

ISSN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive Summary of Activity Report for 2019

New and Existing Portal Services: Publishers Extranet, ROAD, ETAS, and now the Keepers' Registry

The ISSN International Centre promotes the ISSN brand as an evolving and global portfolio of quality data and services specialising in continuing resources throughout their lifetime, from inception to long-term preservation. The central platform to access ISSN data and services, the ISSN Portal (<https://portal.issn.org>), continues to be expanded since its launch two years ago. Our steadily expanding community of users has free access to a subset of ISSN metadata, as well as full access to ROAD records as part of our strategy to adopt Open Access and Linked Data principles. The financial situation of the ISSN International Centre has not suffered despite this, and subscribers continue to renew their subscriptions. Publishers benefit from the ISSN Portal Extranet, and from the integrated Enhanced Transfer Alerting Service (journaltransfer.org) to notify changes in ownership of journal titles. ISSN metadata is updated more regularly thanks to information provided by publishers and suggested by our community of users and subscribers via the ISSN Portal, and checked by ISSN National Centres.

A decisive move in 2019 was to acquire the Keepers Registry from our long-standing partner EDINA thus adding a new service hosted on the ISSN Portal. The Keepers Registry aggregates preservation metadata for digital serials supplied by 13 archiving agencies all around the globe. The ISSN International Centre has plans to cooperate with more archiving agencies in the years to come.

Some numbers about the ISSN Portal services:

- The ISSN International Register contained 2,121,389 “Confirmed” records at the end of 2019, and 58,275 new records were added in the year, showing some stability compared to 2018 figures (58,497). 39% are online resources (22,705).
- 4,884 new ISSN records describing Open Access (OA) resources were added to ROAD in 2019. Globally, as of 2 January 2020, ROAD collected 36,930 OA titles. OA resources only represent 1,75% of all ISSN records, and 13% of online publications described in the ISSN Register.
- ISSN International Centre 2019 turnover from ISSN credits sales remained stable compared to 2018 whereas ISSN subscriptions increased by 1,3%.
- The number of publishers registered on the ISSN Portal has doubled, from 1,557 to 2,953, and in 2019, 137 title transfers (vs 167 in 2018) were filed by receiving publishers and posted on ETAS.
- 44,596 titles are archived by the Keepers and 17,462 titles are being ‘kept safe’ by 3 or more Keepers.

IT Infrastructure: Improving the ISSN Portal and building ISSN +

In 2019, ISSN International Centre staff worked with the company Progilone and a graphic designer to add the Keepers' Registry to the ISSN Portal, with Google to improve site indexing, and with the Finnish National Library to set up a URN:ISSN resolution server, all as part of our current strategy to enhance the ISSN International Centre's IT infrastructure. The key infrastructure project however is the development of ISSN +, the future ISSN production tool that will eventually replace Virtua. A call for tender issued in December 2018 led to the selection of the IT company Anybox and since mid-2019, an agile methods project is underway with the objective to implement the new tool and train users by the end of 2020. In November 2019 the first modules of ISSN +, mainly the search functionality, were presented to ISSN Directors in New Delhi, India. An ISSN+ User Group, consisting of ISSN National Centres volunteers, is actively testing this entirely built-from-scratch cataloguing tool. It is expected the switch from testing to a live version shall happen by the end of 2020.

Some numbers about the IT infrastructure and IT projects:

- 6,000 daily unique visitors and 33 million pages were viewed in 2019, and as of January 2020, 950,000 ISSN records are indexed by Google. ISSN pages are “fed” through sitemap files not only in their default language but also in the other languages available on the server which means almost 9,000,000 different web pages have to be indexed in total.
- 37 countries used the Virtua client in 2019, now including Nigeria.
- The number of files received from ISSN National Centres and ingested into the ISSN Register increased in 2019: 1,159 files were provided by 46 centres; they contained a total of 175,880 new or modified records.
- The assignment activity of the ISSN IC continued to be very high, with a total number of 3,236 new ISSN assigned (2,982 Confirmed records and 254 Provisional records).
- The ISSN+ User Group consists of 17 representatives of ISSN National Centres.

