

Drilling down into eBook identifiers - ISBN, ISTC, DOI etc.

Identifying e-books
“It’s the same but different....”

Brian Green
International ISBN Agency



Why do we need identifiers?

▶ Why do we assign identifiers?

- ▶ Disambiguation – to distinguish things that are not the same
- ▶ Collocation – to bring together instances of the same thing

▶ What does “the same” mean?

- ▶ Whether things are or are not the same is always contextual
- ▶ For example, an ISBN identifies a class of individual instances as being “the same” for particular purposes – meaning is not universal

▶ Why does this matter?

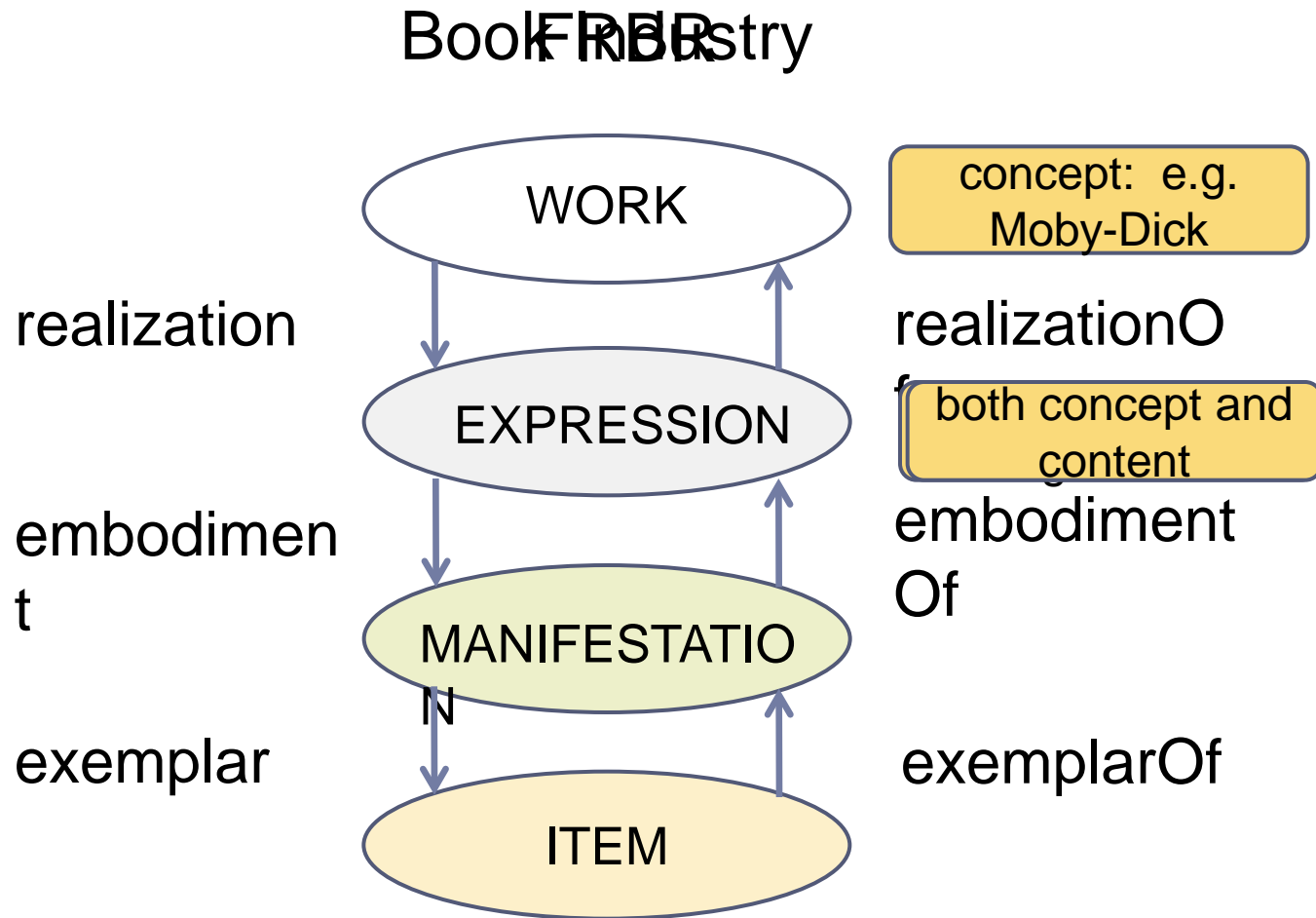
- ▶ Unambiguous communication.....particularly from machine to machine

When do we need **standard** identifiers?

