



The Nielsen Company  
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## Press Release

### Nielsen Book E-Book listings policy statement

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The International ISBN Agency recently issued a policy statement on the use of ISBNs for E-Books restating the requirement in the ISBN standard that each different format of an electronic publication requires a separate ISBN, and newly legitimising the application in some circumstances of ISBNs to E-Book products by resellers and distributors to ensure the continuity of trade systems across the supply chain.

In response, Nielsen Book, operators of the UK ISBN Agency and providers of the leading product information, transaction and sales measurement services for the English language book industry worldwide, are announcing our listings policy for E-Books.

#### **Nielsen Book Policy statement**

*E-Books will only be listed on the Nielsen Book database and in Nielsen Book products and services if they are identified in accordance with the ISBN standard.*

At Nielsen Book we strongly believe that all digital products including E-Books should be listed with all appropriate aggregators – such as ourselves – and we will continue to actively collect and list all ISBNs which unambiguously identify a discrete tradable product in a specified format.

However ISBNs which refer to a generic “master” record which provides information not on a tradable product in a specified format, but rather on a package of content tradable in a number of different formats will not be eligible for inclusion on the Nielsen Book database.

The consequence of this is that E-Books identified only via a generic “E-Book ISBN”

- will not be available within BookData resource discovery tools for retailers, academic and public libraries and others
- will not be provided via BookData Record Supply or Web Service data feeds used by the largest retailers, wholesalers and other major organisations
- will not appear in the BookScan charts
- cannot be reliably and systematically included in or excluded from BookNet transaction services and systems as appropriate.

At Nielsen Book we believe strongly that the most appropriate organisation to assign ISBNs to individual products is the publisher. We will though be fully supportive of third-party assignment where required, noting the requirement in the ISBN Agency’s policy statement for the original publisher to be identified in product records created for ISBNs assigned to E-Book products by resellers or distributors.

## **Why is Nielsen Book adopting this policy?**

We are taking this decision to support what we firmly believe to be supply chain best practice: comprehensive and unambiguous product identification is crucial to supply chain efficiency. We believe that identification at the level of one ISBN per tradable product will be crucial in the medium and long term:

- To ensure automated and accurate communication of what products publishers and distributors have available to existing and potential retailing partners.
- To attach additional format-specific information (accessibility info, usage rights) to specific versions of a product.
- Crucially, to ensure that information needed to make a purchasing decision across all potential resellers is communicated to the consumer accurately and reliably.
- Reporting and measurement of sales and other performance indicators by format, and aggregated across all traded E-Book versions of the same content.
- To enable potential library customers to discover products in standard tools and compare all formats (digital and physical) side by side.
- To enable libraries to receive accurate catalogue records for the correct version of the product.

Most of these can be achieved today with a handful of chosen, familiar partners via other, proprietary techniques. But only by using a global, universally applicable standard can they be guaranteed to be achievable across a broad range of partners of differing types and sizes, and be scalable in terms of the number of trading partners or outlets.

ISBN is so thoroughly embedded within the systems of so many likely supply chain partners that it will be by far the most cost effective and simplest standard to adopt.

In our discussions with publishers, we acknowledge that their E-Book initiatives to date may not have required per-format identification. Equally we do not believe that many publishers see their current E-Book arrangements remaining fixed as their only route to market for digital content for the long term.

We believe that hardwiring bibliographic and identification practice to the limited requirements of current initiatives and experiments runs the risk of storing up inhibitors to future flexibility and adds potential costs of system re-engineering down the line. On these grounds, we recommend that publishers adopt the most flexible policy now on product identification.

Nielsen Book strongly recommends that publishers globally adopt the International ISBN Agency recommendations.

### **Notes to the Editor:**

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**About Nielsen Book**

**Nielsen Book has four key brands: Registration Agencies (ISBN, SAN, DOI), BookData, BookNet and BookScan.** Nielsen Registration Agencies supply unique identifiers for books and publishers. Nielsen BookData provides comprehensive, enriched and timely bibliographic data worldwide to booksellers, libraries and publishers in 110 countries around the world. Nielsen BookNet provides value-added transaction services to the industry. Nielsen BookScan provides the world's only continuous retail monitoring service for English-language books in the UK, Ireland, US, Australia, South Africa, Italy, Spain, New Zealand and Denmark. The Nielsen Book group employs more than 140 staff in the UK. The company is wholly owned by The Nielsen Company, one of the world's largest publishing and information companies.

**About The Nielsen Company**

The Nielsen Company is a global information and media company with leading market positions and recognized brands in marketing information (ACNielsen), media information (Nielsen Media Research), business publications (Billboard, The Hollywood Reporter, Adweek) and trade shows. The privately held company has more than 42,000 employees and is active in more than 100 countries, with headquarters in Haarlem, the Netherlands, and New York, USA.