



Advice on Existing Subscription Message Guidelines

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Overview: Advice on Existing Subscription

This message is intended to support an exchange between Publisher and Agent to verify and synchronise the information held by each. The Publisher sends this message as a detailed snapshot of the active subscription records held for each of the Agent’s customers. In turn, the Agent reviews the message and responds by advising of any corrections or amendments required.

Alongside the main subscription records, it is also possible optionally to send additional records conveying information from the publisher about e-journal access and administration.

ICEDIS and its Messages

What is ICEDIS?

ICEDIS is the International Committee on EDI for Serials. The Committee brings together business and technical representatives from the world's leading journal publishers and subscription agents. Together these trading partners are developing and defining industry standards for EDI use in facilitating journal subscription processing. The aims and objectives of ICEDIS are to:

- Be proactive in the specification, development, testing and implementation of agreed EDI standards.
- Encourage the exploitation and acceptance of EDI standards, thus enhancing cost-effective and value-added services throughout the industry.
- Be recognized as an independent international body for the formulation, maintenance, administration and dissemination of EDI standards between publishers, agents and other intermediaries within the journals industry.
- Work together with other standards organizations to optimize the range and acceptability of the EDI standards developed for the industry.

The Need for Specialised Messages

The messages described here have been designed by ICEDIS to support and help automate trade in journals and other serial resources. The messages address various aspects of the subscription business supply chain, but focus particularly on the high-volume transactional and information interchanges between publishers and subscription agents.

The message set has evolved in recent years to support not only print journals but also the rapid expansion in online serial resources. The information model underlying the formats is robust and designed

with built-in controls and checks. The formats are essentially independent of the medium or method used for data transfer.

Uptake in the Industry

The ICEDIS messages are widely used within the serials sector. Many publishers and subscription agents across the world regularly exchange business-critical information quickly and reliably in this way, with considerable savings in terms of process efficiency and accuracy. Each year, many millions of transactions conforming to the message standard are successfully completed. ICEDIS-standard compatibility is a built-in feature of a number of major proprietary systems.

For Further Information

To learn more about ICEDIS and its work, visit <http://www.icedis.org/>
To contact ICEDIS or send feedback on this documentation, contact:

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Business Description: Advice on Existing Subscription

Purpose

This Publisher to Agent message is used as part of an exchange, to synchronise and verify the information held by the two parties for each continuing title and each existing subscription sold via that Agent. Sufficient information is exchanged so that titles and subscriptions can be uniquely identified, but no prices or values are carried by this message. It thus represents an advisory and quality assurance exercise, and is not intended to support sales transactions.

The message contains both Title Header and Data Records (see Key Elements, right). If only Title Records are included, then the message essentially conveys the information that the titles concerned will continue to be available in the following subscription year. In the more common usage, where both Title and Data Records are included, there is additional snapshot information of the Publisher's current view of each subscription via that Agent.

Typical Usage

Although in principle this message could be used ad hoc by agreement, it is typically employed by the Publisher some months in advance of the peak calendar-year renewals season to advise the Agent of the status of current subscription records. The Agent normally then evaluates the Publisher's data and responds with either confirmations or amendments as necessary. This iterative process improves the accuracy of data held on each system and enables higher match rates during the processing of subsequent renewals.

Benefits

- The immediate, short-term benefit of this message lies in its ability to indicate discrepancies between Agent and Publisher records, thus permitting early correction of errors or changes that may otherwise impact service to the customer.
- The major transactional benefit is derived when the *Subscription Order, Renewal and Transfer* exchanges occur later in the renewal "season": the more that Agent and Publisher files can be synchronised in advance, the greater the match rates and thus auto-processing that can be achieved during the peak season.
- To maximise this benefit, ICEDIS recommends that the *Advice on Existing Subscription* message be sent by Publishers to their Agent trading partners at least annually (guideline May–July of each year) to underpin the success of the calendar-year renewals process later in the year.
- This message can optionally also carry additional records conveying *E-Journal Information from the Publisher* (see next page).

Key Elements

- Title Header Records that relate to journal titles
- Data Records that relate to individual subscriptions, including both Agent and Publisher order identifiers/reference numbers, title details and customer name and address
- File Header and Control Total Records that signal the message type, summarise the information transferred and check for completeness.