- ▶ When there is a need to communicate across organizational boundaries – within any sort of “supply chain” ...
- ▶ ...particularly where anyone in the supply chain needs to manage and aggregate information from multiple sources
- ▶ What matters about standard identifiers?
 - ▶ That their semantic should be clear to everyone...
 - ▶ ...in other words, everyone in the chain knows what type of thing they are identifying

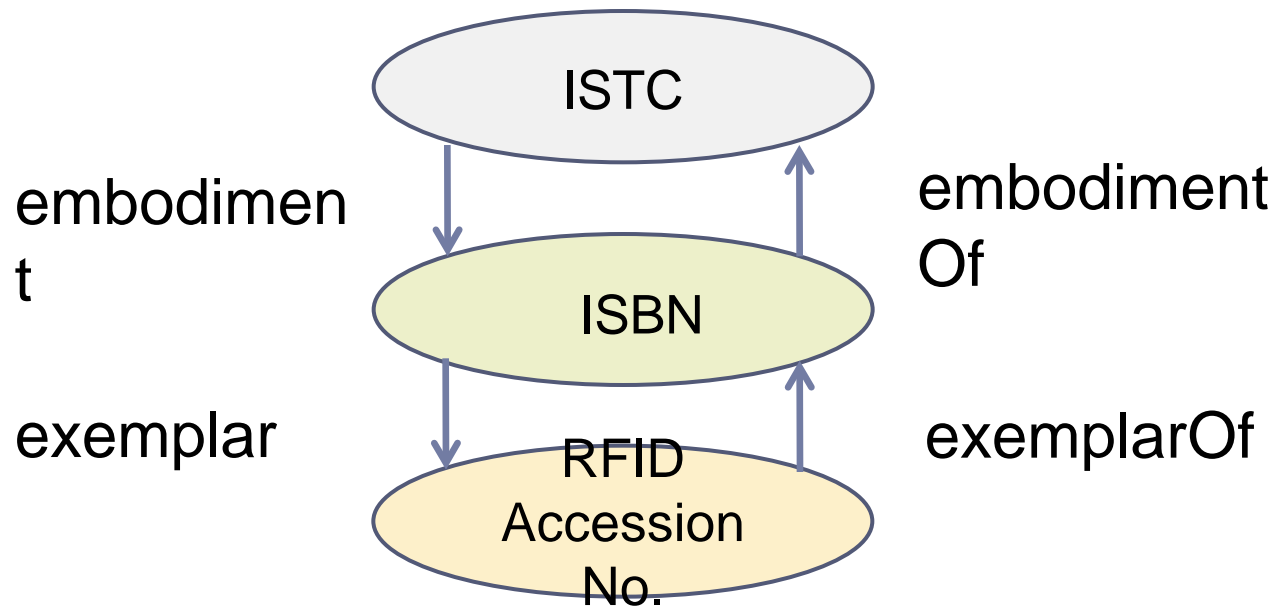


“What matters is that everyone in the chain knows what type of thing they are identifying”



“What matters is that everyone in the chain knows what type of thing they are identifying”

ISTC/ISBN



“Disambiguation – distinguishing things that are not the same”

- ▶ Under “Rules of assignment”, the 2005 revision of the ISBN standard (ISO 2108) says:
 - ▶ *Different product forms (e.g. hardcover, paperback, Braille, audio-book, video, online electronic publication) shall be assigned separate ISBNs*
 - ▶ *Each different format of an electronic publication (e.g. ‘.lit’, ‘.pdf’, ‘.html’, ‘.pdb’) that is published and made separately available shall be given a separate ISBN.*
- ▶ Seemed adequate at the time but file format is not really, in itself, an appropriate indicator of different products



What differentiates e-book products?

- ▶ Ability to render book
 - ▶ Does it work on my device/platform/software?
- ▶ User's experience and usage rights
 - ▶ What can I do with it?
- ▶ File format is only part of the story. DRM is what really differentiates e-book products and platforms
 - ▶ Can you really say that an e-book available without DRM is the same product as one with restrictive DRM, just because the content and file format may be the same?
- ▶ A product needs a separate identifier if anyone in the supply chain needs to identify it separately



Why identify separate e-book products?

