

# **BEST PRACTICE FOR BAR CODING AND ISSUE NUMBERING OF MAGAZINES, PARTWORKS, COLLECTABLES AND PROMOTIONAL VOUCHERS**



Updated – JANUARY 2019

**PRODUCED BY**

**Professional Publishers Association and Association of Newspaper and Magazine Wholesalers**

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
OBJECTIVES.....	4
THE BENEFITS OF BARCODING.....	5
THE REAL COST OF BARCODE ERRORS .....	6
BARCODES IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN .....	7
ISSN AND ISBN – WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW ARE THEY USED?.....	7
OBTAINING AND USING A BARCODE – THE FOUR STEP APPROACH .....	8
BARCODE ‘DO’S AND DON’TS’ .....	11
BARCODE QUALITY CHECKLIST .....	12
QUALITY SUMMARY.....	13
<b>BARCODING FOR MAGAZINES</b>	
COMPONENTS OF THE BARCODE .....	14
BARCODE SYMBOLS – SPECIFICATIONS & DIMENSIONS.....	15
PRODUCING A SMALLER BARCODE SYMBOL .....	16
ISSUE NUMBERING.....	17
PRODUCTION GUIDELINES .....	19
BARCODE VERIFICATION .....	20
<b>INCLUSION OF THE OFF-SALE DATE AND RECALL INFORMATION ON THE FRONT COVER.....</b>	<b>21</b>
CLEARLY IDENTIFYING ONE SHOTS, SPECIALS ETC .....	23
<b>BARCODING FOR ONE OFF SPECIALS - ‘ONE-SHOTS’.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>BARCODING FOR PARTWORKS &amp; OTHER COLLECTABLES.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>BARCODING OF MAGAZINE ‘MULTIPACKS’ &amp; NON-STANDARD MAGAZINE PRODUCT.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>POLYBAGGED MAGAZINE PRODUCT – BARCODE POSITIONING.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>BARCODING FOR NEWSPAPERS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>BARCODING FOR PROMOTIONAL VOUCHERS (COUPONS) .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>COUPON CODING GUIDELINES .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>PPA SMART PUBLISHER’S GUIDE TO VOUCHER SCHEME SAFETY .....</b>	<b>31</b>
STANDARD VOUCHER SPECIFICATIONS .....	32
VOUCHER SPECIFICATIONS WHERE PIN BARCODES ARE USED .....	33
FAQs AND GUIDANCE FOR PUBLISHERS .....	34
GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	39
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
APPENDIX A: USEFUL CONTACTS.....	40
APPENDIX B: FILM MASTER SUPPLIERS .....	41
APPENDIX C: ISSN UK CENTRE .....	42
APPENDIX D: BARCODING FOR BOOKS – ISBN.....	47
BUREAU SERVICES.....	48
SOURCES OF INFORMATION.....	48

## INTRODUCTION

The barcode number is a standardised way of uniquely identifying every issue of a magazine, partwork, or other 'collectible'. This unique identification is of utmost importance when data is electronically captured and transferred between computer systems of trading partners, such as publishers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers. There are internationally agreed systems to identify periodicals, magazines and newspapers. These are the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and the GS1<sup>++</sup> Global Trade Item Number (GTIN). Together they provide a common approach within the industry for uniquely identifying issues of titles by a 15-digit number, using the EAN-13 bar code, starting with 977, plus 2 digit add-on.

The barcode for books is based on the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and EAN 13 bar codes. Books are a one-off product and therefore do not carry the two-digit issue add-on, however book publishers can add a 5-digit add-on, if so desired. Such barcodes are identifiable by the first 3 digits '978' and '979'.

Promotional vouchers issued in magazines also use a style of barcoding based on EAN 13. Please see the section 'Barcoding for Promotional Vouchers' (p15) and Appendix 'F'.

## ENDORSEMENTS

UK retailers, wholesalers, publishers, their respective trade associations and the Press Distribution Forum are all committed to maintaining the highest standards of accuracy in barcoding. All have been involved in developing this document, and all have fully endorsed it.

Thanks are due to ISSN UK Centre for their help & support in compiling this document.

A special acknowledgement is given to GS1 UK<sup>++</sup> for allowing its copyright material to be used throughout this document.

### **++ GS1 UK**

GS1 UK is part of the global GS1 organisation dedicated to the development and implementation of global data standards and solutions for the supply chain. GS1 UK has driven innovation in the supply chain for over thirty years.

The GS1 System is the most widely used supply chain standards system in the world, comprising four product areas; barcodes, EPC Global (RFID), Global Data Synchronisation (GDS) and electronic business messaging. At least 5 billion GS1 barcodes are scanned every day. With over 21,000 members in the UK, GS1 UK represents a diverse cross section of industry sectors.

GS1 barcodes are used throughout the Newstrade to identify electronic trading partners (publisher/distributors, wholesalers, carriers etc) with a unique code. This is known as a GTIN – Global Trade Item Number. Barcodes also identify magazines and newspapers (traded items) at individual issue level. The barcode format used for these purposes is known as 'EAN 13' for trading partners or 'EAN 13+2' for traded items, allowing for issue identification. '13' and '13+2' refers to the number of digits used within the code.

## OBJECTIVES

These guidelines have been developed to address the many problems encountered, at the point-of-sale and when wholesalers scan returns, due to poor quality barcoding. To achieve this it is important to:

- Make recommendations which will improve barcode quality
- Set out a standardised approach to barcoding which is endorsed by retailers and wholesalers

It is hoped that this document will raise awareness among all users of barcodes that a single interpretation of the published standards must be adopted to ensure effective printing and use of barcodes. In addition the document underpins the GS1 guidelines and raises the awareness and importance of GTIN numbering and barcoding in supply chain management.