Building Data Quality through Partnerships and Process

The highest quality and most up-to-date metadata continues to be an important pursuit of the ISSN Network. Partnerships help us to review our data more thoroughly. Data sharing, data cleaning, and automated data workflow processes for ISSN assignment have been put into place through partnerships, such as those with ProQuest, Latindex, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), CIDEMIS, Springer-Nature, Cision, Internet Archive, and Geonames. This ongoing work continues to run smoothly. A new project about the standardization of the various forms of publisher names began in 2019. An internal wiki tool listing multinational publishers, their imprints and ISNIs, will associate National Centres potentially responsible for ISSN assignment to these publishers' resources. The wiki is a transitional tool to prepare for ISSN+ to include this functionality. Another project underway this year, with the support of the company SPARNA, involves inputting basic validated ISSN metadata into Wikidata to enrich the ISSN Portal pages with links to Wikidata and when appropriate to the Wikipedia pages corresponding to already described continuing resources.

Some numbers about data updates through partnership cooperation:

- In 2019 within the framework of the quality plan, 9,200 ISSN records were corrected or enriched, and 9,500 titles proper were added.
- The semi-automated provisional ISSN assignments in a pilot project with Springer-Nature have continued in 2019: a total of 651 ISSN assignments were made.
- approximately 100,000 continuing resources with ISSN data are already present in Wikidata.

The ISSN Network and Beyond

Besides cooperating with partners to improve data quality, the ISSN International Centre, as an intergovernmental organization, disseminates information about its activities to as many interested parties as possible around the globe. Inclusiveness is achieved by building standards; providing information, marketing and training in multiple languages; participating in meetings with other international organizations; and building new long-term strategies with the support of the Governing Board and the ISSN National Centres.

The revision of the ISO 3297 ISSN standard in 2019 resulted in a final draft international standard that will become the official 6th version in 2020. It will serve as a basis to update the ISSN Manual which had an initial revision work plan approved by the ISSN Review Group at the annual Directors' Meeting. The ISSN International Centre is involved in various international standardization working groups and monitors closely the evolution of practices in the library field and the publishing industry.

Within the Network, the ISSN International Centre's Metadata and Technical Coordination team set up several training sessions throughout year 2019 to support ISSN National Centres striving to enhance their professional practice. In July 2019, the Project Officer, in a newly created role, started to manage the renewal of working agreements with ISSN National Centres, and to collect information about their activities in line with ISO regulations, and to assist the ISSN Director in planning the International Centre's 2024 strategic projects. The Governing Board selected seven projects out of 15 proposed in a 2019 initial strategic review. The definitive 2020-2024 ISSN International Centre Strategy will be debated and eventually voted by the General Assembly of Member Countries in May 2020.

Beyond the Network, one objective is to raise the profile of the ISSN International Centre and the National Centres as major contributors to the serial publication value chain. This activity is backed by an active communication campaign via a broad spectrum from professional journals to social media. The 2019 international campaign was instrumental in the promotion of ISSN services with presentations delivered at IFLA 2019 WLIC in Athens, iPRES 2019 in Amsterdam, and the CNI Fall 2019 Membership Meeting in Washington D.C.

Some facts and figures about the ISSN Network:

- 90 members states, with Ukraine and Peru acceding the UNESCO statutes in 2019 to join in 2020.
- Ten representatives of member states sit at the Governing Board beside the representatives for France and UNESCO. Four meetings of the Governing Board were organised in 2019.
- A Regional Directors' Meeting was held in October in Maribor, Slovenia, hosted by the Institut informacijskih znanosti (IZUM).
- The 44th ISSN Directors' Meeting, hosted by ISSN India at CSIR-NISCAIR in New Delhi, in November 2019 welcomed 38 participants.
- In 2019, we published much of our output into the 6 official UN languages: an executive summary of the 2018 activity report; the ISSN Portal interface (portal.issn.org), and the ISSN Website.
- In 2019, 16 staff from ISSN National Centres participated in training sessions. Beside formal training sessions, the International Centre advises 23 National Centre staff on a regular basis. About 3,000 emails were exchanged with ISSN National Centres in 2019.
- By January 2020, the ISSN Newsletter had about 9,000 subscribers, a surplus of 1,059 new subscribers compared to 2018.
- An ad about the ISSN-L appeared in nearly 20 trade and professional publications and websites in 2019.

See the full 2019 Activity Report for more information and numbers.