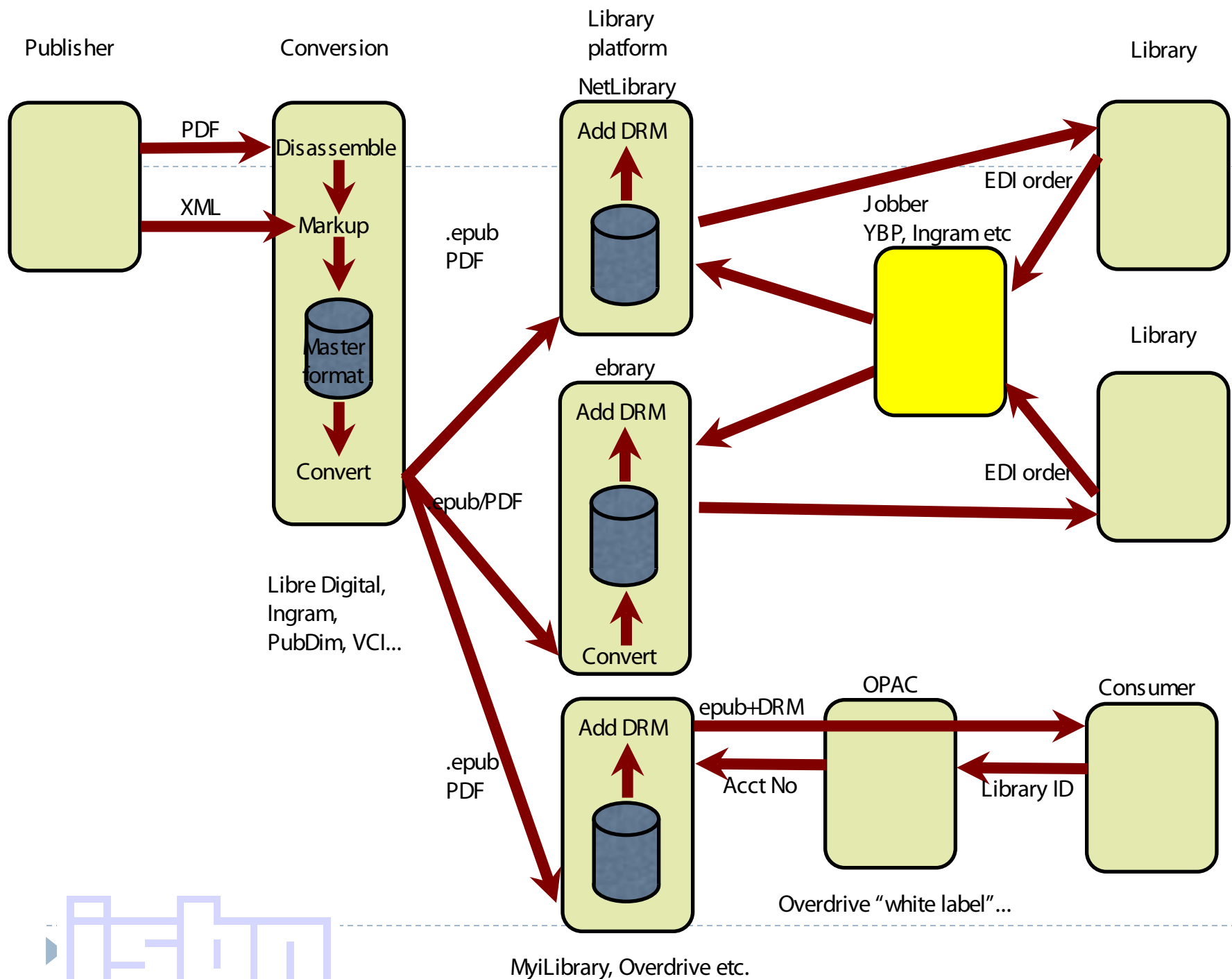
- ▶ To ensure that the e-book ordered is the correct one for the user's e-reader device and/or software platform
- ▶ To enable bibliographic databases to provide information about the different available versions of an e-book
- ▶ To facilitate electronic trading of e-books, particularly where multiple formats are sold through the same channel
- ▶ To facilitate product level reporting of sales and usage and facilitate management of e-book products

