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PRESS RELEASE

For book column editors, publishers, writers / authors, libraries and information centres, distributors, book publishing retail chain

ARE YOU READY FOR THE 13-DIGIT ISBN?

PRETORIA, Gauteng. – April 05, 2006. Currently aligned with the worldwide trend, the South African book publishing and related industries are preparing themselves to be ready to increase the International Standard Book Number (ISBN), with effect from 1 January 2007.

The well-known 10-digit ISBN is changing to a 13-digit number. The nature of this change involves the EAN (European Article Number) bar code. In compliance with retail systems a 13-digit bar code is normally assigned to each product in the supply chain. To ensure compatibility between the 10-digit ISBN and the 13-digit international product coding system for bar codes, this unique identifier for a book is prefixed by the "978" EAN product code for books, followed by the 10-digit ISBN, of which the last character - i.e. the check digit, is recalculated according to the preceding 12 characters, eg.:

ISBN 0-624-02126-2 (10 digits)	becomes	ISBN 978 -0-624-02126-1 (13 digits)
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The result is a 13-digit number which is the "Bookland EAN" bar code, and in which the 10-digit ISBN is embedded. The 13-digit ISBN is identical to the Bookland EAN bar code.

As a consequence of electronic publishing and other changes in the publishing industry, the system is running out of numbers. To resolve this problem, the length of the ISBN is augmented from 10- to 13-digits. This solution is beneficial in two ways: books already carry both the 10-digit ISBN and its 13-digit equivalent in the bar code. Secondly, it also enables the ISBN system to make use of a new "979" EAN prefix (once the "978" is exhausted) which was reserved years ago for the future use of the book trade within the EAN system.

During the transition period between 2005 and 2007, while the 10-digit system is still officially in place, South Africa will follow the International ISBN Agency's *Guidelines for the implementation of 13-digit ISBNs*. The ISN Agency (National Library of South Africa,



Pretoria) still assigns 10-digit ISBNs, but provides a means to convert these to 13-digit ISBNs.

However, from 1 January 2007 when the 13-digit ISBN as specified by the revised *ISO 2108:2005 – Information and Documentation: International Standard Book Number* is the official ISBN, the publishing scene changes accordingly:

- § the ISN Agency assigns only 13-digit ISBNs;
- § publishers print only 13-digit ISBNs on their publications, and the 13-digit ISBN replaces the 10-digit ISBN above the bar code, while the 13-digit EAN is displayed below the bar code;
- § within systems – now adjusted to accommodate ISBN-13, the 13-digit ISBN is input in the valid ISBN field, while the 10-digit ISBN is displayed in the field for an invalid ISBN - the ISBN standard now specifies a 13-character ISBN, and no longer a 10-digit ISBN;
- § publications are ordered by quoting the 13-digit ISBN;
- § publishers continuously consult with GS1 South Africa regarding bar codes for their publications.

It is important that between 2005 and 2007 everyone in the supply chain who currently uses an ISBN should review all their existing systems – manual and electronic, develop an action plan and allocate resources to ensure that those systems can accommodate the new 13-digit ISBN well in advance of the January 2007 implementation date. In South Africa the target date is October 2006, with some time left until December 2006 to finalise any outstanding issues.

This change affects all types of publishers (trade, educational, etc.) as well as distributors, retailers, libraries and any other organizations that record and exchange ISBN in automated areas. Although the conversion to the 13-digit primarily affects systems, it also has an impact on editorial processes, sales and marketing, design and production departments, royalty and accounting functions, as well as catalogue systems.

For further information on the 13-digit ISBN, please consult the following persons, and/or URLs:

- § Magret Kibido, tel.: 012-401-9718, e-mail: magret.kibido@nlsa.ac.za
- § Tienie de Klerk, tel.: 012-401-9731, e-mail: tienie.deklerk@nlsa.ac.za
- § Karen Feiling , tel: (011) 789 5777, e-mail: karen.feiling@gs1za.org
- § **ISBN-13 in SA:** <http://www.nlsa.ac.za/isbn13.html>
- § Frequently asked questions about changes on the ISBN:
<http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca/iso/tc46sc9/isbn.htm>
- § *Guidelines for the implementation of 13-digit ISBNs:*
<http://www.isbn-international.org/en/download/implementation-guidelines-04.pdf>

