

ISSN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Activity Report 2020 Executive Summary

In 2020, the ISSN International Centre and the ISSN Network proved their resilience and ability to pursue their activities in an international context strongly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Total Numbers at a Glance

Meetings with the National Centres

The Network went to work remotely, holding for the first time in its history both the General Assembly meeting and the Directors' Meeting entirely by videoconferences repeated at different times and in different languages to maximize participation. The General Assembly officially approved the launch of the new 5-year strategic plan, concluding the

2015 to 2019 strategy, which had focused on a more diverse and inclusive community; national centre creation; quality metadata; and new partnerships and data services, including the ISSN Portal freemium model, the API and custom data cleaning. The newly appointed Governors for a 2020-2022 mandate represent Brazil, Croatia, Germany, Iran, Mauritius, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States of America. Directors were able to take advantage of the online platform to give live, interactive presentations or video tours of their National Centres; colleagues from ISSN Algeria, ISSN Belgium, ISSN China, ISSN Colombia, ISSN Iran, ISSN Mexico, ISSN Philippines, ISSN Russia, and ISSN USA delivered presentations.

The ISSN International Centre signed two new working agreements, one with the Ivan Fedorov Book Chamber of Ukraine and the other with Hauptverband des Österreichischen Buchhandels in Austria where two ISSN centres opened in early 2021, raising the total number of ISSN National Centres to 92. Negotiations to open a centre at the Biblioteca Nacional del Perú were stalled by the pandemic, but it is expected that the 93rd national centre will open in mid-2021.

The 2020-2024 Strategy

The 2020-2024 ISSN IC Strategy was refined through a process started in 2019 with analysis and reports submitted by research group CiberResearch to the ISSN IC Governing Board. Their 15 proposed objectives were reviewed, and the Board voted to select seven of them. ISSN IC management prepared a detailed project plan for the 2020-2024 Strategy, and a final ballot was cast by the member countries during the meetings of the General Assembly. The agreed objectives, described in detail in the full annual report, are:

- Objective 1: Develop the global interoperability of the ISSN Portal by improving the management of ISNIs within the ISSN Portal
- Objective 2: Encourage the creation of new ISSN National Centres to extend the ISSN Network worldwide
- Objective 3: Implement the sixth version of the ISSN standard by creating the family ISSN and other cluster ISSN

- Objective 4: Implement the sixth version of ISO3297 - ISSN by assigning ISSNs to various types of continuing resources
- Objective 5: Develop interoperability of the ISSN Portal through the management of persistent identifiers and URLs of digital continuing resources
- Objective 6: Promote and develop Keepers Registry to associate new agencies and increase the number of identified archived resources
- Objective 7: Promote the ISSN Portal as a professional tool for the ISSN National Centres to improve the ISSN assignment process

Standard Reviews

As the registration authority for ISO 3297, the ISSN IC is closely involved in the revision process of the standard, which has evolved considerably since 2015. The publication of the sixth edition of ISO 3297 in October 2020 is significant for the expansion of the Cluster ISSN concept to allow for the identification of multiple groups of serial titles related to one another. Details regarding the construction of the ISSN have been added to specify the UNICODE coding of the identifier, and the canonical syntax of the ISSN URI has been recorded in the ISO standard in this latest edition.

The ISSN Manual revision was launched by the ISSN Review Group after the Directors' Meeting in New Delhi in 2019. A survey and data analysis were undertaken in the first two quarters of 2020 before the policy review and rewriting phase began in July. The project team now has 17 members spanning 4 continents, meeting on a monthly basis. In parallel, two members of the ISSN IC represent ISSN interests in other standard reviews, notably the ongoing ISBD revision.

Key numbers

While a few ISSN National Centres have struggled to maintain the same level of activity, publishers have also scaled back their production in 2020. As a result, the global number of identified continuing resources was lower in 2020 with only 54,494 ISSN assigned, i.e. -7% compared to 2019. However, the proportion of new digital publications issued in 2020 was higher compared to 2019 and the total number of digital resources has reached

295,075 in the ISSN Portal. The ISSN International Centre contributed 3,330 new ISSN to the database in 2020 and led several projects to improve quality, e.g. a specific assignment workflow for Springer-Nature thus achieving comprehensiveness for the identification of this company's serial publications and monographic series. Many National Centres used the lull in demand to tackle more data quality projects, so the number of revised records nearly reached the record high set in 2018.

In 2020

202,473 new and updated records from National Centers

3,330 ISSN assigned by ISSN IC

7,228 OA records added to ROAD

2,400 Keepers records updated

2,143 CIDEMIS requests processed

8,500 daily unique visitors to the ISSN Portal

Financial results

The ISSN International Centre achieved a good financial result in 2020 and this surplus will be invested primarily in new IT developments and facilities. In 2020, a new financial report template was developed to facilitate reporting by the National Centres that charge fees for their services.

Outreach

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions during the year 2020, all exhibitions booked by the ISSN IC and conferences planned were either cancelled or carried out remotely. The ISSN IC participated in various online conferences, delivered several distant presentations and sponsored a few conferences. The ISSN IC focused its communication on the integration of Keepers Registry in the ISSN Portal targeting professional publications and newsletters in different geographical areas. A Russian interface was added to the ISSN Portal to complete the coverage to all six official UNESCO languages. A Keepers' Technical Advisory Committee was also formed to develop the service, and a statistics page was added to the site.

Investment in IT

The production launch of ISSN+, the custom-built cataloguing tool initially planned for release at the end of 2020, has been delayed by the developments made necessary by the inclusion of the Keepers Registry service in 2019 and by the difficult pandemic context in 2020. ISSN+ will actually be made available to National Centres in 2021 and user testing has already taken place on some of the developed functionalities.

Another collaboration tool made available since August 2020 is the Multinational Publishers' Wiki to track the list of agreements between ISSN National Centres for ISSN assignment to continuing resources issued by publishers with offices around the globe. The goal of this project is to create a list of multinational publishers and their brands that will be useful to the library community, and cooperate with VIAF and ISNI databases to better identify publishers globally.

Other IT projects have an eye on the linked data world and data exchange. External sources from the world of continuing resources identification and description have been added to the data offered through the ISSN Portal, thanks to the ISSN used as a linking key (Wikipedia, Wikidata, Mirabel, FATCAT, ABES SUDOC). ISSN IC has set up a KBART-compatible version of the ROAD dataset of MARC records which is made available on BACON and can be reused by various partners. There is now an "ISSN Bot" which adds basic free ISSN data elements to Wikidata pages corresponding to journals already identified with at least one ISSN and helps establish a validated metadata structure. A fully-fledged home page for the URN:ISSN resolution server, set up mid-2019, was designed in 2020 and is now implemented (urn.issn.org).

For more details and numbers, read the full report on www.issn.org.