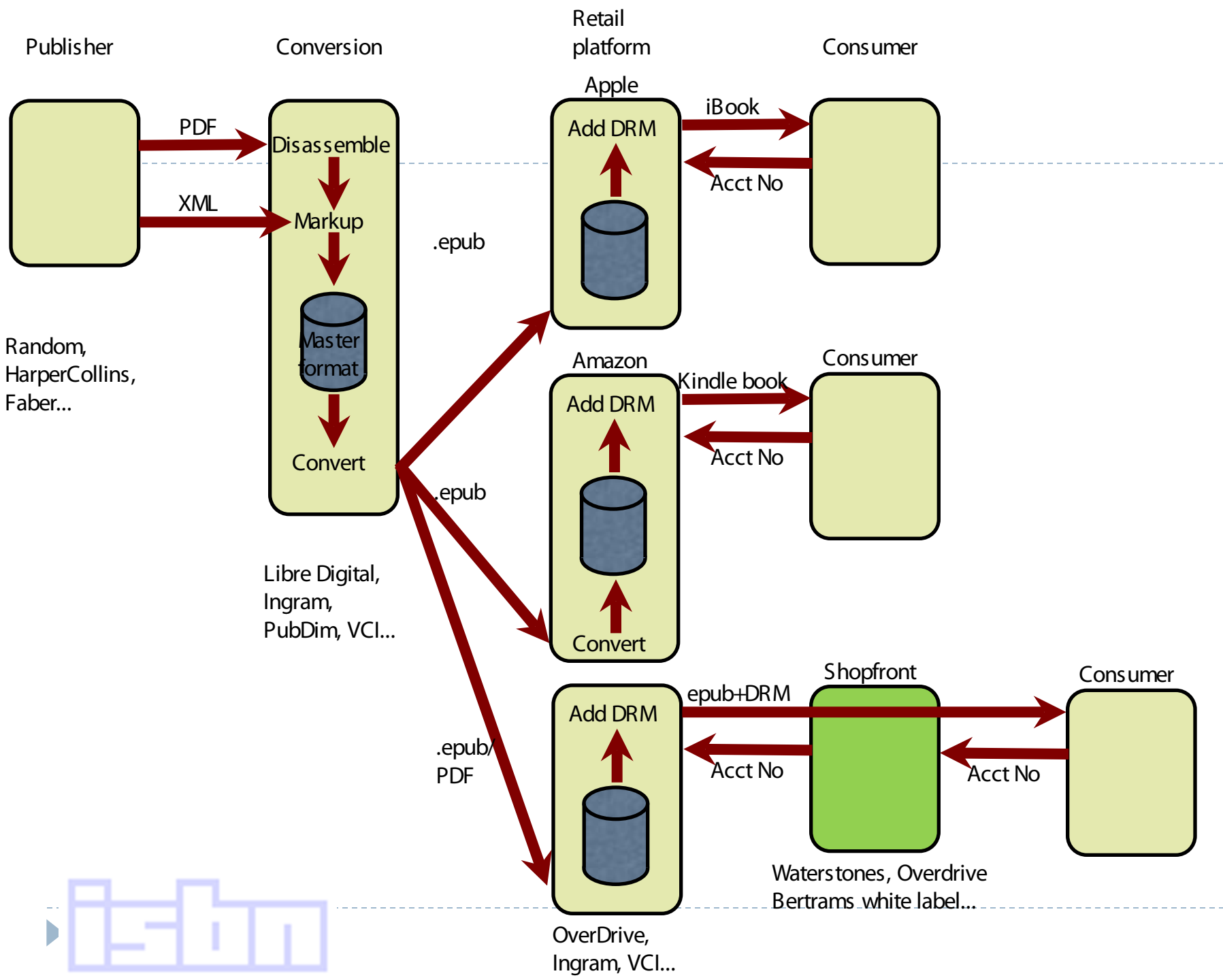


The e-book supply chain

- ▶ For printed books, publishers assign ISBNs to each format, and that product and its ISBN remains constant throughout the supply chain
- ▶ For e-books, there is an additional layer of intermediaries providing conversion services to publishers and producing new e-book products
- ▶ Many publishers only produce a single generic file format (e.g. “.epub” or “PDF”), and intermediaries or Internet retailers add technical rights protection (DRM) and create different formats/products







New ISBN rule introduced 2008

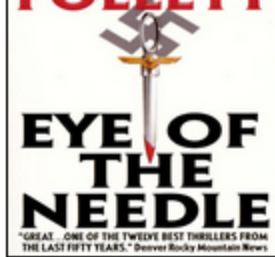
- ▶ Since some publishers do not provide separate ISBNs for each version and some customers, including libraries, need unique identification of products from different platforms with different functionality...
- ▶ If a publisher does not identify each format with a separate ISBN, intermediaries/re-sellers may do so on their behalf
 - ▶ Not ideal but a necessary compromise until publishers assign their own ISBNs
 - ▶ Requires central bibliographic agency to collect and list ISBNs and related metadata



What's actually happening?