## WHO SHOULD READ?

The new guidelines, compiled in accordance with GS1 specifications, are mainly targeted at:

- Publishing staff who are responsible for issuing and using barcodes
- Production department staff, printers, designers and reprographic houses
- Retailer and wholesaler account managers/buyers

They should be read in conjunction with the GS1 UK General Specifications and the GS1 UK booklet 'Barcoding – getting it right' which can be obtained from:

Administration department

### **GS1 UK**

Hasilwood House  
60 Bishopsgate  
London  
EC2N 4AW

Tel: 020 7092 3500

Helpdesk: 0808 178 8799 / 020 7092 3501

Fax: 020 7681 2290

E-mail: [info@gs1uk.org](mailto:info@gs1uk.org)

Internet: <http://www.gs1uk.org>

## **THE BENEFITS OF BARCODING**

Using a standard approach to the numbering and barcoding of publications delivers benefits of speed, accuracy and labour savings in the handling and distribution of goods throughout the supply chain. Standards allow systems to be designed to capture data about goods at all points throughout the supply chain.

The following highlights some of the potential benefits that can be gained from using the guidelines document and getting GTIN numbering and bar coding right. It also addresses some of the potential problems and costs that could be incurred by not following the guidelines:

### **BENEFITS OF GETTING GTIN NUMBERING & BARCODING RIGHT:**

- Fast and accurate data capture at every point in the supply chain, including goods receiving, warehousing, picking, despatch and point-of-sale Epos information
- Better and more timely information for management systems
- Lower stockholding and less waste
- Greater responsiveness to trade customers and consumers
- Fewer errors in recognising goods
- Improved communications and trading relations
- Faster and more accurate scanning of sale or return unsolds, leading to better quality net sales information

### **PROBLEMS AND COSTS RESULTING FROM NOT FOLLOWING THE GUIDELINES:**

- Risk and cost of products being rejected and returned to supplier or relabelled.
- Additional costs of reworking, for example re-labelling, redesigning, packaging waste etc.
- Loss of sales opportunities through product not being available for scanning.
- Increased number of errors through manual data entry.
- Incorrect and late data for planning/forecasting purposes.
- Loss of sales through non-replenishment at outlets operating sales-based replenishment systems
- Poor trading relations and risk of delisting of product.
- Incorrect information for EDI (electronic data interchange) processes, resulting in wrong orders, credit claims, etc.

## THE REAL COST OF BARCODE ERRORS

This article outlines the costs to publishers and their distributors that can ensue from inaccurate bar coding of magazines. It is reproduced here by courtesy of Comag.

Ensuring that barcodes scan first time, every time should be a priority for all magazine publishers. Accurate barcode information is vital as data is electronically captured and transferred between the systems of publishers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers to plan, manage and measure magazine sales.

In July 2008 PPA's Technical Services Panel (TSP) in conjunction with the Association of Newspaper & Magazine Wholesalers (ANMW) and the body responsible for bar codes GS1 (UK) launched an updated version of its guidelines for publishers to ensure their bar codes scan first time, every time.

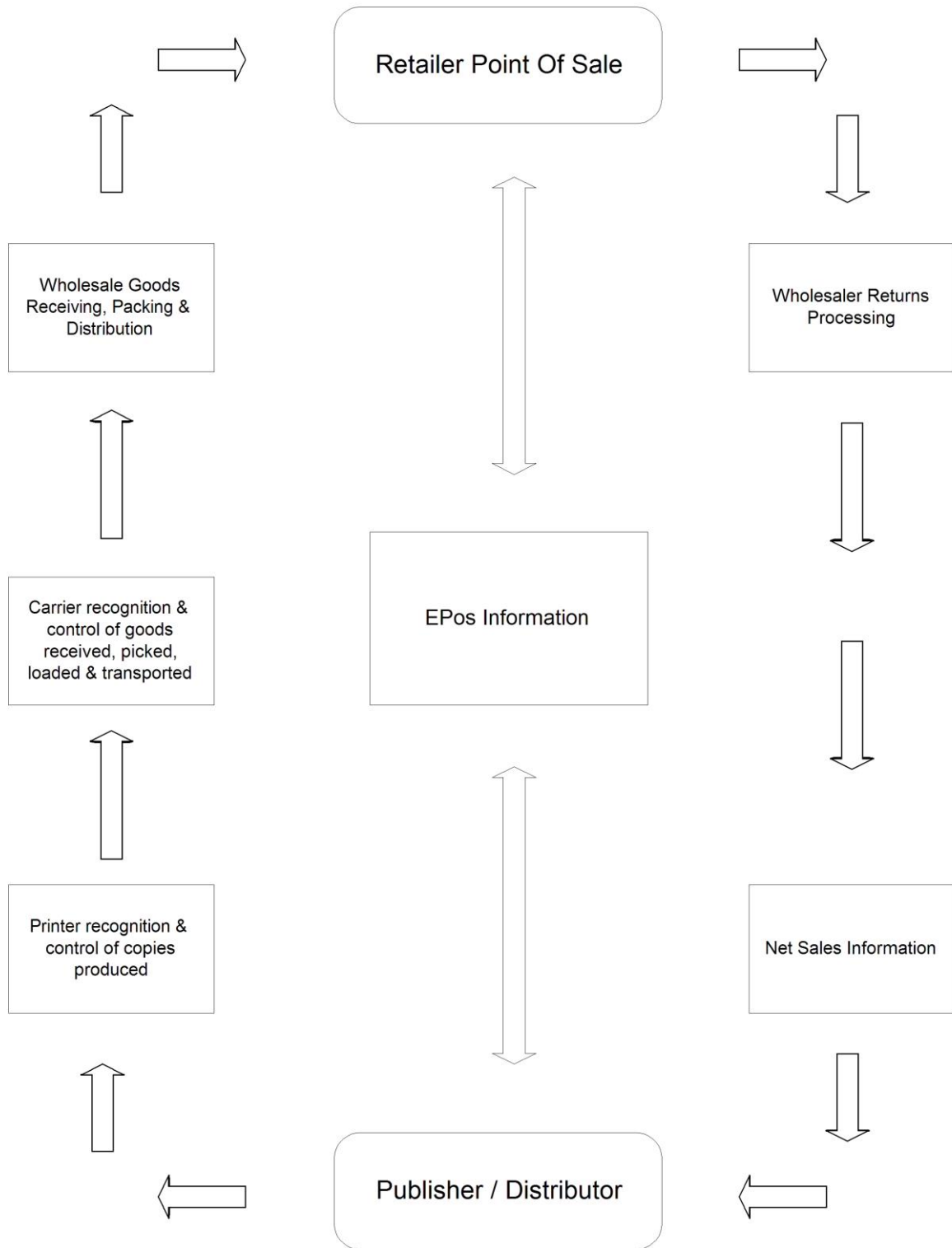
Steve Jones, central data manager, Comag and member of PPA's TSP highlights the potential impacts of poorly managed barcodes:

