

International Standard Name Identifier

ISNI Organisation Overview

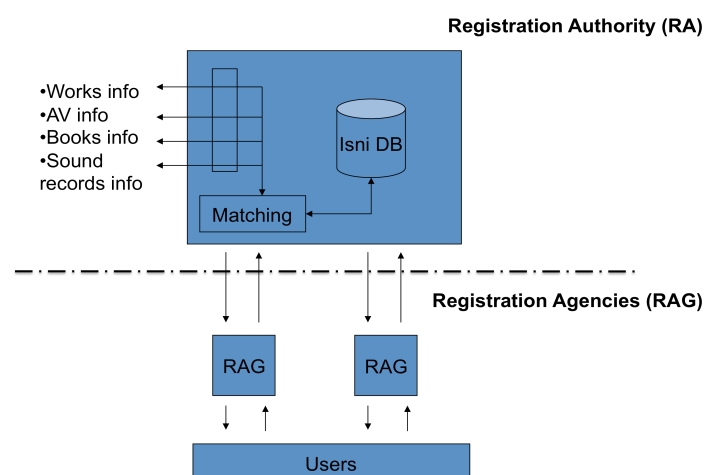
Introduction to the ISNI

The International Standard Name Identifier (ISNI) is a draft ISO standard that will provide a means to uniquely identify the publically facing names of creators, including authors, composers, artists, cartographers and performers, among others. Fictional and historical characters are also in scope as so called “public identities” as are also publishers and other organizations and persons having roles associated with the realization of a creation. Such an authoritative identifier will serve as an authoritative reference and a link for occurrences of an identity across diverse databases on the web.

The ISNI is currently at Draft International Standard (DIS) status and is expected to become operational in 2010. A requirement for publication is the establishment of an international Registration Authority. A consortium is being proposed that consists of the members listed below.

- International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC) www.cisac.org
- International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations (IFRRO) www.ifrro.org
- International Performers’ Database Association (ipda.sami.se)
- Bowker (www.bowker.com)
- Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) (www.oclc.org)
- Bibliothèque Nationale de France
- The British Library

As shown in the diagram, the Registration Authority will build and maintain the central reference database by matching all incoming metadata pertaining to Public identities. In turn, the appointed Registration Agencies (RAGs) will provide all the tools and services to the market.



The ISNI Database

Each founding member already maintains an important database of names of creators, including in particular the Virtual International Authority File - VIAF, the Interested Party Identifier – IPI and the International Performer Database – IPDA. Data from these and other databases will be made available for the creation of the initial ISNI database.

To validate the quality level required, the founding members undertook a proof of concept thus defining the criteria necessary to ensure the uniqueness of all the ISNI assigned. Sophisticated algorithms developed and evolved over more than eight years by 2 of the founding members will be employed in the core of the ISNI system.

Unlike other ISO identifier standards, whereby the database is created as the standard deploys, the ISNI database will include at least 3 million records on its first day of operation, including book and text authors, performers and music composers. The data will be made available for enquiry to the Registration Agencies.

Once the database has been established, the process will work in a hybrid centralized / de-centralized way. There will be a series of registration agencies (RAGs) that are able to apply for ISNIs on behalf of creators and publishers. The agencies will submit metadata to the international registration authority which will match the data with the ISNI database and either assign an existing identifier or assign a new one. In some cases more information will be requested for disambiguation purposes. The metadata submitted for matching will be richer than the metadata retained against an ISNI.

In relation to the assignment of ISNIs, the international agency and the registration agencies will operate on a cost recovery basis. Registration agencies may provide additional services incorporating ISNIs. Registration agencies will pay an annual subscription fee and will be charged per ISNI application request. There will be variant rates based on volume of requests.

What is the size of ISNI?

The proof of concept tests allowed the founding members to assess the level of overlap in their respective databases. Based on these figures it is conservatively estimated that there will be at least 20 million identities eligible for ISNIs and more than 600,000 new identities per annum.

These estimates include a very conservative 3 million identities that are authors of articles who have not been already identified as creators of works catalogued by libraries, covered by rights management societies or present in databases from the existing databases of the founding members. The International Association of Scientific, Medical and Technical Publishers (RTM) have recently reported that there are about 7 million article authors and 210,000 new ones per annum.