

## August 2020 – Contents

- [In this issue of ISNI News](#)
- [A new website for ISNI](#)
- [ISNI in the music industry](#)
- [ISNI and libraries](#)
- [ISNI in publishing](#)
- [Member focus](#)

## In this issue of ISNI News

Welcome to the latest issue of ISNI News!

In this issue we start out by reporting our successful migration to a rebuilt ISNI website. With tremendous assistance from colleagues at the British Library section of the ISNI Quality Team, and others at the ISNI Assignment Agency at OCLC – and not forgetting our new hosting partner, Bibliographic Data Services (BDS) – the new [isni.org](https://isni.org) website went live at the beginning of June. We hope that you'll find this new site a big improvement, and we'll continue to update and enhance this new site over the months to come.

ISNI continues to 'make a splash' in the music industry and this is reflected in short articles on ISNI's Music Sector Consultation Group and on ways in which ISNI is collaborating with the DDEX standards body. But this new focus in no way diminishes our commitment to the more established community of ISNI's library users – we report below on the activities of the ISNI Library Sector Consultation Group, welcome a number of libraries that have joined ISNI over the past year, and examine the growing interest in integrating ISNIs into national legal deposit workflows.

ISNI is increasingly being picked up in the book publishing industry too. We have an update on a trial coordinated in the UK by the British Library to match between publishers' author files, the British National Bibliography, and name strings from library name authority files. Very encouraging match rates for established authors (in several cases up to 80% of the names in publisher files are matching to existing library name authority records) are providing a solid platform for further efforts in this area.

Finally, for this issue at least, we briefly profile three Registration Agencies new to ISNI over the past 12 months.

We hope there will be something of interest to you here – please [e-mail me](mailto:info@isni.org) with any feedback or suggestions for *ISNI News*.

Tim Devenport  
Executive Director, ISNI International Agency

[back to top](#)

## A new website for ISNI

At the beginning of June 2020, ISNI introduced a rebuilt and extensively redesigned [website](#). At the same time, the site was moved to a new hosting provider [BDS](#), and we have taken steps to tighten website privacy and security and to either replace or update website software. We have also introduced a modern 'responsive' design so the website is more usable on a variety of mobile devices.



Regular visitors will notice the new, simplified logo, and significant differences in both site architecture and the presentation of much of ISNI's reference material. An overhaul of the documentation available via the website is underway, and many key documents have been redrafted or updated. We have also tried to make particularly popular options – like how to 'Get an ISNI' or 'Search the ISNI Database' – more prominent, straightforward and intuitive to use.

Some further improvements are planned over the coming months, including steps aimed at improving the accessibility of the site to visually impaired web users. The ISNI website is an important element in communicating with our users around the world and those eager to learn more about ISNI – we would welcome any feedback on how we could improve it further.

[back to top](#)

## ISNI in the music industry

### Music sector consultation group

Interest in ISNI adoption continues to grow within the music industry. Faced with the same issues as in other creative domains, professionals active in music are turning to ISNI to help solve problems of unique identification, disambiguation of similar names and record de-duplication.

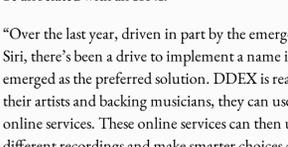
Alongside the decisions by more music organizations to join ISNI as either Members or Registration Agencies, ISNI has actively sought to reach out to the wider music industry. An ISNI Music Consultation Group has been formed, and several well-attended virtual meetings have been held. The objective is to enable and encourage two-way communication between ISNI and the industry, so that specific music sector requirements and priorities can be more quickly incorporated into ISNI's future direction.

Chaired by Paul Jessop, the music consultation group has initially focused on how to tailor ISNI assignment rules to a music setting, considered factors that can help (or hinder) broader adoption of ISNI, and started to formulate statements of best practice when applying ISNI to music.

If you have a particular interest in or questions about the Group, or about ISNI in the music industry, please contact [Paul Jessop](#) or [Tim Devenport](#).

### DDEX standards for music-industry communication

ISNI's role is to contribute a key element – party identification – to a larger metadata puzzle. Here music-industry consultant Paul Jessop explains how ISNI can collaborate with the vital standards that [DDEX](#) has developed over the years to support e-commerce in the music industry:



“A very senior executive in the music industry once said that the standards created by DDEX couldn't possibly be important because none his team ever mentioned them. He was as wrong as it is possible to be. The whole industry simply got on with designing and implementing common data formats for delivery, licensing and reporting of music. Over time, this has probably resulted in cost savings of many millions of dollars compared with *ad-hoc* mechanisms using spreadsheets and portable hard drives, knowledge never needed to percolate upwards, because it 'just worked'.