See Table 4 for a detailed technical description of this message's data record

Business Description: E-Journal Information from the Publisher

Purpose

This optional additional data record is used to convey information related to registration and access for e-journals, from the Publisher to the Agent. It is used as part of the *Advice on Existing Subscription* message (see previous page) to provide reference strings, user IDs or passwords that customers will require to enable access to their online subscriptions. It can also be used to advise the Agent of rate information for the following year and to prompt for a copy of the relevant license agreement to be sent to the Publisher. Note that this data record presupposes that a subscription order or renewal has already been placed with the Publisher.

Typical Usage

As with the other ICEDIS messages, the frequency of *E-Journal Information* exchanges must be agreed between business partners. However, customer expectations are rightly high in this area, and the aim for such exchanges is to get as close as possible to the speed of response that a customer might expect via Internet-based e-commerce exchanges. Therefore it is likely that the frequency of exchanges should be high – for example weekly – to minimise delays.

Benefits

The key benefit derived from using this data record as part of an *Advice on Existing Subscription* message is enabling rapid and error-free access for customers to the online resources they have purchased. Access keys provide an essential control mechanism for publishers and other hosting services, but at the same time it is essential that they are communicated quickly and accurately to those for whom they are intended.

Key Elements

Two groups of elements are conveyed. The first contains important administrative data, including:

- The Publisher's electronic subscription reference
- A prompt for a copy of the relevant license agreement
- A flag to advise on rates for the next year.

The second group covers information needed by the customer to enable access, including:

- A Publisher access number
- User ID and user password assigned by the Publisher.

An Alternative Approach for e-Access Exchanges

At the time of writing, ICEDIS is developing a new mechanism to support e-access requests and responses. This will define XML transactions, making it possible, by agreement, for agents to communicate directly with online hosting platforms on behalf of their customers.

See Table 5 for a detailed technical description of this additional data record

Maximising Success

Synchronising Records, Address Rules

The key to smooth operation for renewal or transfer orders is to maximise the degree of synchronisation between Agent and Publisher files. This can be facilitated by timely usage of the *Advice on Existing Subscription* message. Carrying out this step, and dealing promptly with any amendments or corrections that arise, lays a solid foundation for high match rates during the peak renewals season and thus high levels of automated (rather than manual) processing.

For all subscription orders, it is essential that accurate customer address information be supplied. Given that currently the field available is free-text in nature (as with the *End-User Address* additional data record), it is also vital that business partners reach explicit agreement about how address elements should be handled – particularly if auto-loading to the Publisher’s system is envisaged. Note also the usefulness of keeping the change of address indicator up to date, so that the status of each address can be accurately ascertained.

Getting Prices Aligned

It is vital for all parties that the correct and agreed prices be applied to each transaction, since numerous price variants (catalog, negotiated, etc.) may in principle be available. At least two approaches may be used. In the first, the Publisher communicates valid catalog prices to the Agent as soon as these are known, via an electronic file and/or a printed list. In the second, the Publisher utilises the *Price at Subscription Level* message to provide the Agent with line-by-line advice that can also take into account negotiated, consortium and other arrangements. Either way, prompt and accurate advance loading of these prices to the Agent’s system is a prerequisite for later processing.

