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# ISIL - International Standard Identifier for Libraries and Related Organisations

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title** | ISIL (International Standard Identifier for Libraries and Related Organizations) |
| **Creator** | International Organization for Standardization (ISO) |
| **Publisher** | International Organization for Standardization (ISO), ISIL Registration Authority (maintainer) |
| **Date** | 2009 |
| **Identifier** | ISO 15511:2011 |
| **Rights** | Open Standard |
| **Description** | An alphanumeric string of up to 16 characters. |
| **Subject** | Persistent identifier (organisation) |
| **Relation** | http://biblstandard.dk/isil/ |

„Communication and resource sharing among libraries and related organizations, including archives, museums, government agencies, educational institutions and businesses, have dramatically increased. This new collaboration has created a need for a structured, standard identifier for organizations, especially libraries." (Introduction of ISO 15511 [2])

**What is ISIL?**

ISIL is an abbreviation for "International Standard Identifier for Libraries and Related Organizations" and it corresponds to International Standard ISO 15511, which came into force in September 2003.
This code is designed to identify libraries, archives, museums and other related institutions, for preventing misunderstandings, which could arise from change of institution names or from different language variants of the name, as well as for creation a worldwide standard for facilitating of communication and interaction between all participants in this field.

**Evolution of ISIL**

When the standard was proposed, a prime objective was to facilitate  access to library catalogues. Also it was supposed to be used by agencies connecting with library business, such as suppliers and publishers for identifying their library customers.
After launch in course of time ISIL was expanded over other cultural institutions: museums, archives, etc.

Nowadays it is still considered as limited, and Danish National Library Authority, which hosts the International ISIL centre, has made it clear that any organization, which participate directly or indirectly in international library or book trade communication, could obtain ISIL if it has a valid reason and need for it. An ISIL is not intended to be used to classify organizations or their services and holdings.

**How the ISIL is constructed?**

The ISIL is a variable length identifier. It has a maximum of 16 characters and consists of two parts, seperated by a hyphen-minus:
-   a prefix (either a two character country code (ISO 3166-1) or a non-country code, registered at a global level);
-   a library identifier (assigned by the national ISIL centres).

Each ISIL identifier must be unique. The permitted characters are: Arabic numerals 0 to 9, unmodified lettres from the basic Latin alphabet and the special marks solidus (/), hyphen-minus (-) and colon (:).

Due to the fact that organizational identifiers are already widely used in many countries, this International Standard utilizes a flexible structure that can accommodate existing identifiers and be used to create new identifiers. Globally, therefore, the code have to be treated as unstructured. As a result, there is no common catalog of all identifiers, each list is retained and updated only by local center.

**Examples**

Examples of particular cases:
-   United States Library of Congress Washington - US-DLC
-   Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut Bibliothek - DE-Tue120

Examples of ISIL assignments within different countries:
-   The valid 6-digits Danish library number is now an ISIL with the preceding country code "DK-" as an international library code [8];
-   ISILs assigned to libraries by the British Library are based on MARC organisation codes which are made globally unique by the addition of a country code prefix [10].

Example of general list of ISILs within one national ISIL centre [13]:
In Switzerland all institutions registered in the address database LibRO, automatically received an ISIL. In the LibRO database section relating to the ISIL Register can be:
•   Institutions which participate in interlibrary loan (ILL);
•   bodies whose individual and family archival collections (fonds) are indicated in the Index of manuscript collections held in libraries and archives in Switzerland;
•   all institutions which were specified in the listing Information Schweiz;
•   other bodies which correspond to the regulations for ISIL assignment.

**Archive plan search**

- HelveticArchives - Archivdatenbank der Schweizerischen Nationalbibliothek NB (2008
  - CDN Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel (2000-)
  - GS- Graphische Sammlung GS / EAD (1886-)
  - SLA Schweizerisches Literaturarchiv (1991-)
  - Biokat Biografischer Katalog = Catalogue biographique (1930-2012)
  - ISplus Gesamt-Adressverzeichnis der Archive, Bibliotheken und Museen, inklusive
    - AG Aargau
    - AI Appenzell Innerrhoden
    - AR Appenzell Ausserrhoden
    - BE Bern
    - BL Basel-Landschaft
    - BS Basel-Stadt
    - FR Freiburg
    - GE Genf
      - Académie internationale de l'environment (AIE) Bibliothèque
      - Alliance universelle des unions chrétiennes de jeunes gens Bibliothèque (1
      - American Library (1930-)
      - Archives d'architecture de l'Université de Genève (1830-)
      - Archives de la Société religieuse des Amis en Suisse (quakers) (1914-)
      - Archives de la Ville de Genève (AVG) (1986-)
      - Archives de l'Université de Genève (1973-)
      - Archives d'Etat de Genève (1371-)
      - Archives Dufour
      - Archives Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau (AIJJR)

