

HOW AUDIOVISUAL STANDARD IDs HELP PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Studios, broadcasters, networks, and independent creators produce more content than ever, and the audiovisual sector needs the capacity to identify and track audiovisual assets across all distribution platforms. The solution is to use a globally-unique, international audiovisual standard identifier from the International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISAN) or the Entertainment ID Registry (EIDR). Using a standard audiovisual ID enables you to designate any film or television production through a unique identifier. This ensures easier cross-referencing between online and linear catalogues, increased efficiency of media production and distribution, improved cross-platform measurement, and larger reach of video content across platforms.

Additionally, the European Commission encourages the adoption of the two standard IDs referenced in this guide. In fact, their use is one of the requirements of the Creative Europe MEDIA programme supporting the culture and audiovisual sectors.

WHAT IS AN AUDIOVISUAL STANDARD ID?

An audiovisual standard ID is a globally-unique code assigned to a film or television production by an ISO¹ registration authority or an industry group conforming to an ISO standard. It identifies an audiovisual production in an analogous way to how a UPC/EAN bar code identifies a retail product or an ISBN identifies a book. It is unambiguous and machine-readable, and it enables computer systems and digital platforms to identify works and their versions easily and accurately for purposes of licensing, processing transactions, rights, audience measurement, digital file management, and metadata. It also highly improves discoverability and recommendation, allowing audiovisual works to be more easily found by their audiences.

Audiovisual standard IDs can be assigned to all types of audiovisual works, including films, television series, individual episodes, documentaries, shorts, and other works. Different versions or edits of a work also can be assigned different IDs for tracking purposes.

Standard audiovisual IDs are non-proprietary and available from non-profit organizations. Today there are two such standard IDs widely used in the audiovisual industry. They are the International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISAN) and the Entertainment ID Registry (EIDR).² EIDR and ISAN are globally-unique, standard audiovisual IDs that have evolved in different ecosystems, so they often are deployed differently across a variety of use cases, including for example, by Collective Management

¹ International Organization for Standardization www.iso.org

² ISAN is the ISO International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISO 15706-1 and ISO 15706-2). EIDR is an implementation of the ISO Digital Object Identifier Standard (ISO 26324).

Organizations (CMOs), Electronic Program Guides (EPGs), data providers, audience measurement companies, film funds and archives, as well as by digital platforms for reporting purposes and automation of digital distribution.

Both of these international standard audiovisual IDs are available to the industry today. ISAN and EIDR are working to help producers, distributors, CMOs, broadcasters, and online service providers automate workflows, cut distribution and rights management costs, and expand the benefits of digital distribution.

INTEROPERABILITY BETWEEN ISAN AND EIDR

One of the objectives of the accompanying measures set out in the Copyright Communications of December 2015 (COM(2015) 626) and September 2016 (COM(2016) 592) is to support the efforts of EIDR and ISAN to achieve full interoperability between the two systems.

As far as ID registrants are concerned, interoperability means that for any new standard ID created, the applicant should have the ability to obtain both an ISAN and an EIDR ID upon request, through submission of a single application, thus simplifying the registration process.

Accordingly, EIDR and ISAN have mapped the technical requirements of the two systems and have created a common registration template (Excel spreadsheet) so that registrants can provide one set of metadata for registration in both Registry systems. The application will then be processed separately by each of the ISAN and EIDR Registry systems. Avoiding the need for registrants to submit two sets of metadata in two parallel registration processes is a key goal of interoperability. Interoperability is also furthered by implementing systematic cross-referencing between both databases. Every ID created via the dual-registration process will be recorded in both Registries, therefore enabling easy translations from one ID system to the other by both applicants and users.

Common best practices for registrations, both at the work level and for versions will be developed. With registrants in both systems following the same best practices, it is expected that the Registries will be able to ensure interoperability for all future registrations, beginning with standard abstraction records (excluding edits, encodings, and collections).

HOW TO GET AN ID TODAY

Today, obtaining an EIDR ID or ISAN is quite easy. Only a small amount of descriptive information (or metadata) about a work is required in order to generate an ISAN or EIDR ID, or both.

For a film or other stand-alone work, that information includes:

- Title of the work in the original language
- Primary language(s) used in the work
- Date or year of first release
- Approximate length
- Country(ies) of origin

- Limited information about the creators in order to uniquely identify the work, e.g., production company, director, lead actors. (Neither Registry requires or maintains full lists of cast and crew.)

For episodic works such as television shows, the same basic metadata is required, plus some additional information about the series or programme as a whole and the sequence of episodes within the whole.

For versions or edits, additional information is required to describe the changes made to the work.

Before you register, always do a search first. Both Registries provide public user interfaces (<http://web.isan.org/lookup/> and <https://ui.eidr.org/search>) that allow you to look up your work to see if it already has an EIDR or ISAN ID. If the work is already registered, no further action is required.