1. **Financial Penalties** – retailers will fine suppliers for late notification and for product that doesn't scan correctly. These fines can be severe, often thousands of pounds, as retailers seek to recover the cost of lost sales and in-store processing, generally based proportionally on supply volume.
2. **Corrective Costs** – additional costs will be incurred by the publisher where re-printing or over-stickering is necessary, directly affecting the issue's profitability.
3. **Lost Revenue** – supply delays caused by last minute corrective action can lead to *late on-sale*. Copy which is identified as incorrect after the on-sale date will often be removed from the shelf and *early returned*.
4. **EPoS** – data captured through retail EPoS systems are used for a variety of trade marketing activity including early sales measurement, rate of sale analysis and sales forecasting, all of which are compromised when valid sales are not recorded due to barcode errors.
5. **Promotions and Price-Tests** – expensive retail activity is wasted when sales are not recorded accurately. Promotional effectiveness and return on investment cannot be measured.
6. **Title Listings** – retailers undertaking range reviews will look at EPoS sales to determine title performance. Missing sales data can lead to weakened listing proposals, downgrades and in some cases, products being de-listed entirely.
7. **Retail Relationships** – persistent barcode errors can put commercial relationships under strain.
8. **Stock Control Systems (eg Rascal)** – some retail groups have implemented electronic systems to manage stock flow at store level. Shelf availability can be affected if the product cannot be tracked, a problem that will become more significant as more groups adopt these systems.
9. **SBR** – Sales Based Replenishment is increasingly being utilised by wholesalers and major retailers and delivering real benefits in terms of copy efficiency and availability. It is, however, totally reliant on accurate barcodes to track sales.
10. **Wholesale Returns Processing** – wholesale operations use barcodes to scan and count returns. Product that doesn't scan is likely to not be credited, causing unnecessary cost to the publisher and misleading sales figures.

**Figure 1**, overleaf, shows the different points in the supply chain at which barcodes are used, and highlights where the potential problems are if they fail to scan.

Figure 1

## BARCODES IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN



Printing a good quality bar code that complies with the published standards and is acceptable at all points through the supply chain does not cost any more than printing a bar code that is unscannable

## ISSN AND ISBN – WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW ARE THEY USED?

### WHAT IS AN ISSN?

The International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) is an internationally accepted number, which identifies the title of serial publications. It is an eight-digit number consisting of seven digits plus a check digit, which enables a computer to recognise when the number is incorrectly cited. The check digit may be an X; otherwise the ISSN is fully numeric.

The ISSN is not connected with ownership of the journal, nor does it confer copyright or protect the title of the serial from use by other publishers. The ISSN is not related to legal deposit. Under the Copyright Act of 1911, as amended by the British Library Act of 1972, all publications, including individual issues of serials, must be deposited with the British Library whether they carry an ISSN or not.

### WHAT IS AN ISSN ASSIGNED TO?

The ISSN UK Centre is responsible for assigning ISSN to serials published in the United Kingdom alone.

ISSN are assigned to the titles of serial publications in accordance with the definition below: A continuing resource in any medium, issued in a succession of discrete parts [and having a common title], usually bearing numbering, that has no predetermined conclusion. Examples of serials include journals, magazines, electronic journals, ongoing directories, annual reports, newspapers, and monographic series.

ISSN may also be assigned to online journal titles, CD-ROMs and diskettes which are intended to be issued on a continuous basis. Different editions of serials must have different ISSN. This applies to different language editions, regional editions and different physical formats (e.g. CD-ROM, online and print versions of a journal title have separate numbers). However ISSN are not assigned to Internet resources consisting predominantly of links, nor individual or company home pages including Weblogs.

ISSN should **not** be assigned to one-off publications, magazine specials, newspaper specials, finite publications, serials not intended for general circulation, calendars, diaries or posters.