- ▶ Everything. It's like the 1960's before ISBN.
- ▶ Some publishers assign separate ISBNs to each version
- ▶ Some assign the same ISBN to all versions
- ▶ Some publishers assign an ISBN to the epub file and let third parties assign their own ISBNs or proprietary identifiers to their versions
 - ▶ Sometimes these proprietary "ISBN-like" identifiers actually duplicate ISBNs assigned to books already published elsewhere





Publisher: HarperCollins
Imprint: HarperCollins e-books
Subject(s): Fiction
Suspense
Thriller
Language(s): English

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Format Information

eNYPL Adobe EPUB eBook

Copies available: 0
Copies owned: 1
File size: 408 KB
ISBN: 9780061796043
Release date: Jan 22, 2008

Plays on:      

eNYPL Adobe PDF eBook

Copies available: 0
Copies owned: 1
File size: 1989 KB
ISBN: 9780061572562
Release date: Jan 22, 2008

Plays on:      

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File size: 370 KB
ISBN: 9780061572630
Release date: Jan 22, 2008

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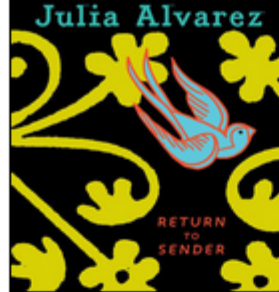
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Publisher: Random House Children's Books
Imprint: Knopf Books for Young Readers
Subject(s): Fiction
 Juvenile Fiction
Language(s): English

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Format Information

eNYPL Adobe EPUB eBook

Copies available: 0
 Copies owned: 1
 File size: 2083 KB
 ISBN: 9780375891618
 Release date: Jan 13, 2009

Plays on: PC Mac Burn to CD WMA iPod MP3

eNYPL Adobe PDF eBook

Copies available: 1
 Copies owned: 1
 File size: 1551 KB
 ISBN: 9780375891618
 Release date: Jan 13, 2009

Plays on: PC Mac Burn to CD WMA iPod MP3

eNYPL Mobipocket eBook

Copies available: 1
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 File size: 352 KB
 ISBN: 9780375891618
 Release date: Jan 13, 2009

Plays on: PC Mac Burn to CD WMA iPod MP3

All the same

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One
ISBN for
ebrary

Title: CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF STRATEGY AS PRACTICE

Editor: DAMON GOLSORKHI

Publisher: CAMBRIDGE UNIV PRESS

Pub Year: 2010

Binding: eBook

Content Level: ADV-AC

LC Class: HD30.28.C348 2010

Subject Headings: STRATEGIC PLANNING--HANDBOOKS, MANUALS, ETC.

YBP Interdisciplinary Topics: Business; Management; Philosophical

Approval Note: ED: ROUEN BUSINESS SCHOOL. NEW COLLECTION ON THEORETICAL & PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF STRATEGY.

Format: Collection/New

Language: English

ISBN: 9780511787089

Place of Publication: CAMBRIDGE

Country Of Origin: UK

Pagination: 349 P.

YBP Select: Research-Recommended

LCCN: 2010-22105

NON-RETURN/NON-CANCEL YBP

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[alt-ed-slip sent \(11/3/2010\)](#)

[alternate editions](#)

[library activity \(10 sold\)](#)

Supplier	Purchase Option	List Price	Status	Library Availability	Preview
+ ebrary	Single User Option (SUPO)	150.00 USD	Available	Yes	Preview

Separate ISBN

Title: CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF STRATEGY AS PRACTICE

Editor: DAMON GOLSORKHI

Publisher: CAMBRIDGE UNIV PRESS

Pub Year: 2010

Binding: eBook

Content Level: ADV-AC

LC Class: HD30.28.C348 2010

Subject Headings: STRATEGIC PLANNING--HANDBOOKS, MANUALS, ETC.

