

# Frequently Asked Questions about 'ISBN-13'

## Q. How is ISBN13 different from ISBNs and EAN Bookland?

ISBNs are the unique 10-digit identifiers currently used within the book industry. Each ISBN is composed of four distinct elements, typically shown separated by a hyphen:

- A group element;
- A publisher prefix;
- A title identifier; and
- A check digit.

For example, for the ISBN 0-06-075794-9, the first 9 digits identify the particular book, while the tenth and last digit is a "check digit" computed from the preceding nine digits.

EAN Bookland is a bar code format currently in use within the book industry. In other words, EAN Bookland is a *printing* format. EAN generates bar codes that are 13 digits long, and that consist of 3 parts:



- A 3-digit, constant prefix of 978 (the EAN product identifying code for books);
- The first 9 digits of a book's ISBN [the Group-Publisher-Title elements described above]; and
- A check digit computed from the first 12 digits.

As it's name implies, ISBN13 is 13-digit identifier that will replace the current 10-digit ISBN as the unique ID for books. In both the human readable and bar code forms it will appear exactly like the present EAN bookland, except that the first 3 digits can be *either* 978 *or* 979. Examples of each kind of SKU for the same title:

- ISBN 0-06-075794-9
- EAN 978-0-06-075794-6
- ISBN13 978-0-06-075794-6

The ISBN13 SKU ends with '6' instead of 9, as the ISBN does, because 6 is the newly-calculated check digit. Barcodes for the SKU above:



As you can see, the existing EAN Bookland codes are legitimate ISBN-13s

## Q. What happens within WordStock right now with ISBNs vs. EAN Bookland?

In the current release of WordStock, if an EAN Bookland code is scanned or entered into the system, WordStock converts the entry into a 10-digit ISBN. The reason for this is that the WordStock database is currently organized by storing the 10 digit ISBN as the unique identifier in database files (inventory, P.O., Returns, Special Order, *etc.*)

## Q. What will happen when ISBN13s are in use throughout the industry?

WordStock will supply a program that will convert all your existing databases from the old 10-digit ISBN to the new ISBN13 format. So, everywhere you now see a 10 digit ISBN, you will see an ISBN13 instead.

Since there is bound to be a time when some older book stock will have the 10 digit ISBN displayed on it, if the 10 digit ISBN is entered into the WordStock system, it will automatically be converted into ISBN13. Note that, if an EAN Bookland code is entered from an older product, it will still scan correctly because EAN Bookland codes are valid ISBN13s.

## Q. When will I have to convert my database to ISBN13?

As best we can tell right now, the 3rd quarter of 2006, but we will be keeping an eye on what the publishers' implementation schedules look like and notify you accordingly.

## Q. Anything else I need to know?

While we are hopeful that most of the industry is working hard to prepare for a smooth transition, one area we see as a potential problem is ordering - both electronic and via printed POs.

It is possible that some vendors will fail to implement ISBN13 in a timely fashion. To contend with this eventuality, WordStock will support the identification of a vendor as ISBN10 - meaning the vendor can only process 10 digit ISBNs. When POs are processed for such vendors, either electronically or on a printed PO, the ISBN13 codes used within your store will be converted to ISBN10 before transmitting electronically or printing paper POs.

**Q. What happens if I receive shipments that include both ISBN10 and ISBN13?**

One way to handle both the transition and ultimate conversion to ISBN13 would be to accept both the ISBN10 and the ISBN13 as unique IDs.

Under this scenario, there would be two separate inventory records in the store's database for the same book title; one with the ISBN10 and one with the ISBN13.

While this approach appears to solve the problem of moving to ISBN13, it leaves you, the bookseller, with no convenient way to consolidate the content of the two inventory records with respect to onhand/onorder qtys, sales history, *etc.* wherever and whenever necessary. For this reason, WordStock is not going to use this approach.

Instead, we'll work with you in 2006 to pick an appropriate date on which your store's entire database content will be converted to ISBN13 for internal use, *i.e.*, there will be no ISBN10s in any part of the database.

After this conversion, an ISBN10 will be automatically translated into an ISBN13 when entered into WordStock.

**Q. How will WordStock accommodate these changes with respect to electronic ordering?**

WordStock will cease to support BISAC fixed record formats because we expect all suppliers to move to 'BISAC X12' between now and 2007. Since BISAC X12 can support variable length SKUs, ISBN13 is not a problem for it. Rather, the problem will be whether or not a supplier's system handle an ISBN13 if it's included in a BISAC X12 order file. Since this will vary over time by supplier, as they update their systems, we're adding additional supplier-specific parameters for converting a WordStock PO into an BISAC X12 order file, and for interpreting the suppliers' BISAC X12 order acknowledgement.

**Q. What about GTIN?**

First of all, GTIN stands for **Global Trade Identification Number**. Simply put, the GTIN is the ISBN13 with a leading "0" tacked on to indicate "unit" ordering, *e.g.*, for ISBN13 '9780394720289' the GTIN would be '0978394720289'.

At this point in time, its primary use within the book industry will be *inside* the files exchanged during electronic ordering. In other words, for the foreseeable future, *GTIN will be invisible on a day to day basis*.

Since the ISBN13, *not the GTIN*, will be printed on or inside books, WordStock has decided that the ISBN13 will be used as the primary identifier within the system at this time to minimize confusion (and typing).

Note that *inside* the WordStock databases (inventory, P.O., *etc.*), there is already space to accommodate the 14 digits of the GTIN should it become the primary identifier within the book industry, meaning, when/if GTIN is printed on books.

**WordStock Responses to  
The ABA's ISBN-13 Implementation Survey**

Q. When do you anticipate that you will be able to process and send orders (including printed purchase orders) using the 13-digit ISBN?

**By July 1, 2006**

Q. When do you anticipate that you will be able to process and send returns (including packing lists) using the 13-digit ISBN?

**By July 1, 2006**

Q. When do you anticipate that you will be able to include the ISBN-13 on other paper documents, such as credit and debit memos, product labels, customer sales receipts, *etc.*?

**By July 1, 2006**

Q. When do you anticipate that you will be able to accept and process new title data in BISAC X12 format using ISBN-13?

**By July 1, 2006**

Q. When do you anticipate that you will be able to accept and process new title data in ONIX format using the ISBN-13?

**By July 1, 2006**

Q. If you provide title data to your customers, when do you anticipate being able to include ISBN-13 in that data?

**By July 1, 2006**

Q. When do you anticipate that you will incorporate the EAN/UCC-14 into your EDI applications, including Pubnet:

- Orders & order acknowledgements: **By July 1, 2006**
- Invoices: **By July 1, 2006**
- Advance Ship Notices: **By July 1, 2006**
- Returns: **By July 1, 2006**

Q. If your system interfaces with other vendors' systems (e.g., web site or shopping cart services), when do you anticipate being able to communicate with those systems using ISBN-13 identifiers?

**By July 1, 2006**

Q. If your system reports to point-of-sale data collection services (e.g., BookScan), when do you anticipate being able to communicate with those services using ISBN-13 identifiers?

**By July 1, 2006**