | |
| | Date Published: 1 Feb 2006 | |
| | Price: £ 7.99 | |
| | Availability: Available | |
| | BookScan UK Postn: 32707 | |
Why should every developer who puts together a site or a system have to re-invent the wheel when it comes to managing sameness, with varying results?

The ISTC is a standard and unambiguous field that discovery professionals will use to link and group editions and help to avoid any duplication in results. This work must be populated by the people who know best – the publishers!
Registration Agency Status

• RAs already active in:
  – UK
  – US
  – Germany
  – France (appointed October 2010)

• Formal applications to operate an RA received from:
  – China
  – Russia

• Interest in operating an RA in:
  – Australia, Denmark, Finland, Flanders, Italy, Netherlands, Norway

• International Agency corporate structure is currently under review – may lead to inviting additional members
International Agency Developments

- Online search facility launched April 2010
  - Search by title, contributor or ISTC
  - Free to use, no user-registration required
  - Manual GUI and “API” computer interfaces

- Currently developing a “recursive search” API
  - Input an ISTC & receive the ISTC of the source/original work
  - Input an ISTC & receive the ISTC(s) of works derived from it

- Next:
  - Designing a web-based ISTC registration facility for low-volume registrants e.g., literary agents and small publishers
Order out of chaos

ISTCs are as revolutionary for the book trade as the ISBN was.

ISTC is the natural evolution of the ISBN in a more complex Book Industry.
Be an agent of Order (or an Edgar or an Escher!)

- Got to: www.istc-international.org

- Contact: Julian.Sowa@nielsen.com International ISTC agency or your local registration agency