**NOTE:** In the UK **partworks** are treated as an exception to this rule. Although they are finite publications ISSN's are assigned by agreement with the ISSN UK Centre.

### APPLYING FOR AN ISSN

Please leave ample time for ISSN requests to be processed. Apply at least a month before the ISSN is needed. Ideally the request should be made as soon as the title and launch date of a new title have been decided upon.

In certain cases the ISSN UK Centre may need additional information or may need to consult other ISSN national centres before the number is issued. This may take some time.



## WHAT IS AN ISBN?

The International Standard Book Number system is used worldwide to give a book, and any specifically related material, its own unique number to facilitate bibliographical recording and prevent errors in ordering.

ISBNs are assigned to identify BOOKS and specifically related material. They must NOT be used to identify any form of product that has a 'frequency of issue' or has any kind of periodicity.

One off special magazine barcodes use an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) in EAN 13 format beginning with either 978 or 979. They are designated to identify publications that are issued as a single item and must NOT be used to identify any form of magazine that has a 'frequency of issue' or has any kind of periodicity. **By their nature they are used to identify publications that are single occurrences only.**

Publishers can only obtain ISBNs from the ISBN agency. For publishers in the UK and Ireland, the ISBN Agency, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Midas House, 62 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6LQ (Tel: 0870 7778712), is the only body authorised to allocate UK ISBNs and should be contacted by publishing companies before publishing any titles.

Contact Address:

**ISBN Agency**  
3rd Floor  
Midas House  
62 Goldsworth Road  
Woking  
Surrey GU21 6LQ

**Tel: (+ 44 (0) 870) 777 8712**  
**Fax: (+ 44 (0) 870) 777 8714**  
**E-mail: [isbn.agency@nielsen.com](mailto:isbn.agency@nielsen.com)**  
**URL: <http://www.isbn.nielsenbookdata.co.uk>**  
**<http://www.isbn-ternational.org/index.html>**

## NOTE:

From January 2007 ISBNs are 13-digit numbers beginning 978 or 979. This move is aimed to reduce pressure on the previous system, where capacity for new numbers was running low. The new format will be identical to the GS1 GTIN numbering system, the standard for bar codes printed on books.

## **OBTAINING AND USING A BAR CODE – THE FOUR-STEP APPROACH**

- Step 1**      Apply to the British Library – ISSN UK Centre to secure an ISSN for all titles (see appendix C)
- Step 2**      Understand how to construct a full barcode based on the ISSN (see components of the barcode on page 13 and issue numbering on pages 16/17)
- Step 3**      Order a barcode symbol from a film master supplier, or produce it internally using dedicated software (see appendix B)
- Step 4**      Incorporate with artwork for front cover and send to printer (see Production Guidelines on pages 19 & 20)

### **NOTE: APPLYING FOR AN ISSN**

Please leave ample time for ISSN requests to be processed. Apply at least a month before the ISSN is needed. Ideally the request should be made as soon as the name and launch date of a new title have been decided upon.

In certain cases the ISSN UK Centre may need additional information or may need to consult with other ISSN national centres before the number is issued. This may take some time.

## **BAR CODE 'DO'S & DON'TS'**

There are a number of 'best practices' for barcoding magazines and all publishers should follow these:

### **DO's**

- **Do** keep all people who will be using the barcode informed of the issue numbering/add-on codes that are planned for future use. For example, an annual schedule, a regular product data file.
- **Do** ensure that the correct barcode is printed on the right issue. For example, use of a checklist.
- **Do** ensure your printer is aware of barcoding requirements by making sure he has a copy of these guidelines. Request the finished barcode is verified for legibility and accuracy (details of verification are contained on page 20)
- **Do** follow one method of establishing a barcode consistently from year to year.
- **Do** check the barcode is readable on all copies of your magazine.
- **Do** contact PPA if you require any guidance on issue numbering or any other barcode enquiry.
- **Do** refer to the GS1 General Specifications, available free of charge via the GS1 UK Website, [www.gs1uk.org](http://www.gs1uk.org)

### **DONT's**

- **Don't** use the same add-on code for issues within a calendar year period.
- **Don't** make frequent changes to the basis on which the barcode is determined.
- **Don't** assume that users of the barcode will automatically know the add-on code that will be on your magazine.
- **Don't** have more than one barcode on a magazine; i.e. don't use cover-mounts or poly-bagged copies that have their own visible barcodes. See page 25 for further details
- **Don't** include barcodes on magazines advertised on the back cover of a publication.
- **Don't** print on or near any folds or creases.
- **Don't** box in barcode symbols.
- **Don't** cover the barcode with a band, polybag or cover mounts.
- **Don't** use a barcode in any form as part of the design artwork on the cover of a magazine.

**NOTE: Don't obscure or omit the normal printed cover price in preference to the bar code. At retailers it is still essential that the traditional cover price is fully visible to the seller and the buyer.**

## **BAR CODE QUALITY CHECKLIST**

**It is vital that symbols will scan successfully every time.** This means having adequate procedures in place to ensure that all the barcodes marked on goods are correct in every way: data content, symbols, position and print quality.

The following checklist may be used to ensure that printed barcodes comply with the specified standards.