| Titel / Name: | American Library |
|---|---|
| **Adresse** | |
| Strasse, Nr.: | Rue de Monthoux 3 |
| PLZ: | 1201 |
| Ort: | Genève |
| Telefon: | +41 22 732 80 97 |
| **Identifikation** | |
| ISIL: | CH-001139-2 |
| **Bestände und Benutzung** | |
| Entstehungszeitraum: | from 1930 |
| Bestandsbeschreibung: | Romans,documentaires,ouvrages de référence tout en langue anglaise: Englische Sprache und Literatur |
| Bibliothekarische Bestände: | 20'000 volumes |
| Archivalienbestände: | 250 cassettes sonores en langue anglaise |

Picture 1 – Catalog of Swiss ISIL Register (web-page).

**National ISIL centres**

If an organization fullfills the conditions for obtaining of ISIL, it can request to be registrated by the local ISIL Centre. For this purpose will be enough to send an e-mail, a fax or a letter with the address of the institution to the address indicated under contacts.
Nowadays there are 25 national centres in different countries. They are registered by the ISIL Registration Authority and responsible for assignment of identifiers and maintenance of the codes within their countries.
Every year there are several new centers, but the system still needs wider distribution.
On this web-page you could find an up-to-date list of national centres:
http://biblstandard.dk/isil/

**ISIL and other standards**

The International Standard Collection Identifier (ISCI) is a new standard for identifying the collections, fonds, and series of libraries.
It consists of three parts: ISIL, delimiting character (colon) and the actual (colon-less) collection identifier for describing the collection within the institution.
Examples:
- FI-H:Slavica (Slavic collection in HUL);
- FR-751041001:Casadesus1 ( Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Arts du spectacle, Fonds Christian Casadesus, Archives de la Compagnie du Regain et du Théâtre de l'Ambigu), where <FR-751041001> is the ISIL of  Département des Arts du spectacle de la BnF , <Casadesus1> is the internal identifier of the fonds [14].

The ISCI is based on ISIL standard in order to allow decentralization of the ISCI assignment and creation of Internet-wide resolution service without a global ISCI DB, thus each organization can assign its own ISCIs.

**Example of ISIL utilization**

RFID tags system is used by libraries to provide identification for check-out, check-in, taking inventory, and for protection against theft.
This system uses a globally unique identifier for every item, which is composed of the combination of owner library/institution and Item ID (according to part 1 of ISO 28560).
Therefore, if a library plans to implement RFID tagging project, it should obtain ISIL previously.

Encoding the ISIL Code in RFID:
One of the ISIL code advantages is, that it facilitates to  be encode an owner library/institution data element very efficiently.  This process is specified by rules from ISO 28560-2.
„The data set for the ISIL code is 9 bytes long. As it requires locking, and the next data set is unlocked, it needs to be block-aligned. This is achieved by inserting the offset byte with the value $02_{HEX}$ and encoding two null bytes—value $00_{HEX}$—following the data." [12]
An example of  encoding is shown in the next picture.

