

ISNI Quality Infrastructure

Operations overseen by the Quality Team and the Assignment Agency

The ISNI Quality Team (ISNI-QT) is responsible for a range of activities that are central to maintaining and improving the quality of the ISNI database and its operations. IT and systems support for these activities are the responsibility of the ISNI Assignment Agency (ISNI-AA).

Key areas of the quality infrastructure include the following:

- System for reporting errors
 - For data contributors
 - For the general public via the web search interface
- Ability to upgrade data for data contributors
- System for ISNI-QT to adjudicate and carry out corrections
 - Merging
 - Splitting
 - Other corrections
- System for reporting corrections to data contributors
- Regular anomaly checking by program
 - Date anomalies
 - Pseudonym and real name inconsistencies
- Regular data sampling and analysis of problems
- Adjustments to correct or accommodate incoming data
 - E.g. Minor deviations from the format, character set, too many occurrences of people born 1st January, date of publication zero, expanding abbreviations, only a surname supplied, etc.
- Data enrichment to increase matching
 - E.g. application of Dewey
- Identification of new data sources that can serve to increasing matching by providing bridging information, e.g. encyclopaedias, other identifiers schemes.

Wider responsibilities for data quality

A number of parties collaborate closely to maximize data quality in ISNI's operations: these are as follows.

ISNI-AA: the ISNI Assignment Agency, operated by OCLC BV on behalf of ISNI-IA, looks after the core systems and database at the heart of the ISNI matching and assignment services.

ISNI-IA: the ISNI International Agency is the Registration Authority charged by ISO with delivering, developing and promulgating the ISNI standard.

ISNI-QT: the ISNI Quality Team, operated by the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the British Library, works to define and guarantee quality assurance across the

ISNI service, sampling existing data and new data sources, contributing to and testing ISNI's matching algorithms and dealing with queries from data subjects and the general public.

ISNI's data contributors: including ISNI Member organizations and Registration Agencies.

Finally we must not forget contributions and feedback to ISNI received by data subjects and other members of the public.

Data Contributors

Each data contributor takes reasonable steps to establish unique public identity reference metadata. Data contributors – particularly ISNI Members and Registration Agencies – are invited to check the accuracy of ISNI assignment and report any errors. They are also invited to review the possible matches and report via the web interface. They may enrich their own records, thus giving rise to further matching. Data contributors periodically receive notification reports of errors and new ISNI assignments that concern records that they have contributed.

ISNI-QT

The ISNI Quality Team responds to error reports from data contributors and from public contributions. Hidden notes fields that can be seen by ISNI Registration Agencies and Members are used to record errors and details of fixes made as appropriate. The ISNI-QT keeps a history of all email correspondence generated by the ISNI Quality Team. It systematically reviews reports, provided by ISNI-AA, of potential problems. In addition, it requests statistical samples from ISNI-AA and manually reviews those records and reports on the findings.

ISNI-QT is responsible for merging records, where appropriate. This results in a notification to all sources on the resulting record. Where there is a data error or a record with mixed identities and only one source on the record, the error is reported to the contributing source. The record is marked and no ISNI is assigned. Where there are several sources on the record, ISNI-QT will fix the record and notify all the sources as appropriate. If ISNI-QT splits a record into two or more records, the end result may be a record for a single source that still contains mixed identities and then the source will be notified and no ISNI will be assigned for that record. If ISNI-QT finds that the matching system caused an error, ISNI-AA is notified.

ISNI-AA

The ISNI Assignment Agency is responsible for the IT and systems elements of the quality infrastructure described above. It responds to queries from ISNI-QT about possible matching errors. It regularly runs the anomaly program and statistical sampling programs and feeds the resulting reports to ISNI-QT.

ISNI-IA

The ISNI International Agency is the owner of the database and is ultimately responsible for the quality of the data within it. ISNI-IA may set thresholds for the

percentage of data error that is acceptable. As mentioned elsewhere, different types and causes of errors exist and thus different thresholds may be applied. Where it is found that the error rate is unsatisfactory, the ISNI-IA, as the owner of the data, is ultimately responsible for finding a solution. ISNI-IA works with the ISNI Technical Advisory Committee, ISNI-AA and ISNI-QT to devise and resource appropriate solutions.

Data subjects and the general public

Data subjects and members of the public are able to make contributions via the web search interface on the ISNI website. Captcha is used to ensure that such inputs are from a genuine human being, but identification is not mandatory. The data is collected into hidden indexed fields that generate a nightly alert. Members of ISNI-QT receive this alert and aim to respond within three working days. An email response is sent if a valid email address was given with the information.

For situations in which high volumes of contributions are received, ISNI-QT prioritizes responses broadly as follows:

1. All inputs involving data correction, merging and splitting
2. All suggestions for enrichment of records coming from persons associated with a single ISNI (i.e. persons themselves, heirs etc.)
3. All suggestions for enrichment from other parties that will facilitate ISNI linking (future matching etc.)
4. Other enrichment suggestions.