- ✓ Ensure that the GTIN is unique for each product.
- ✓ Double-check the check digit calculation.
- ✓ Notify trading partners of the GTINs and the products they identify in good time.
- ✓ Re-check the GTIN in any artwork.
- ✓ Check the size of the symbol, both the magnification factor and the height.
- ✓ Check the position of the symbol on the final, made-up product.
- ✓ Ensure that there are adequate light margins.
- ✓ Check that the contrast between the bars and background is adequate and that the colours chosen will scan.
- ✓ Check the print quality regularly throughout the print run.
- ✓ Check the barcode symbol will remain readable in the environment in which the product will be stored, handled and distributed.
- ✓ Ensure that no tape or other printing will obscure the barcode on the finished product.
- ✓ Carry out routine scanning checks to ensure that the barcode can be scanned.
- ✓ Note that if non-standard bar codes are produced to meet specific customer requests, other recipients of the goods may find interpreting the barcodes difficult.

**BARCODES SHOULD SCAN FIRST TIME, EVERY TIME**

**QUALITY SUMMARY: - Be aware of obvious, visible quality faults**

**Take corrective action to prevent:** Print quality faults - check printers regularly  
Light margin infringement  
Obscured or defaced codes  
Incorrect positioning of labels  
Poor adhesion of labels

For example, it is strongly recommended the packaging of the magazine should not obscure the barcode. Placing a cover mount directly over the barcode. The magazine barcodes scanning quality should be checked before it enters the supply chain (see the verification section on page 20). This should ensure against having to withdraw a product due to a non-scannable barcode.

Ensure that effective communications are in place to notify wholesale and retail customers of new or changed barcodes so the details can be added to computer files.

Suppliers should use the Barcode Quality Checklist on page 11 to ensure that barcodes are printed in accordance with the published standards, and that they are scannable.

**Magazines are at risk of being refused by wholesale/retail if the bar code is unscannable**

## BARCODING FOR MAGAZINES

### COMPONENTS OF THE BARCODE

Magazine issue barcodes are represented in EAN 13 format with a 2-digit add-on code.

The barcode is constructed in the following way:



- **GS1 Prefix** (digits 1-3): 977 for magazines with an ISSN
- **ISSN Component** (digits 4-10): The first 7 digits of the 8 digits ISSN (the last digit, which is a check digit, is deleted as it is redundant when included within the EAN-13 which has its own check digit). The UK Centre at the British Library assigns the ISSN.
- **Sequence Variant** (digits 11-12): Used on magazines to indicate price changes. For a new magazine start with 00 and move up by 01 for each price change either up or down. Actual prices are not represented anywhere in the bar code. For “one-off” special priced issues an initial sequence variant of 99 should be used and thereafter decreasing the value to 98, 97, 96, etc.
- **Check Digit** (digit 13): Derived from a calculation, based on the first 12 digits, used to check that the code is correct if manually entered into a system. The Film Master Supplier or your dedicated bar code software would normally calculate the check digit. Please see GS1 UK website for an example of the check digit calculation <http://www.gs1uk.org/> - then select ‘Check Digit Calculator’ from the Quick Links menu.
- **Add-on** (digits 14-15): The 2-digit code used to identify each issue. The section overleaf defines the guidelines for numbering different types and frequencies of magazines. The add-on changes for every issue therefore a new bar code symbol is required for each issue.
- **Light Margin Indicator (chevron)**: This appears in the right-hand margin of the symbol. It ensures there is sufficient margin for the bar code reader to realise it has finished the bar code.

### \*\*\* KEY CONSIDERATION – CHANGE OF DISTRIBUTOR \*\*\*

On occasions when magazines change distributor it is vital that there is communication between the old and new distributors, and wholesalers, to ensure a consistent pattern in the supply of issue file information.

This involves close communication to ensure:

- Consistent pattern of issue numbering with no unexplained gaps
- Consistent title descriptions between the two distributors

If any changes to issue information are made they must be fully communicated.

## BARCODE SYMBOLS – SPECIFICATIONS & DIMENSIONS

**Magnification Factor** – To ensure optimum-operating efficiency at all levels of the newstrade it is essential that publication barcodes scan successfully **FIRST TIME EVERY TIME**. A major influencing factor is the publication's paper quality. As a rule of thumb, better quality paper allows the use of smaller barcodes.

For very best results 100% magnification should be used, however 80% is acceptable on publications of high quality print on high quality paper such as coated paper.



100 % Magnification



80% Magnification



With 50% Truncation

The following examples can be taken as currently accepted **MINIMUM** specifications within the newstrade. To ensure reliable scanning 'first time every time' barcodes must not breach these minimum size, colour or aperture specifications. Any that do may fail to scan at retail or wholesale and could incur penalty charges or delisting of titles.

### Coated Paper- All titles with the exception of Newsprint or other wood-chip papers (See below)

Magnification	80%
Truncation	May be applied up to 50 % from top of symbol
Bar Sizes:	Guide bars at each end of EAN 13 symbol minimum height 12mm Symbol bars minimum height 10mm 2-digit add on Symbol bars minimum height 8.5mm
White paper aperture	15mm deep x 40mm wide
Colour	100% black on a white background
Light Margins	Must be in place and indicated by a leading '9' and trailing '>' chevron

### Uncoated/Improved Newsprint Stock

Magnification:	90%
Truncation	None – show bars to full height
White paper aperture	26mm deep x 44mm wide
Colour	100% black on a white background
Light Margins	Must be in place and indicated by a leading '9' and trailing '>' chevron

Conventions for the human readable numbers, light margins and chevron symbol should remain as at present.

Barcode symbols must **not** be contained within a ruled 'box' as this may lead to inaccurate scanning. Black bars on a white background must always be used to ensure maximum legibility.