| Bytes | Description |
|---|---|
| 11 06 0B 3A | Encoding the Primary Item Identifier |
| 73 CE 2F F2 | |
| 02 02 90 02 | Encoding the OID Index and the Block-aligned Shelf Location |
| C7 02 07 44 | |
| 1C B6 E2 E3 | |
| 35 D6 00 00 | |
| 83 02 07 AC | Encoding the Block-aligned and Locked ISIL Code |
| C0 9E BA A0 | |
| 6F 6B 00 00 | |
| 5F 02 18 87 | Encoding the Title |
| 2A 5D 64 12 | |
| 77 66 DF CB | |
| 6E 1E 9A 77 | |
| EE 41 43 96 | |
| FC 79 79 F3 | |
| D3 BB 3F 00 | |
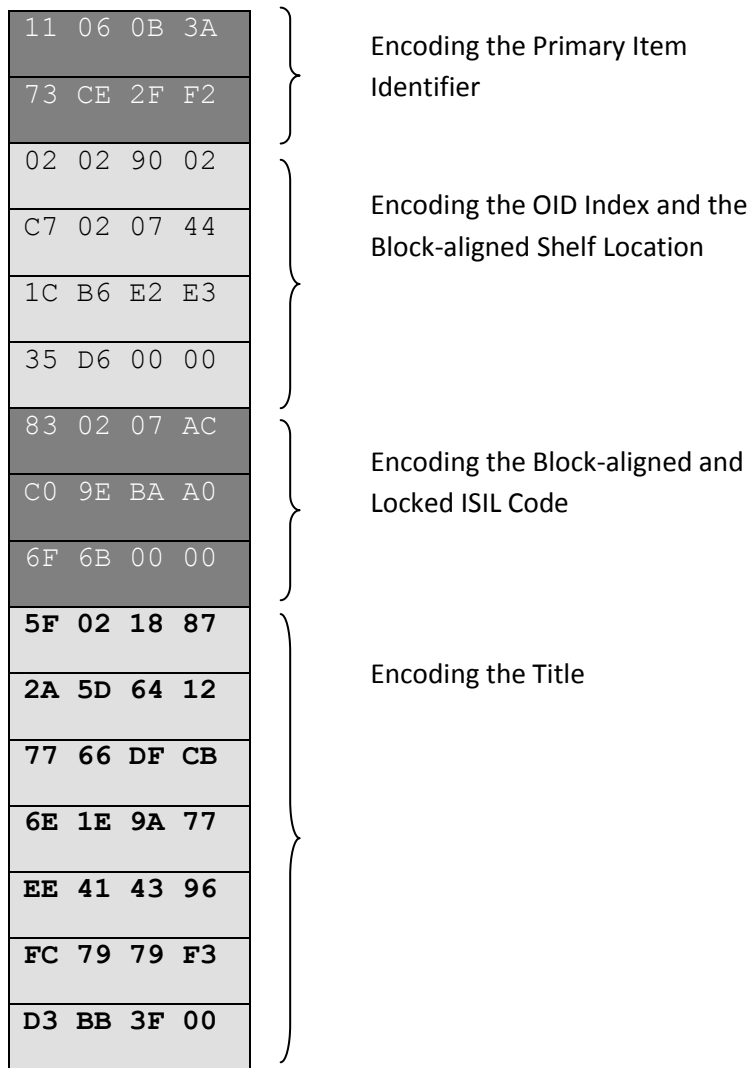
Picture 2 – Example of encoding within RFID system.

**Conclusion**

In our period of globalization it is very important to create systems and standards on a world scale. The purpose of ISIL is a unique identification of libraries and related organizations. It solves a lot of problems connected with business in this area with a minimum impact on already existing systems. Of course, it still needs wider distribution, but it has the chances to be broadly used. Despite the criticism that it is insufficiently detailed, the ISIL has already proven itself as efficient standard, and nowadays it starts to build new systems and standards on its basis.

**URL:**

1) Report of ISIL Registration Authority  to ISO TC46/SC4 May 2012  2 April 2012
2) http://217.218.200.220/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=18518&folderId=20332&name=DLFE-27178.pdf (ISO 15511: 2003)
3) Name numbering for the UK book industry, David Martin and Liz Potter,  April 2000
4) http://sigel.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/en/vergabe/isil/
5) Persistent identifiers (pids): recommendations for institutions, edited by Athena WP3 Working Group
6) http://www.niso.org/publications/newsline/2012/newslinemay2012.html
7) www.iso.org
8) http://www.kulturstyrelsen.dk/english/institutions/libraries/national-solutions/standards/danish-library-number/#.UL4S14NdPZU
9) http://www.nb.admin.ch/index.html?lang=en
10) http://www.bl.uk/bibliographic/isilagency.html
11) Persistent identifiers: the 7 levels of identification, Juha Hakala, Helsinki University Library
12) RFID in U.S. Libraries, March 2012, prepared by the NISO RFID Revision Working Group
13) https://www.helveticarchives.ch/archivplansuche.aspx?ID=166870
14) **Error! Reference source not found.**, 17.12.2010, **Error! Reference source not found.**

**DC metadata**

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