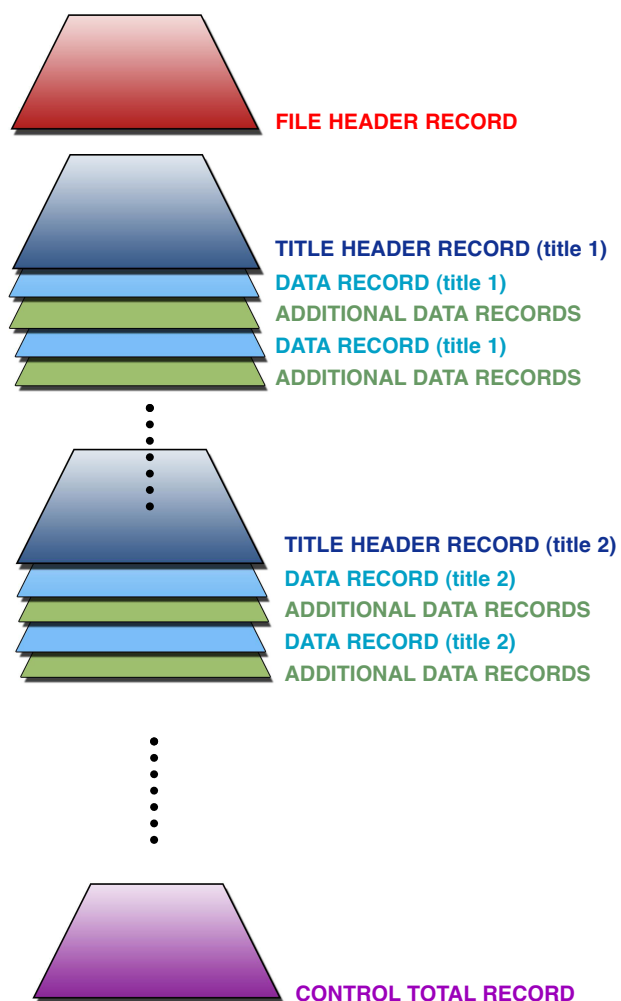
Practical Steps

- The keys are planning and preparation: operational managers within Publishers and Agents should maintain contacts with their opposite numbers and actively plan the sequence of events during the subscriptions year, including the preferred timing, methods, frequency and administrative controls for each type of exchange during various stages of the year.
- Publishers and Agents should exchange the *Advice on Existing Subscription* message some months ahead of the calendar-year renewal peak season to align data on which subscriptions are supposed to be going to which customers.
- Similarly, Publishers and Agents should discuss and agree how prices and price changes are to be communicated, whether using the *Price at Subscription Level* message or outside of the ICEDIS framework.
- Agents should explicitly advise Publishers when they are taking on significant groups of existing subscriptions from another Agent: this helps ensure uninterrupted service to customers as well as maintaining subscription history for the Publisher.
- Agents should seek advance confirmation from Publishers as to whether multi-currency transactions should best be handled within one message or whether they are better split into a series of messages, with one for each currency.
- The *End-User Address* additional data record should be used as part of the *Subscription Order, Renewal or Transfer* message for all subscriptions subject to agent-consolidation arrangements.
- The *E-Journal Information from the Agent* and *IP Address Range* additional data records should be used as part of this message wherever the subscription involved includes partly or wholly online content.

See the companion guidelines at www.icedis.org for other messages described here

General Message Structure

Advice on Existing Subscription



Headers and Control Totals: Publisher to Agent

The File Header Record (Table 1) formally opens the message and declares which type of message is involved. It must be the first record and may occur only once. The Title Header Record gives details of the serial title or journal involved and its structure is shown in Table 2. This record is repeatable, with one instance for each title transmitted, and can be followed by a series of Data Records (see below) each corresponding to the same title. The message ends with a Control Total record, whose structure is shown in Table 3. This provides information on the total number of records transmitted in the message: there can only be one instance of a Control Total in a message and it must be the last record.

Regular & Additional Data Records

Within the overall message structure previously described, the Data Records may be thought of as carrying the “payload” of the messages. Typically there will be one or many Data Records following each Title Header, with each Data Record corresponding to a subscription to the title concerned. Optionally, there may also be Additional Data Records to amplify or elaborate the information transmitted.

End of Record Indicator

Records end with the newline character (CRLF).

Fixed Field-Lengths and Sequences

All the ICEDIS messages are defined in terms of fixed field-length elements and records. This means that not only the content but also the position of each piece of information is significant. The corollary is that pieces of information too long for the relevant field must be correctly truncated and that pieces of information too short for the relevant field must be correctly padded – e.g. with leading zeros for numeric or value fields or with trailing blanks for alphanumeric fields.

Use of Other File Formats

The ICEDIS messages define standards and descriptions that could in principle be exchanged in formats other than simple, fixed field-length. For example, the field and element descriptors might be used to define CSV (comma-separated value) files or spreadsheet layouts with the same field-lengths as the originals. These alternative formats may be easier to achieve by new entrants to the industry, or those with smaller or more modern systems. However, ICEDIS strongly recommends that any such deviation from the basic standard be explicitly discussed and agreed in advance between business partners to avoid confusion or data loss during subsequent exchanges.