**Positioning** - Never try to hide the barcode. Preferably position the barcode in the bottom left hand corner of the front cover, however the bottom right hand corner is acceptable. In addition bars should be vertical and it is recommended that the symbol should not be printed closer than 10 mm from any cut or folded edge. (Chapter 2, Sections 4.4 and 8 in the GS1 UK Operating Manual give more specific guidance and examples).

Full details on barcode sizing can be found in Section 5.4 of the GS1 General Specifications.

**Paper Quality** - The quality of paper used in magazine printing greatly affects the products ability to be scanned. For example poor quality materials can lead to 'bleeding' of the barcode, which can alter the data, contained or make the barcode impossible to scan. To ensure effective scanning the following two points should be considered:

- **PRINT CONTRAST** - To ensure the barcode will scan it is essential the dark bars are printed in solid colours without any voids or missing sections. For traditional printing this may mean more ink and/or pressure being applied to the printing plate.
- **DEFECTS** - When using recycled sub-rate material, particularly recycled paper, the "bits" (defects) in the paper can affect the print contrast and light margins (see page 7) causing the barcode to fail scanning.

#### **ACHIEVING A SMALLER BARCODE SYMBOL - CONSIDER AN ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATION FORMAT**

Publishers often wish to reduce the size of the barcode symbol printed on covers. An effective way of achieving this is to represent all the bars in the same plane with all the human readable characters either above or below the bars – See example below.



The smaller bars scan successfully because they are all the same height & all in the same scanning plane. The 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> digit add-on is not offset as in the traditional representation of the symbol thus improving the margin for accurate scanning.

#### **NOTE:**

**GS1 UK recommends that publishers should be encouraged to produce full height barcodes wherever possible. Truncation greatly reduces the ability of scanners to read barcodes.**



## ISSUE NUMBERING

The method of identifying each issue is extremely important to the process of information exchange. The framework for establishing add-on codes for magazine issues aims to:

- Uniquely identify every issue of a magazine within a calendar year.
- Provide for consistency in determining the code.
- Provide a framework suitable for most magazines and can be adapted for the unusual cases.

The EAN-13 symbol is followed by a 2-digit add-on symbol, which identifies the issue. Issue numbering is controlled by the publisher who should ensure correct use according to the following standards. If in doubt about the numbering method to use, publishers should consult the PPA or ANMW for guidance.

### **Weekly publications –**

The issue number is week number of the cover date. The International Standards Organisation (ISO) week number is used; where week 01 is the first week of the year, containing 4 or more days of the new year. Weeks are numbered sequentially (from 1 to 52 or 53) and the cover date will relate to this number. Note weeks start on a Monday.

### **Fortnightly, three-weekly and four-weekly publications –**

Use the same numbering method as for weeklies with the issue number being the week number of the cover date.

### **Monthly publications –**

The issue number is based on the month shown on the cover, using the month number 01-12 (Jan = 01)

### **Special monthly publications –**

When an additional issue is published during the year, 20 should be added to the month number. For example, summer special issue, cover dated June, would be numbered 26 and a Christmas special would be numbered 32.

### **Monthly publications showing no month date on the cover –**

Use the rules for serial publications below.

### **Bi-monthly publications –**

Use the number of the first month as shown on the cover date. For example June/July would be 06.

### **Quarterly seasonal and special publications –**

Use guidelines as for monthly or serial publications.

### **Serial Publications (eg. Partworks) –**

There are several forms of numbering used for these publications depending on the circumstances:

- Volume numbered - use the last 2 digits of the issue number. For example, Vol X No 8 = 08 and Vol X No 123 = 23.
- Issue numbered - use the last 2 digits. For example: issue 82 = 82. For part numbers over 100 continue to use the last 2 digits. For example: issue 109 = 09.
- Beware of a title changing from numbered to cover-dated, as issue numbers must not repeat within the year.
- See also PARTWORKS section - **Page 21**

### **Daily publications –**

Use the ISO week number as for weekly publications. The first digit of the sequence variant (digit 11) is used to identify the price change and the second digit (digit 12) the day of issue. For example. Monday 1:Tuesday 2: Wednesday 3, etc. The day number runs sequentially from one through to seven. Monday is the first day of the week

Digits 14 & 15 are used to indicate the ISO Standard Week of the Year. ISO Standard Week Numbers are available from the National Title File website [www.nationaltitlefile.co.uk](http://www.nationaltitlefile.co.uk)

**Other publications –**

If a publication does not fit any of the above schemes and it cannot be treated as a book using an ISBN (International Standard Book Number), the issue number should be 01. Subsequent issues within the same 12-month period should add 01 to the previous number.

**Changes in frequency -**

A change of frequency of a magazine has an impact on the barcode issue add-on method of calculation. It is important that the publisher/distributor checks the 'new' GTIN +2 is still unique for that calendar year.

## PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

Quality procedures for item numbering and bar coding are vital if electronic data capture is to be used successfully by businesses for improving their management of the supply chain. Barcodes provide a means of electronic capture of identification data which is fundamental for all trading processes, and it is imperative that they scan first time, every time.

### Number Notification –

Trading partners must be notified sufficiently in advance of the GTINs assigned to any products, before any movement of stock is carried out.

PPA cannot recommend any single agreed minimum notification period as each different product-trading relationship may require a different mutually agreed time scale.

### Colour –

This is vitally important to printing a readable code. Barcode scanners measure the contrast between the dark bars and the light spaces in a symbol in order to decode the individual elements into meaningful data. **PPA and ANMW recommend only black bars on a white background to achieve maximum reliability in reading.**

### Light Margins –

Each symbol has to be printed with sufficient clear space around it to enable the scanner to read the start and the end of the barcode. These clear spaces are the light margins. If bar codes are printed in such a way as to exclude or reduce these light margins below the minimum specified size, then the code simply will not scan. It is vital that light margin infringement is avoided, as it is one of the main reasons for symbols not scanning (non-scans).

