

ISNI AND LINKED DATA

CONTACT DETAILS:

PROJECT NAME: INTERNATIONAL STANDARD NAME IDENTIFIER (ISNI)

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Objectives

ISNI (the International Standard Name Identifier) is the ISO-certified global standard number that seeks to identify the names of researchers, scientists, publishers, writers, artists, musicians, politicians, and other public figures and contributors to creative or scientific works. It has been diffused across many platforms (including Wikipedia, VIAF, OCLC Theses, JISC Names, MLA, Zetoc, Bowker's Books in Print, ProQuest's Scholar Universe and ProQuest Theses).

ISNI seeks to serve as a bridge identifier, linking data sets together and making research highly discoverable. Members of ISNI include the British Library, the French National Library, ODIN (ORCID and DataCite's Interoperability Network), and ORCID itself is using ISNI to identify institutions.

The objective of ISNI is to provide links and interoperability among as many data sets as possible, disambiguate the names of researchers and authors, and provide accurate URIs on the open web. Registration for ISNI is handled by Ringgold (for institutions), and Bowker (for persons and publishers).

On-going activities:

ISNI's Assignment Authority, OCLC, creates and maintains the algorithms for assigning ISNIs to names. Assignment is on an ongoing basis – new names are added to the database every day. Error correction is facilitated with online forms and email reporting to the ISNI Quality Team (consisting of OCLC, the British Library, and the French National Library). Diffusion to Wikipedia via Wikidata is also ongoing.

Individual applications are accepted via email, but an online form is currently in development at Bowker, and it will be available in Spanish as well as English by the end of 2013.

Representatives from the ISNI International Authority present regularly at conferences such as ELAG, ALA and SWIB, as well as other events and workshops. ISNI also works closely with the Linked Content Coalition (LCC), and has submitted proposals to both the US Copyright Office and the UK Copyright Hub.

Results:

To date, 6.5 million ISNIs have been assigned. As mentioned, these ISNIs have been diffused widely into numerous data sets on the web (both open and closed). As ISNI proliferates, we will see applications with Google's Knowledge Graph, the LOD Cloud Diagram, and other visual representations of metadata and identifiers. A year after its publication as an ISO-certified global standard, ISNI facilitates interoperability among at least 9 data sets, linking them at the contributor level.

Conclusions

ISNI's emphasis on interoperability means that researchers who use this identifier will have their work discovered in contexts that other identifiers cannot provide. The use of ISNI in both closed and open data sets on the web ensures that, e.g., Linda Richards the neuroscientist is not confused with

Linda Richards the editor of January magazine. As data sets proliferate, recombine, and link, ISNI provides disambiguation in ways that no other authorial identifier can.

Next Steps

Wikipedia will continue to diffuse ISNIs in their entries. Subscribers to ProQuest and Bowker databases will soon have access to ISNI data; several dissertation databases (OCLC, ProQuest, JISC) will also be linked by inclusion of ISNI. An application form will roll out in December 2013, in both English and Spanish, so individual researchers can apply for their ISNIs.