



## About ISNI – Notes for Prospective Members

Tim Devenport, Executive Director, May 2017

### ***An ISNI Overview***

These Notes are intended to provide a brief introduction to ISNI for organizations that may be considering membership of ISNI or otherwise contributing to its work.

### ***What is ISNI?***

ISNI is the International Standard Name Identifier, initiative 27729 of the International Standards Organization, the ISO. The abbreviation ISNI is used to describe both the identifier scheme and supporting infrastructure as well as the actual identifiers (ISNIs) that are assigned.

ISNIs are designed to uniquely identify and disambiguate the wide range of parties involved with or of importance to the creative sector – across a range of domains.

ISNIs can be assigned to the public identities of persons, organizations or “personas” of each, thus spanning for example authors, artists, composers, musicians, film actors or producers, as well as publishers, recording companies, imprints and record labels.

### ***How ISNI is Organized***

The ISNI International Agency (ISNI-IA) governs the assignment and registration of ISNI identifiers (ISNIs) globally and formulates policies and practices to support ISNI and promote its widespread adoption.

ISNI-IA is constituted as a non-profit limited company, registered in the UK but with global responsibility to promulgate the ISNI identifier on behalf of ISO. ISNI-IA has a

governing Board to set strategic direction and a part-time Executive Director responsible for the agency’s operations.

The ISNI Assignment Agency (ISNI-AA), operated on ISNI’s behalf by OCLC, maintains the centralized ISNI database and associated technical services, including matching algorithms and programs that sample data, check for anomalies and enrich data.

The ISNI Quality Team (ISNI-QT), currently drawn from staff of the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the British Library, evaluates new data sources, identifies strategic databases to add, reviews statistical samples, and corrects records flagged for manual review, as well as responding to end user input.

Most importantly, ISNI is supported financially and substantively by ISNI-IA’s global membership, comprising Founding Members, Regular Members and Registration Agencies.

### ***Founding Members & the ISNI-IA Board***

ISNI-IA’s Board is drawn primarily from representatives of the Founding Members of ISNI (CENL – represented by the British Library and the Bibliothèque nationale de France, CISAC, IFRRO, OCLC and SCAPR) plus the company Ringgold representing ISNI’s Registration Agencies.

Several Founding Members also act as Registration Agencies.

### **Registration Agencies**

ISNI Registration Agencies (also known as “RAGs”) are licensed by ISNI-IA to assign ISNIs for their own purposes and also for other, third-party clients and may charge appropriate fees for such third-party services. They interact with the ISNI database, making requests for ISNI assignments and contributing/maintaining supporting metadata for each identity.

Each RAG typically has a particular area of interest or expertise; some specialize in requesting assignments for individuals whilst others focus on assigning ISNIs to organizations.

A current list of ISNI Registration Agencies appears in the Current Membership section below.

### **Regular Members**

Regular ISNI Members are licensed by ISNI-IA to assign ISNIs for their own purposes but not for clients external to their own organizations. They carry out similar interactions with the ISNI database as those described for the RAGs, above.

A current list of regular ISNI Members appears in the Current Membership section below.

### **License Agreements**

Each ISNI member organization operates under a comprehensive license agreement with ISNI-IA. These agreements describe the rights and responsibilities of licensor and licensee, and include sections on the use of public and confidential data in the ISNI database, mechanisms for interacting technically with the ISNI database and relevant fee structures.

A copy of the appropriate license agreement template is available from ISNI-IA on request.

### **Fee Structures**

Within its overall non-profit status, the operations and on-going development of ISNI are funded by a combination of membership fees and charges for technical setup and usage of the ISNI database.

Fee structures for the various categories of ISNI membership (Regular Member, Registration Agency, Federated RAG), as well as charges for utilising the ISNI system and assigning new ISNIs, are described in the template license agreement and are available from ISNI-IA upon request.

### **In Which Sectors is ISNI Used?**

Approaching 10 million ISNIs have been assigned to date, with about 9.5 million relating to individuals (current and historical) and 0.5 million to organizations.

ISNI aims to provide a solution for unique identification and disambiguation across the creative and scholarly communities. Early adopters have included libraries across the world and rights management/collection agencies in a variety of creative industries.

Current activities are broadening the scope of application further, for example with notable interest from organizations active in the music and film domains. There is also a significant trend for individuals (performing artists, composers, etc.) to apply for ISNI assignments to distinguish and protect their professional identities.

### **Further Information & Contacts**

ISNI’s website [www.isni.org](http://www.isni.org) contains extensive information on the aims and objectives of ISNI, as well as technical documentation, descriptions of data models, and explanations of how ISNI works.

Please contact Tim Devenport at ISNI-IA, via the email [info@isni.org](mailto:info@isni.org), for any further information you may need.

### **Current Membership**

Active members of ISNI-IA at the time of writing are as follows.

#### *Registration Agencies:*

- Biblioteka Narodowa, Poland
- Bibliothèque nationale de France
- Bibliothèque nationale de Luxembourg
- British Library, United Kingdom
- Casalini Libri, Italy
- Cercle de la Librairie/Electre, France
- Identification Agency, Russia
- Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Netherlands
- Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, Turkey
- National Assembly Library of Korea
- National Library of Korea
- Numerical Gurus, United States
- Ringgold Inc., United States/United Kingdom

#### *Members:*

- Agence Bibliographique de l'Enseignement Supérieur, France
- Archives nationales de France
- Brill Publishers, Netherlands
- Centre Español de Derechos Reprográficos, Spain
- CENL (Founding Member)
- CISAC (Founding Member)
- Copyrus, Russia
- FCT|FCCN, Portugal
- Harvard University, United States
- IFRRO (Founding Member)
- Irish Copyright Licensing Agency
- ISSN International Centre
- La Trobe University Library, Australia
- Library of Congress, United States
- MacOdrum Library, Carleton University, Canada
- National Library of Finland
- National Library of New Zealand
- National Library of Norway
- OCLC (Founding Member)
- Publishers Licensing Society, United Kingdom
- SCAPR (Founding Member)
- Stichting Centrale Discotheek Rotterdam, Netherlands
- University of New South Wales, Australia