

News Release: American Library Association

Public Information Office
American Library Association
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
312 944-6780

From: Peggy Barber, Director
Public Information Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 1976

At the suggestion of the Joint Committee on the Union List of Serials, and with the unanimous concurrence of the American Library Association/ Resources and Technical Services Division Serials Section Executive Committee, libraries and other information communities are encouraged to incorporate the ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) in their serials data bases whenever the existence of these numbers is known. The ISSN serves as a nationally and internationally accepted identification code, suitable for use in both manual and machine readable files-- and will provide a common link between the CONSER data base and other serials data files.

An ISSN is an eight digit number consisting of seven digits plus a check digit (which is regarded as an essential part of the number) and is written in the form: ISSN 1234-5679. In those instances in which the check digit is ten, the roman numeral "X" is recorded instead of the Arabic numeral.

As the U.S. representative to the ISDS (International Serials Data System), the National Serials Data Program (NSDP) at the Library of Congress is responsible for the assignment of ISSN to serials published in this country and is also charged with making these numbers accessible to interested communities. ISSN assigned or validated by NSDP and other ISDS centers are available through a number of published sources. The Library of Congress includes these ISSN on its printed catalog cards, in the MARC Serials Distribution Service, and in New Serial Titles. Preparation is

underway for publication of an ISSN/Key Title Register by the end of the year, which will contain ISSN and bibliographic information on all titles processed by NSDP through February 1975. Titles registered after that date, in addition to being in the above, are being input by NSDP into the OCLC system as a CONSER participant, and are therefore available via that vehicle to anyone who has access to an OCLC terminal.

In addition to these sources of ISSN information, the International Centre of ISDS publishes a quarterly ISDS Bulletin which includes ISSN and essential bibliographic information for titles registered by ISDS centers.

Several years ago the R.R. Bowker Company was allocated blocks of ISSN to be used in association with titles listed in the Bowker Serials Bibliography (Ulrich's International Periodical Directory and the Irregular Serials and Annuals) as well as the 1950-1970 cumulation of New Serials Titles. A great deal of technical and editorial work on the part of the Bowker Company was involved in these operations, and their efforts have produced valuable sources of bibliographic information on serials. However, since the ISSN registered for titles included in these publications were assigned to entries based upon various cataloging codes or conventions which were not always compatible with the bibliographic specifications of ISDS, some erroneous assignments were inevitable. This does not unduly jeopardize the validity of these numbers, however, and their use is both advocated and encouraged. In those instances where a title was inadvertently numbered twice, the lower number is generally considered to be the valid ISSN and the higher one(s) are cancelled by the appropriate ISDS center.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Joseph H. Howard, Library of Congress, (202) 426-5333.