The International Standard Name Identifier - ISNI

Tools of Change Supply Chain Track
Frankfurt Book Fair 2012
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ISNI in a Nutshell

What is the ISNI
What does it identify
Why should you care
The ISNI record
ISNI technical structure
Current status
An example: Looking for Michele Smith
No, not looking for the Musician.

{Michele Smith}

ISNI 1422 4586 3573 0473
Not the Singer.

Michele Smith
ISNI 1421 7586 3433 9962

ISNI 1421 7586 3433 9962
YES, the Author.

ISNI 7722 4586 1234 0422
Identification
made easy with an ISNI number.
So what is the ISNI?

The ISNI is an ISO standard (ISO 27729:2012) published on March 15th, 2012 that identifies the Public Identities of parties. This means the identities used publicly by individuals or organizations involved in creating, producing, managing and distributing content.
WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?
The ISNI system uniquely and authoritatively identifies **Public Identities** across multiple fields of creative activity. It provides a tool for disambiguating **Public Identities** that might otherwise be confused such as Michele Smith the musician, Michele Smith the female singer, and Michele (Italian form of "Michael") Smith the male author.
Public Identities

• A person’s public identity: Madonna vs Madonna Louise Ciccone
• A company name: Random House
• A fictional character: Sherlock Holmes

The ISNI identifies these names
Separating / Collocating

• Two authors with the same name
  – Thomas Wolfe – “You Can’t Go Home Again”
  – Tom Wolfe – “Bonfire of the Vanities”

• One author, variant spellings/transliterations
  – Fyodor Dostoevsky
  – Fyodor Dostoyevski
What About Pseudonyms/Aliases?

• They get separate ISNIs because they are separate public identities
  – Ruth Rendell vs Barbara Vine
  – Stephen King vs Richard Bachmann
  – David Johansen vs Buster Poindexter

• The metadata in each record refers to the other ISNI, and describes the relationship between them
How Will It Help?

• Search results
  – Distinguishing the books of authors who are truly different people
  – Gathering together the books of an author with multiple ways of spelling her name
  – Keeping the books of pseudonyms distinct and separate

• All of which means that customers find the exact right book
What does an ISNI look like?

- A 16-digit identifier: A 15-digit numeric identifier, plus a check digit (which could be an X)

ISNI 1422 4586 3573 0476
Why should you care?

• Google and other search engines give higher priority to standardized data. ISO Standard identifiers like ISNI indicate information that is unique and authoritative - which is exactly what Google wants to display

• If your metadata contains standard identifiers, it will influence search rankings

• In areas ranging from rights management to royalty assignments, it is essential that there be no doubt as to the identity of the relevant party
Why should you care?
What does an ISNI record look like?

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<tr>
<th>ISNI:</th>
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Technical Architecture

1. Registration Agencies
2. Central ISNI DB
3. VIAF
4. External Databases
5. Verification Agencies
6. Resources databases
7. External databases
8. Manual verifications
Current Status of ISNI

Assigned ISNIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provisional</td>
<td>15,544,706</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>16,975,134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are currently two ISNI Registration Agencies

**Bowker** - primarily (though not exclusively) registers names of individuals and publishing organizations

**Ringgold** - primarily (though not exclusively) registers institution names
Thank You!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

• Beat.Barblan@bowker.com
• www.isni.org