“Those common message formats, under the DDEX banner, include standard identifiers wherever possible, and some of these have been in widespread use for many years – the International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) for sound recordings and music video recordings, the International Standard Musical Work Code (ISWC) for compositions and the Global Release Identifier (GRid) for instance. Until recently, almost no one in the music industry was using ISNI, but the message formats were ready to accommodate ISNI wherever a named entity was cited. A performer, a songwriter, a label or a publishing company can each be associated with an ISNI.

“Over the last year, driven in part by the emergence of voice-activated services like Alexa and Siri, there's been a drive to implement a name identifier in the music industry, and ISNI has emerged as the preferred solution. DDEX is ready, and as soon as labels have the ISNIs for their artists and backing musicians, they can use DDEX messages to transmit them to the online services. These online services can then use the ISNI to see connections between different recordings and make smarter choices about what to offer their customers. And those services will no longer have the headache of working out whether 'John Williams' refers to the guitarist (*Cavatina* and the *Concierto de Aranjuez*), the film music composer (*Star Wars* and *Jurassic Park*) or the music producer (the Housemartins and the Proclaimers).”

[back to top](#)

## ISNI and libraries

### Consultation group for libraries

As the scope of ISNI assignment extends into new areas, it's vital that the interests and priorities of ISNI's library users are clearly understood and represented. With this in mind, an ISNI Consultation Group for Libraries has been assembled, with the group being chaired by Vincent Boulet from the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). The project was floated at the ISNI Libraries Summit held in Paris in June 2019, and since that time a volunteer steering group has been meeting to exchange ideas and suggestions.

A questionnaire is currently being developed for circulation to users in libraries during the fourth quarter of 2020. It is hoped that this will not only start to tease out priorities and pain points experienced by national libraries, but also help publicize the activities of the consultation group beyond its original core of steering group members. Alongside this information-gathering exercise, there's an aim to add an elected board member representing library-community interests to the main Board of Directors of ISNI-IA. For further information, please contact consultation group chair [Vincent Boulet](#) of the BnF.

### Libraries new to ISNI membership

Over the past year, ISNI has welcomed a number of new members from the library sector. One substantial group has comprised members of the so-called 'UKB' group of universities in the Netherlands. Recognizing a shared interest in ISNI adoption, this group asked SURF – the collaborative organization for ICT in Dutch education and research – to facilitate this via a joint arrangement with ISNI. To date, ten affiliated universities have joined as ISNI members and it is hoped that several more will do so in the near future.

Two new ISNI Registration Agencies from the library community have also come on board during the period. One is the Legal Deposit Libraries ISNI Consortium in the UK and Ireland (see below), and the other is ICCU – the Central Institute for the Union Catalogue of Italian Libraries. And the National Library of Finland – an ISNI Member for some years – has opted to become a Registration Agency in order to deliver better support for a range of identifier-related activities in Finland with which it plans to be involved.

### ISNI in legal deposit workflows

Legal deposit is an area of national library operations where ISNI can offer useful benefits – addition of ISNI identifiers to metadata sets furnished by publishers can both enrich the resulting metadata and aid in wider dissemination and use of ISNIs in the supply chain. A notable example is the way in which the BnF has collaborated with publishers and distributors in France – including Hachette Livres, Interforum and L'Harmattan – to systematically enrich and return metadata originally contributed under legal deposit obligations.

Legal deposit libraries in the UK and Ireland have recently formed a consortium to explore the likely workflows involved and potential benefits of developing similar approaches. The consortium, which will itself act as an ISNI Registration Agency, has six members:

- British Library
- Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
- Cambridge University Library
- National Library of Scotland
- National Library of Wales
- Library of Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin

[back to top](#)

## ISNI in publishing

### Kickstarting ISNI adoption in trade publishing

For the past couple of years, the British Library – in its role as an ISNI Registration Agency – has been working with a small group of publishers and other organisations involved in the metadata supply chain for the UK book industry to explore options for including ISNIs in publisher's standard product metadata.