YBP Interdisciplinary Topics: Business; Management; Philosophical

Approval Note: ED: ROUEN BUSINESS SCHOOL. NEW COLLECTION ON THEORETICAL & PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF STRATEGY.

Format: Collection/New

Language: English

ISBN: 9780511788222

Place of Publication: CAMBRIDGE

Country Of Origin: UK

Pagination: 349 P.

YBP Select: Research-Recommended

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[alt-ed-slip sent \(11/3/2010\)](#)

[alternate editions](#)

[library activity \(10 sold\)](#)

NON-RETURN/NON-CANCEL YBP

Supplier	Purchase Option	List Price	Status	Library Availability	Preview
+ EBL	Non-Linear Lending™	150.00 USD	Available	Yes	Preview

Separate ISBN

Title: CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF STRATEGY AS PRACTICE

Editor: DAMON GOLSORKHI

Publisher: CAMBRIDGE UNIV PRESS

Pub Year: 2010

Binding: eBook

Content Level: ADV-AC

LC Class: HD30.28.C348 2010

Subject Headings: STRATEGIC PLANNING--HANDBOOKS, MANUALS, ETC.

YBP Interdisciplinary Topics: Business; Management; Philosophical

Approval Note: ED: ROUEN BUSINESS SCHOOL. NEW COLLECTION ON THEORETICAL & PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF STRATEGY.

Format: Collection/New

Language: English

LCCN: 2010-22105

ISBN: 9780511789694

Place of Publication: CAMBRIDGE

Country Of Origin: UK

Pagination: 349 P.

YBP Select: Research-Recommended

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[alternate editions](#)

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NON-RETURN/NON-CANCEL YBP

Supplier	Purchase Option	List Price	Status	Library Availability	Preview
+ NetLibrary	Varies by subaccount	150.00 USD	Available	Yes	

One ISBN
for Wiley
Interscience

Title: ACT OF REMEMBERING: TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF HOW WE RECALL THE PAST

Editor: JOHN H. MACE

Publisher: WILEY-BLACKWELL

Pub Year: 2010

ISBN: 9781444328202

Binding: eBook

Series Title: [NEW PERSPECTIVES IN COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY.](#)

Series ID: 506304

Content Level: ADV-AC

LC Class: BF378.A87A25 2010

Subject Headings: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY.

YBP Interdisciplinary Topics: Psychological

Approval Note: ED: EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIV. COLLECTION OF NEW ESSAYS ON AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY RETRIEVAL.

Format: Collection/New

Language: English

LCCN: 2010-16199

Place of Publication: CHICHESTER

Country Of Origin: UK

Pagination: 406 P.

Series Type: Unnumbered Series

YBP Select: Research-Recommended

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NON-RETURN/NON-CANCEL YBP

Supplier	Purchase Option	List Price	Status	Library Availability	Preview
+ Wiley Interscience	Multiple User Access	100.00 USD	Available	Yes	



Another ISBN
for everything
else

Title: ACT OF REMEMBERING: TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF HOW WE RECALL THE PAST
Editor: JOHN H. MACE
Publisher: WILEY-BLACKWELL
Pub Year: 2010
Binding: eBook
Series Title: [NEW PERSPECTIVES IN COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY.](#)
Series ID: 506304
Content Level: ADV-AC
LC Class: BF378.A87A25 2010
Subject Headings: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY.
YBP Interdisciplinary Topics: Psychological
Approval Note: ED: EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIV. COLLECTION OF NEW ESSAYS ON AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY RETRIEVAL.
Format: Collection/New
Language: English

ISBN: 9781444328219

Place of Publication: CHICHESTER
Country Of Origin: UK
Pagination: 406 P.
Series Type: Unnumbered Series
YBP Select: Research-Recommended

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[alt-ed-exported \(10/26/2010\)](#)
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Supplier	Purchase Option	List Price	Status	Library Availability	Preview
+ ebrary	Single User Option (SUPO)	99.95 USD	Available	Yes	Preview
+ NetLibrary	Varies by subaccount	99.95 USD	Available	Yes	



Same ISBN for all versions

Title: SPIV AND THE ARCHITECT: UNRULY LIFE IN POSTWAR LONDON.

Author: HORNSEY, RICHARD QUENTIN DONALD

Publisher: UNIV OF MINNESOTA PRESS

Pub Year: 2010

ISBN: 9780816673438

Place of Publication: MINNEAPOLIS

Country Of Origin: US

Binding: eBook

Pagination: 310 P.

