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**Information and documentation —  
International standard serial number  
(ISSN)**

*Information et documentation — Numéro international normalisé  
des publications en série (ISSN)*



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 9, *Identification and description*.

This seventh edition cancels and replaces the sixth edition (ISO 3297:2020), of which it constitutes a minor revision. The changes are as follows:

- in 3.4.6, "Universal Resource Identifier" has been corrected to read as "Uniform Resource Identifier";
- in 8.3, the examples given, including ISBNs, have been corrected;
- in 8.6, incorrect reference to 8.3 has been corrected to 8.2;
- in E.4.1.1, ISSN have been corrected.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

The need for a brief, unique and unambiguous identification code for serials and other continuing resources is internationally recognized. The exchange of information among libraries, abstracting services and other content users, system suppliers, distributors and other intermediaries, and publishers and other content producers justifies the requirement for a standard code. Communication between the different organizations transcends national boundaries and therefore requires an international code which is numeric, since no single alphabet is used by the majority of producers and users of serials. In response to these requirements, the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) has been established as the identification code for serials. The ISSN is an opaque identifier where no meaning is to be inferred from the code itself.

The International Serials Data System (ISDS) was established as an inter-governmental organization within the framework of the UNESCO/UNISIST program to be the designated authority for controlling the assignment of ISSN. In 1993, the ISDS became the ISSN network which is the inter-governmental organization comprising ISO 3297 Registration Authority and ISO 3297 Registration Agencies to which some Registration services have been delegated, including ISSN assignment.

The first three editions of this document pertained only to serials. However, in 2002 a new category of resources, "continuing resources", was defined by the library community to encompass new kinds of resources, such as updating databases. The scope of the fourth edition was broadened to cover serials and other continuing resources. The fifth edition removed any reference to the business model from the standard. This sixth edition responded to sector requests by establishing the ability to group and identify related continuing resources into new types of clusters. Furthermore, the sixth edition specified richer metadata elements to allow the communication of additional characteristics of a resource.



# Information and documentation — International standard serial number (ISSN)

## 1 Scope

This document defines and promotes the use of a standard code (ISSN) for the unique identification of serials and other continuing resources.

Each International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) is a unique identifier for a serial or other continuing resource in a defined medium whether print or electronic.

This document also allows for grouping related continuing resources into clusters identified by a separately-prefixed ISSN as defined in this document.

ISSNs are applicable to serials and to other continuing resources, whatever the business model or modes of distribution (e.g. free, open access, on subscription, etc.) and irrespective of whether the serial is currently in publication, has ceased publication, or publication is planned for the foreseeable future. Continuing resources include whatever the medium of production (print or electronic):

- serials, such as newspapers, periodicals, journals, magazines, blogs, conference proceedings, monographic series with no predetermined conclusion, annual or other periodic reports, and
- ongoing integrating resources that are updated, such as loose-leaf publications, updating websites, institutional repositories, directories and databases.

Monographs, sound and video recordings, notated music publications, audiovisual works, textual works and musical works have their own standard identifiers and are not specifically mentioned in this document. Such items can carry an ISSN in addition to their appropriate identifiers when they are part of a continuing resource.

NOTE This document does not contain any operational guidance for its practical implementation.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1 Metadata

#### 3.1.1

##### abbreviated key title

specific title established by the ISSN network by replacing each significant word of a key title with the corresponding abbreviation from the List of Title Word Abbreviations managed by the ISO 3297 Registration Authority for ISO 4

Note 1 to entry: See Reference [2] for the List of Title Word Abbreviations.