If you register, you should read and follow the instructions provided. Both ISAN and EIDR have guidelines and best practices for registrations. For example:

- When EIDR or ISAN ask for the release date of a work, always provide the first release date, whether in theatres, on a broadcast network, or on a digital platform. It is inaccurate to identify a work with a secondary release date, for example a DVD release date that followed a theatrical release.
- Both ISAN and EIDR require the original title of a work, but also request as many alternate titles (in all languages) as can be provided. Providing those alternate titles makes your work easier to track in distribution and helps avoid duplicate registrations under different names.
- Similarly, if you know alternate IDs that have been assigned to the work, e.g., Lumière, IMDb, etc., provide as many of those IDs as possible.
- If you register the original work and versions or edits of the work, you will need to pay special attention to the best practices for registering those versions or edits. Both EIDR and ISAN keep track of the hierarchical relationships between a work and different versions of that work.
- According to the principles of full interoperability, both EIDR and ISAN will establish a common set of best practices for registering those versions.
- Once you provide the required information, the Registries provide the IDs. You are never required to provide a copy of the work itself, only metadata about the work. ISAN and EIDR maintain public catalogues of works just like librarians or archivists, but unlike in a library or an archive, EIDR and ISAN never maintain copies of the work itself. Rightsholders always maintain ownership of the work. In addition, since registration of an ID does not equate to ownership, rightsholders are free to license or transfer an identified work as they choose.

For additional information about ISAN and EIDR, go to www.isan.org or www.eidr.org.

HOW TO USE AN AUDIOVISUAL STANDARD ID

When catalogues of works include EIDR IDs or ISANs, there are many opportunities to use those IDs to benefit the media ecosystem and the digital marketplace, notably for film and TV. Recommended uses include:

- Providing IDs to broadcasters when a film or show is licensed for television

- Delivering to online platforms and digital distributors in lists of works available for license and metadata in order to enable automation and reduce risks of errors deriving from manual operations
- Tracking deliveries and communications to and from post-production houses and service providers who perform subtitling and dubbing
- Providing to listing guides and EPG metadata providers along with cast lists, synopses, and broadcast times
- Providing to audience measurement firms with requests for data or services
- Submitting to archives to enable faster and more accurate cataloguing and research
- Registering rights with Collective Management Organizations (CMOs)
- Adding to cue sheets along with music IDs to enable better tracking of video and music rights
- Identifying works in development or licensing contracts
- Managing content in databases to automate the submission and exchange of data, track performance, and gather statistics

These are only some of the ways that audiovisual standard IDs can benefit the media sector. The important thing is to use the IDs everywhere you can, providing them to colleagues and distribution partners **whether they ask for them or not**. An ISAN or EIDR ID should be a standard element of every delivery, and if you don't see the IDs returned to you in performance reports for your tracking, ask for them to be included in the future.

Following these ID practices will decrease errors in payments and reports, speed up processing, save time and money for right holders and their media partners, streamline digital distribution, increase metadata accuracy, and dramatically reduce the need for time-consuming and expensive title matching.

GLOSSARY

Registrant or **Applicant** refers to the person that applies for the allocation of audiovisual standard ID. The applicant is typically a producer, distributor, or broadcaster.

Work refers to an audiovisual work creation in its most general form, e.g., a film, an episode, a documentary. It is the parent of all different edits and versions of a work in the ISAN and EIDR systems.

Edit The EIDR system uses the term *Edit ID* to refer to child registrations that represent unique creative instances of a parent audiovisual work, e.g., the domestic theatrical release edit, a director's cut, a broadcast television edit, a colorized version of an originally black-and-white work, etc. In both ISAN and EIDR systems a single edit may have multiple language tracks, and a new language track by itself does not define a new edit for purposes of ID creation. EIDR Edits are generally equivalent to ISAN Edition Versions.

Manifestation The EIDR system uses the term *Manifestation ID* to refer to child registrations that represent changes to the technical properties, including language tracks (audio, subtitle, closed caption, etc.), aspect ratio, resolution, codecs, etc.; or to the fixation of the content on a specific media, including both physical (film, tape, etc.) and digital (DCP, IMF, MPEG, etc.) formats. EIDR Manifestations are generally equivalent to ISAN Media Versions.

Version The ISAN system uses the term *ISAN version* or *V-ISAN* to refer to the identification of any instances of a work resulting from changes in the content or format of an audiovisual work. Such changes can be creative (ISAN Edition Version), or related to the technical properties or to the fixation of the content on a specific media such as Blu-ray, DCPs or IMF (ISAN Media Versions). Contents derived from a work such as clips or interviews (ISAN Related Content Version) or closely related items such as subtitles files or closed captions (ISAN Related Item Version) can also result in the issuance of a new ISAN version. ISAN Edition Versions are generally equivalent to EIDR Edits and ISAN Media Versions are generally equivalent to EIDR Manifestations.