Content Level: ADV-AC

YBP Select: Research-Recommended

LC Class: HQ76.3.G72L655 2010

Subject Headings: HOMOSEXUALITY--ENGLAND--LONDON--HIST.--20TH CENT.

YBP Interdisciplinary Topics: Contemporary Social; Historical; Urban; Gay/Lesbian Studies

Approval Note: AUTH: U. WEST ENGLAND. EXAMINES GAY MEN'S RESISTANCE TO SOCIAL STRICTURES & ATTITUDES. TLS 8/27/10.

Geographic Focus: United Kingdom

Language: English

LCCN: 2009-52922

[slip sent\(11/3/2010\)](#)

[alt-ed-slip sent \(5/5/2010\)](#)

[alt-ed-slip sent \(5/5/2010\)](#)

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Supplier	Purchase Option	List Price	Status	Library Availability	Preview
+ EBL	Non-Linear Lending™	75.00 USD	Available	Yes	Preview
+ ebrary	Multiple User Option (MUPO)	112.50 USD	Available	Yes	Preview
+ ebrary	Single User Option (SUPO)	75.00 USD	Available	Yes	Preview
+ NetLibrary	Varies by subaccount	75.00 USD	Available	Yes	



“Whether things are or are not the same is always contextual”

- ▶ Results of ISBN survey 2009/2010:
- ▶ There is a need for each digital format to be separately identified at various points in the supply chain
- ▶ However there seems to be a need for a more abstract generic identifier to collocate different versions of the same books
 - ▶ ISTC identifies underlying textual works and is a potentially useful way of aggregating different manifestations and their ISBNs regardless of media
 - ▶ Do we need yet another identifier to identify the generic e-book master file? If so it shouldn't be an ISBN



“Collocation – bringing together instances of the same thing”

- ▶ The International Standard Text Code
- ▶ Unambiguously identifies a textual work, even though it may be published in many different forms (One ISTC may link to many ISBNs)
- ▶ For use in improved discovery services, **collocation**, rights and royalties etc.
- ▶ Identifies content separately from the products which contain it
- ▶ Also identifies the relationships between items of content (ONIX for ISTC registration)
 - ▶ e.g. Abridged, Annotated, Compilation, Critical, Excerpt, Expurgated, Non-text material added or revised, Revised, Translated



Publisher record at work level

Products ID: 656

Product Details (Work)

Title Prefix: The Without Prefix: British Countryside Work ID: W09812-BC87

Title: The British Countryside Type: Work

Authors: Belinda Gordon-Lewis, Martin Frobisher Organisation: Publishing Technology

Details | Editorial | R&R Editorial | Identifiers | Contributors | Resources | Classifications | Relationships | Prices | Acquisitions

Manifestations: Overview | Product Details | Schedules Overview | Comments | Attachments

Summary


Output Format: Not Applicable Imprint: Publishing Technology

Short Title: The British Countryside Trading Division: Publishing Technology

Subtitle: Publisher: Publishing Technology

Description: Our countryside has so much to offer whether you are looking for wildlife, driving for pleasure or seeking a long walk in the fresh air to name but a few activities. You'll discover an amazing diversity of scenery around the British regions. Quite often you'll be surprised by the changing landscape presented to you within the regions and even the counties themselves! If its peace and q Security Domain: Publishing Technology PLC

Distributor: Publishing Technology PLC

Cover Image: 

Identifiers

Identifier Type	Description	Value
Work Identifier		W09812-BC87
ISTC - International Standard Text Code		0A3-2010-012335C7-F

Contributors

ID	Role Type	First Last Name	Author Display Sequence	Internal Role	Con
664	Author	Belinda Gordon-Lewis	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pub
665	Author	Martin Frobisher	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pub

Classifications

Description	Classification Description	Classification Code
Main BIC Subject Code	Regional geography	
Main BISAC Subject Code 2008	TRAVEL, Europe, Great Britain	

Versions

Version Type	Publication Date	Identifier	Type	Output Format Description	De
Work/Concept	26/05/2011		Work ID	Not Applicable	

Example from Publishing Technology

Link to various manifestations

The screenshot shows a software interface for product details. The title bar reads "Products ID: 656". The main window is titled "Product Details (Work)".