EAN 13+2 Light margins



The left and right hand light margins must not be obscured by either printing the code too close to the end of the label, or printing additional text or lines too close to the barcode.

The left light margin is achieved by printing the character '9' to the left of the barcode symbol.

To ensure an acceptable light margin to the right of the barcode PPA recommends that a chevron symbol be printed above the margin, immediately following issue number add-on (see above diagram).

## BAR CODE VERIFICATION

After following the production guidelines you should have a scannable barcode. However, there is a method available to your printer to check or verify that the barcode is correct. **Verification** is a means by which barcodes can be analysed in order to check whether they meet a given specification and to identify deviations from the ideal dimensions.

PPA recommends that publishers request that their barcode is checked, and the printer follows the verification guidelines featured in appendix D.

Verification can be used as:

- a) part of a production quality assurance procedure
- b) a predictor of a symbol's likely scanning performance.

Strict adherence to the procedures defined in the GS1 General Specifications for production and printing of symbols should ensure the production of good quality barcodes, but verification can also be used to assist production process control and to provide confirmation of the result.

Test scanning barcodes on a simple pass or fail basis may provide a basic indication of potential scanning problems, but as no diagnostic information is provided the process cannot be classed as verification as defined. There are two approaches to barcode verification:

- a) Traditional measurement (EAN) of bar and space widths and print contrast signal (PCS), giving an "in spec/out of spec" indication, which has been superseded by ...
- b) The ISO/IEC standard 15416 gives the symbol a quality grade, which reflects the symbol's likely scanning performance.

For the ISO/IEC standard a minimum grade of 1.5 or C is required for all barcodes except those printed on outer case, corrugated fibreboard material where a minimum grade 0.5 or D is acceptable:



For further assistance in correct verification procedures and suppliers of verification equipment please contact AIM UK (see Appendix A) or GS1 UK

## INCLUSION OF THE OFF-SALE DATE AND RECALL INFORMATION ON THE FRONT COVER

Incorporating the magazine off-sale date into the barcode area of magazines helps ensure the timely return of unsolds; thereby reducing 'shrink' issues arising from wrongly identified copies, and missed or rejected credit.

'Shrink' is a major issue within the newstrade affecting all stages of the supply chain. The PPA is firmly committed to overcoming 'shrink' and these guidelines are designed to play a part in that process.

Given the particular problems associated with irregular product, publishers of one-shots and specials should pay particular attention to these guidelines although PPA does recommend the inclusion of the off-sale date on all magazine products, other than weeklies for which the dates are self-evident and for those products that may be distributed multiple times, e.g. those that carry an ISBN.

### Operational Issues

Wholesalers receive basic cover information from publisher/distributor EDI 'Issue' files in advance of the on sale date. With this information they populate the National Title File (NTF) and it is used as the basis of the delivery and returns recall notes provided to retailers.

Issues may arise, however, if:

- the physical copy supplied differs from the pre-notified EDI information
- titles on a related subject, or in a series, have particularly similar covers
- titles from different publishers cover the same subject & appear identical

There may then be problems for retailers to correctly identify magazines in store and they may potentially fail to return them for credit, resulting in shrink.

For ease of recognition an 'off sale date' should be shown above the publication bar code, positioned so as not to be confused with any other numbers or interfere with the scanning process.

The date should take the format *DD/MM/YYYY*

The Issue Description of the publication should be shown

If necessary bar codes may be truncated to accommodate the additional information. See the 'Technical Note' below for minimum dimensions of the bar code symbol.

Example:



## Benefits

- The Off Sale Date allows the retailer to recognise immediately that the publication must be returned.
- Assists the retailer in having the correct issue available to the customer.
- Checking One Shots and specials each week will assist the retailer in keeping track of those due for return.
- Wholesalers and publishers will encounter fewer early returns & 'shrink' issues.

## Publisher Requirements

Publishers and distributors must take particular care to ensure that information in their EDI Issue files (or other notification to wholesalers) gives a clear indication of:

Title Description: A 'common sense' approach should be adopted to ensure ease of recognition within a 26-character standard (including spaces).

Issue Date: For Specials and Series this must match what appears on the cover

Off Sale Date: Must match the week of printed 'Off Sale Date' on the cover

Publishers and distributors must work closely with publishing units originating One Shots & Specials to ensure the required disciplines are clearly understood.

If changes do have to be made they must be communicated to wholesalers and service providers including Rascal and Newmans as quickly as possible by EDI Issue File AND email.

NB If a recall date is extended, then this communication overrides the off-sale date printed on the cover.

## Technical Note

The minimum size of the bar code symbol is 0.80 magnification factor.

Truncation may be applied up to 50% from top of symbol

EAN 13 Symbol:        Guide Bars at each end of symbol minimum 12mm height  
                             Symbol bars minimum 10mm height

2-digit add on Symbol:        Symbol bars minimum 8.5mm height

Conventions for the human readable numbers, light margins and chevron symbol should remain as at present.

Bar code symbols must not be contained within a ruled 'box' as this may lead to inaccurate scanning. Black bars on a white background must always be used to ensure maximum legibility.

NOTE: The above sizes apply to 'Coated Paper' only. For further guidance on other paper types please refer to the PPA Best Practice Guideline for Bar Coding and Issue Numbering of Magazines (Version 9 2005).