Table 1. File Header record

The File Header is mandatory and non-repeatable: it MUST be the first record in every message

Field no.	Element name	Definition and notes	Type*	Req? **	Length	Position in record	Permissible values, where appropriate	Examples
1	Record type	Element denoting the type of an ICEDIS record	N	M	1	1	0	0
2	Sender reference	Reference string allocated by the sender of the message, whether Publisher or Agent. May by agreement be viewed as 15-character code for the sender and a 5-character code for the sender site (if required)	A	R	20	2–21		Swets Lisse 001
3	Sender name	Free-text string identifying the sender of the message, whether Publisher or Agent	A	R	30	22–51		Palgrave Macmillan
4	Creation date	System date when record created. Date in YYMMDD format	D	M	6	52–57		050401
5	File identifier	Controlled value string identifying the nature of the message. REFNCE signifies reference number updates, when used with <i>Advice on Existing Subscription</i> (Table 4) PASUBL is proposed for Price at Subscription Level (Table 5) ORDERS signifies subscription orders, when used with <i>Subscription Order, Renewal or Transfer</i> (Table 6)	A	M	6	58–63	ORDERS PASUBL REFNCE	ORDERS
6	Creation time	System time when record created. Time in HHMM format	D	R	4	64–67		2215
7	Unused area	Unused area. Note: Length of element is either: 593 (when used with <i>Subscription Order, Renewal or Transfer</i>) OR 333 (when used with <i>Advice on Existing Subscription or Price at Subscription Level</i>)	A	R	593 OR 333 (see note left)	68–660 OR 68–400 (see note left)	Always spaces	

Key: * N = Numeric field; A = Alphanumeric field; D = Date field; V = Value field (numeric field with 10 digits including two decimal places)

**M = Mandatory field; R = Recommended field; O = Optional field

Table 2. Title Header record

The Title Header record is repeatable; at least one occurrence is mandatory in every message

Field no.	Element name	Definition and notes	Type*	Req? **	Length	Position in record	Permissible values, where appropriate	Examples
1	Record type	Element denoting the type of an ICEDIS record	N	M	1	1	1 = Title header record	1
2	Publisher title reference	Proprietary identifier assigned by the publisher to the journal/ manifestation concerned	A	R	20	2–21		7014385
3	Journal title	Title of a print or e-journal as defined by the publisher. The “full” cover title should be used	A	M	90	22–111		<i>Nature Biotechnology</i>
4	ISSN	The International Standard Serial Number for the journal ordered or renewed <i>Notes:</i> Only a genuine ISSN, assigned by one of the national or international ISSN agencies, should be used here. The ISSN agencies strongly recommend that separate ISSNs be assigned for each manifestation of a journal – for example, print or electronic versions of the same title should have different ISSNs.	A	R	8	112–119	Genuine ISSN, transmitted unhyphenated	13601385
5	Unused area	Reserved for future use	A	M	281	120–400	Only blanks	

Key: * N = Numeric field; A = Alphanumeric field; D = Date field; V = Value field (numeric field with 10 digits including two decimal places)
 **M = Mandatory field; R = Recommended field; O = Optional field

Table 3. Control Total record

The Control Total record is mandatory and non-repeatable; it MUST be the last record in every message

Field no.	Element name	Definition and notes	Type*	Req? **	Length	Position in record	Permissible values, where appropriate	Examples
1	Record type	Element denoting the type of an ICEDIS record	N	M	1	1	9	9
2	Control total	Numerical total of all records in the message, including the File Header and Control Total records themselves	N	M	8	2-9		00016239 (note leading zeros)
3	Unused	Unused area – not yet allocated	A	M	391	10-400	Always spaces, 391 characters	

Key: * N = Numeric field; A = Alphanumeric field; D = Date field; V = Value field (numeric field with 10 digits including two decimal places)
 **M = Mandatory field; R = Recommended field; O = Optional field