Product Details (Work)

Title Prefix: Without Prefix: Work ID:

Title: Type:

Authors: Organisation:

Navigation: Details | Editorial | R&R Editorial | Identifiers | Contributors | Resources | Classifications | Relationships | Prices | Acquisitions

Manifestations: Overview | Product Details | Schedules Overview | Comments | Attachments

Concept Source: Editorial Source:

Products that are 'Contents/Manifestations' of The British Countryside

Manifestations / Contents

- Book - Hardback - The British Countryside (ISBN: 978-1000299281)
 - Chapter (print) - Scotland & The Scottish Isles (Section ID : CH0003)
 - Chapter (print) - The South East (Section ID : CH0001)
 - Chapter (print) - The South West & The Channel Islands (Section ID : CH0002)
- Book - Paperback - The British Countryside (ISBN: 978-1000292882)
- E-Book - The British Countryside
 - Amazon Kindle - (ISBN: 978-4993993832)
 - Sony eBook - (ISBN: 978-2837737222)

Table of Manifestations:

Manifestation	Edition	Identifier	Publication	Type
The British Countryside	Main Market Edition	978-1000299281	27/05/2010	Book- HardCov
The British Countryside	Main Market Edition	978-1002928820	26/05/2011	Book- Paperba
The British Countryside	Amazon Kindle		26/05/2011	E-Book

Example from Publishing Technology

Link to various manifestations

Product Details (E-Book)

Title Prefix: The Without Prefix: *British Countryside* Type: E-Book

Title: The British Countryside Organisation: Publishing Technology

Authors: Belinda Gordon-Lewis, Martin Frobisher Status: Editorial Concept

List Prices:

Details | Editorial | R&R Editorial | Identifiers | Contributors | Resources | Classifications | Relationships Overview | Prices | Acquisitions | Accounting | Fulfilment

Overview | Product Details | Product Versions | Schedules Overview | Comments | Attachments | Web | Contents

Summary

Output Format: **Electronic Book** Imprint: Publishing Technology

Short Title: *The British Countryside* Trading Division: Publishing Technology

Subtitle:

Publisher: Publishing Technology

Description: *Our countryside has so much to offer whether you are looking for wildlife, driving for pleasure or seeking a long walk in the fresh air to name but a few activities. You'll discover an amazing diversity of scenery around the British regions. Quite often you'll be surprised by the changing landscape presented to you within the regions and even the counties themselves! If its peace and quiet you are after then look no further. It's right here in Britain!*

Security Domain: Publishing Technology PLC

Distributor: Publishing Technology PLC

Cover Image:

Contributors

Role Type	First Last Name	Author Display Sequence	Internal Role
Author	Belinda Gordon-Lewis	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Author	Martin Frobisher	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Versions

Version Type	Publication Date	Identifier	Type	Output Format	Descriptor
Amazon Kindle	26/05/2011	978-4993993832	ISBN 13	Electronic Book	
Sony eBook	26/05/2011	978-2837737222	ISBN 13	Electronic Book	

Classifications

Description	Classification Description	Classification Code
Main BIC Subject Code	Regional geography	
Main BISAC Subject Code 2008	TRAVEL , Europe , Great Britain	

Shared metadata multiple ISBNs

Example from Publishing Technology

What about chapters and fragments?

- ▶ Are you making chapters and fragments separately available through the supply chain?
- ▶ Do you want them listed in trade databases?
 - ▶ If so, then treat them as individual publications and assign ISBNs
- ▶ Will they only be available through a single source (e.g. publisher's website?)
 - ▶ If so, then you can assign an internal identifier or, possibly, a DOI to facilitate linking
 - ▶ (N.B. ISBN-A, the actionable ISBN, provides a simple syntax to enable an ISBN to be incorporated into a DOI)



In summary

- ▶ The use of a single ISBN to identify multiple e-book versions is confusing and potentially unsafe
 - ▶ If two things are given the same identifier it becomes very hard to distinguish between them if/when we need to
 - ▶ The International ISBN Agency continues to recommend that publishers should assign ISBNs to each e-book version separately available (see latest FAQs)
 - ▶ ...but we also need to use identifiers at higher levels of abstraction (ISTC, others?)
 - ▶ Consistent application of standard identifiers is essential
-

Thanks

E-Book FAQs: www.isbn-international.org/news/view/31

ISTC: www.istc-international.org

Brian Green
brian@isbn-international.org