Members of the group who have taken part in this matching trial and author name data between the British National Bibliography and publisher metadata, and triangulating this with author name strings and IDs from library name authority files including VIAF, NACO and ISNI. An algorithm can link the data, harvesting ISNIs and matching them against the correct name strings in publishers' product metadata. The results so far have been encouraging, linking ISNIs into around 70% of names contained in publishers' current databases.

Having proved the practicality of linking library and trade metadata to share the benefits of the ISNI as an author identifier in the book supply chain, the group is continuing to meet, to explore how to get even greater ISNI coverage in publisher metadata, and to encourage wider use of the ISNIs further downstream – at retail, or in royalty reporting for example. Next steps will also include exploring options for establishing sustainable workflows for ongoing assignment of ISNIs to new authors.

### And in case you wondered why unique identification is so vital...

Debut novelist and former UK policeman David Jewell published his crime novel *Death Rattle* (Wild Wolf Publishing, ISBN 978 1 907954 76 4) earlier this summer – but gained attention from an unexpected direction.

As reported recently on local north east England news website *Chronicle Live* and later in the UK's *Guardian* newspaper, he was startled to find himself confused on Amazon with *another* David Jewell, a US author of bondage erotica. This may stem from Goodreads inadvertently tying a review of the crime novel to the website of the American author, or to simple name matching within Amazon's database. The result: crime aficionados unwittingly directed to books of an altogether more 'specialist' nature, and *vice versa*.

It's unclear who might profit more from this misdirection, but the British David Jewell is upbeat. 'Maybe the other guy's readers will order my book', he told *Chronicle Live*. 'I've already had a Twitter follower from a group called Domination Sites!'

This is an instance where ISNI identification could help, ensuring that the UK's [David Jewell](#) and his [US namesake](#) were not confused – avoiding the potential for reputational damage and perhaps sparing readers' blushes along the way.

Bestselling UK thriller writer [Jack Higgins](#) has previously been involved in a similar mix up with prolific erotica writer [Jack Higgins](#), as also reported by the [Guardian](#).

[back to top](#)

## Member focus

Among the organizations that have joined ISNI over the past 12 months, we briefly profile here three new Registration Agencies.



New ISNI Registration Agency **Jaxsta** is a music company using technology to develop what it describes as the world's most comprehensive resource of official music credits. Based in Sydney, and with representatives in New York, London and Los Angeles, Jaxsta ensures those who create music – artist, producer, songwriter, collaborator, guest performer or engineer – receive credit where credit is due.

Jaxsta doesn't accept crowd-sourced information. Instead, it delivers official data sourced exclusively and directly from the custodians of that data, such as major and independent record labels, publishers, royalty agencies and industry associations across the globe. Jaxsta plans to use ISNI to assist in its core processes of data de-duplication, cross-referencing, and deep linking of metadata to identify and describe music creatives and their contributions across the music sector.



**Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico**

ICCU is based in Rome. As the Italian national bibliographic agency, it manages the union catalogue of Italian libraries, including its bibliographic service, online catalogue <https://opac.sbn.it> and authority data. ICCU will operate as an ISNI Registration Agency, focussing on the Italian cataloguing and library communities, and utilising ISNI to assist in its identity management operations.



**Quansic**

The Swiss-based company **Quansic** became an ISNI Registration Agency in the Autumn of 2019. After many years' involvement in the overlapping music and standards communities (including spells with CISAC and Google/YouTube), FX Nuttall founded Quansic to offer identifier-related services, specifically those involving ISNI, to the music industry.

Alongside ISNI matching and ISNI registration services, Quansic also offers registration facilities for other standard identifiers (ISRC and BOWI) as well as a data enhancement service called Smart Repertoire.

[back to top](#)

## In future issues

Next time, watch out for information on ISNI's new facilities for delivering Open Linked Data, set for rollout later this year.

### For further details, contact

<b>Tim Devenport, Executive Director, ISNI-IA</b>	
% EDItEUR	Phone: +44 20 7503 6418
United House	E-mail: <a href="mailto:tim@editur.org">tim@editur.org</a>
North Road	Twitter: <a href="#">@isni_ID</a>
London N7 9DP	ISNI: <b>0000 0004 5913 7837</b>
UK	

### Privacy policy

ISNI's privacy policy, together with descriptions of related policies on data and data quality, can be reviewed via the [Resources](#) section of the ISNI website. If you no longer wish to receive updates on ISNI's activities via *ISNI News*, or if your contact details need updating, then please let us know (via [info@isni.org](mailto:info@isni.org)). Copies of *ISNI News* can also be viewed on the ISNI website.