Table 4. Advice on Existing Subscription – data record

This record is optional and repeatable

Field no.	Element name	Definition and notes	Type*	Req? **	Length	Position in record	Permissible values, where appropriate	Examples
1	Record type	Element denoting the type of an ICEDIS record	N	M	1	1	2 = Advice on existing subscriptions, data record	2
2	Agent subscription reference	A persistent identifier assigned by the agent to a particular subscription, preferably for the lifetime of that subscription	A	R	20	2–21		23792305 (a Swets order no)
3	Publisher subscription reference	A persistent identifier assigned by the publisher to a particular subscription, preferably for the lifetime of that subscription	A	M	20	22–41		
4	Customer name and address	Name and delivery or “ship-to” address for the customer <i>Note:</i> This field is populated assuming a data structure of 7 lines of 45 characters	A	M	315	42–356		Brian Green, BIC/EDITEUR, 39-41 North Road, London N7 9DP, UK
5	ISSN	The International Standard Serial Number for the journal ordered or renewed <i>Notes:</i> Only a genuine ISSN, assigned by one of the national or international ISSN agencies, should be used here. The ISSN agencies strongly recommend that separate ISSNs be assigned for each manifestation of a journal – for example, print or electronic versions of the same title should have different ISSNs.	A	R	8	357–364	Genuine ISSN, transmitted unhyphenated	13601385
6	Publisher title reference	Proprietary identifier assigned by the publisher to the journal/manifestation concerned	A	R	20	365–384		7014385
7	Unused area	Reserved for future use	A	M	16	385–400	Only blanks	

Key: * N = Numeric field; A = Alphanumeric field; D = Date field; V = Value field (numeric field with 10 digits including two decimal places)

**M = Mandatory field; R = Recommended field; O = Optional field

Table 5. E-Journal Information From Publisher – additional data record

This record is optional

Field no.	Element name	Definition and notes	Type*	Req? **	Length	Position in record	Permissible values, where appropriate	Examples
1	Record type	Element denoting the type of an ICEDIS record	N	M	1	1	3 = E-journal information, data record	3
2	Agent subscription reference	A persistent identifier assigned by the agent to a particular subscription, preferably for the lifetime of that subscription	A	R	20	2–21		
3	Publisher subscription reference	A persistent identifier assigned by the publisher to a particular subscription, preferably for the lifetime of that subscription	A	M	20	22–41		
4	ISSN	The International Standard Serial Number for the journal concerned <i>Notes:</i> Only a genuine ISSN, assigned by one of the national or international ISSN agencies, should be used here. The ISSN agencies strongly recommend that separate ISSNs be assigned for each manifestation of a journal – for example, print or electronic versions of the same title should have different ISSNs	A	R	8	42–49	Genuine ISSN, transmitted unhyphenated	13601385
5	Publisher title reference	Proprietary identifier assigned by the publisher to the journal/manifestation concerned	A	R	20	50–69		7014385
6	Publisher electronic subscription reference	A persistent identifier assigned by the publisher to a particular <i>electronic</i> subscription, preferably for the lifetime of that subscription	A	O	20	70–89		

Key: * N = Numeric field; A = Alphanumeric field; D = Date field; V = Value field (numeric field with 10 digits including two decimal places)
 **M = Mandatory field; R = Recommended field; O = Optional field

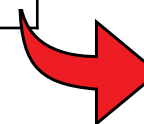


Table 5. E-Journal Information From Publisher – additional data record (continued)

Field no.	Element name	Definition and notes	Type*	Req? **	Length	Position in record	Permissible values, where appropriate	Examples
7	Publisher electronic subscription reference required for registration	Flag to indicate whether or not the publisher electronic subscription reference is required to complete the registration process	A	O	1	90	Y = Yes N = No	Y
8	Publisher access number	An access number or string issued by a publisher	A	O	40	91–130		Catchword ID, Springer Link
9	Customer license agreement needed	Flag to indicate whether or not the publisher is waiting for a copy of the license agreement	A	O	1	131	Y = Yes (publisher waiting) N = No	N
10	Rate indicator	Code to indicate a rate type for a given subscription	A	O	1	132	0 = Normal 1 = Deeply discounted 2 = Consortium 3 = Tier one 4 = Tier two 5 = Tier three 6 = Tier four 7 = Tier five 8 = Tier six	2
11	User ID assigned by publisher	A user ID assigned by the publisher to enable access to an online subscription	A	O	25	133–157		
12	Password assigned by publisher	A user password assigned by the publisher to enable access to an online subscription	A	O	25	158–182		Swordfish

Key: * N = Numeric field; A = Alphanumeric field; D = Date field; V = Value field (numeric field with 10 digits including two decimal places)
 **M = Mandatory field; R = Recommended field; O = Optional field

Version Control Details

This initial Version AES4 has been derived from the more comprehensive ICEDIS Messages and Implementation Guidelines, Version 4, April 2007. Any future changes will be listed here as new versions are released.