Text for the additional 'Recall Date' should be a slightly larger & bolder font than that used for the human readable characters under the bar code symbol. Black characters out of a white background should be used.

The bar code panel may be increased in depth to accommodate the 'Recall Date'.

## CLEARLY IDENTIFYING ONE SHOTS, SPECIALS ETC

### Definitions:

**One shot:** A magazine format product intended for once only publication. It may be linked to a parent magazine, but not planned for serial issue. One Shot bar codes must be based on the ISBN bar code format. **See Sections on ISBN & Bar Coding of One Shots below.**

**Special series:** A series of 'themed' or 'branded' specials linked to a parent title and intended for serial publication, e.g.: 'PICK ME UP SPECIAL'. On most occasions the seriality of the specials will be different to that of the parent publication. A parent publication may support several Specials Series, which may be ABC audited.

### Best practice:

Branded magazine specials require particular attention to ensure retailers are able to correctly identify them in store to maximise sales and reduce shrink.

Individual issues within a series of specials should be clearly identified by showing the series 'brand' on the cover. This does not need to be over-prominent, but should be of sufficient size to be easily recognisable for consumers / retailers and must be consistent on all issues in the series.

An issue date and recall date should be printed on the cover and be sent to wholesalers in the EDI Issue File.

To help retailers to differentiate between similar products, the corresponding 'issue date' and 'recall date' should be shown above the publication barcode. It must be positioned so as not to be confused with any other numbers or interfere with the scanning process.



### Benefits

- Easier for the retailer to recognise the product 'brand'
- Consistency of the 'issue date' description printed on the retailers recall note
- Recall date calendar recognition as above
- For publishers there are no changes to the bar code itself to accommodate the 'Series' identity & therefore no additional retail display charges to be paid.
- The issue number and recall date allow the retailer to easily recognise when the publication is due to be returned and to verify this information against recall notes.
- Publishers will encounter fewer early returns

**Distributors must take particular care to ensure that information in their EDI Issue files (or other notification to wholesalers) replicates what is on the front cover.**

**Title Description:** The title shown in the EDI Issue File matches as closely as possible the title on the front cover (working within a 26-character standard - including spaces)

**Issue Date:** For Specials Series must match what appears on the cover

**Off Sale date:** Must match the week of printed 'Recall Date' on the cover

Publishers/Distributors must work closely with publishing units to ensure the required disciplines are clearly understood. If changes do have to be made they must be communicated to wholesalers by EDI issue file and by email.

Wholesalers receive cover information from distributors' EDI issue files in advance of the on sale date. With this information the National Title File (NTF) is populated and the data is distributed to EPOS providers and the news supply chain in general. Wholesalers also use it on delivery and returns documentation provided to retailers.

## BARCODING FOR ONE OFF SPECIALS - “ONE SHOTS”



One off special magazine barcodes use an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) in EAN 13 format beginning with either 978 or 979. They are designated to identify publications that are issued as a single item and must NOT be used to identify any form of magazine that has a 'frequency of issue' or has any kind of periodicity. By their nature they are used to identify publications that are single occurrences only.

Publishers can only obtain ISBNs from the ISBN agency. For publishers in the UK and Ireland, the ISBN Agency, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Midas House, 62 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6LQ (Tel: 0870 7778712), is the only body authorised to allocate UK ISBNs and should be contacted by publishing companies before publishing any titles.

Contact Address:

**ISBN Agency**  
3rd Floor  
Midas House  
62 Goldsworth Road  
Woking  
Surrey GU21 6LQ

**Tel: (+ 44 (0) 870) 777 8712**  
**Fax: (+ 44 (0) 870) 777 8714**  
**E-mail: [isbn.agency@nielsen.com](mailto:isbn.agency@nielsen.com)**  
**URL: <http://www.isbn.nielsenbookdata.co.uk>**  
**<http://www.isbn-ternational.org/index.html>**



## BARCODING FOR PARTWORKS & OTHER COLLECTABLES

The general rule is the components of the barcode are used as for a serial publication (see p8), using the issue number digits – Add on digits 14 & 15 – to express the PART or ISSUE NUMBER.

### National and test partworks

In the most cases the bar codes on the test and subsequent national launches are the same.

To enable the national launch to be:

- 1 communicated to Retailers via the National Title File
- 2 assist wholesalers at Goods In

Publishers should treat the test launch in the following way:

The EDI Issue File GTIN will need to be sent as a "dummy barcode" and not as normal with the EAN from the front cover.

The dummy EAN format needs to meet the following criteria

999 replaces 977 for test partworks - This is the only change required.

### **Test partworks**

- **EAN prefix** (digits 1-3): Replace the 977 with 999
- **ISSN Component** (digits 4-10): The first 7 digits of the 8 digits ISSN (the last digit is deleted). The ISSN UK Centre at the British Library assigns the ISSN.
- **Sequence Variant** (digits 11-12): Used on magazines to indicate price changes. For a new magazine start with 00 and move up by 01 for each price change either up or down. Actual prices are not represented anywhere in the barcode. For "one-off" special priced issues an initial sequence variant of 99 should be used and thereafter decreasing the value to 98, 97, 96, etc.
- **Check Digit** (digit 13): Derived from a calculation, based on the first 12 digits, used to check the code is correct **if manually entered into a system**. The Film Master Supplier or dedicated barcode software would normally calculate the check digit. Please see the GS1 UK website for an example of the check digit calculation, <http://www.gs1.org.uk>.
- **Add-on** (digits 14-15): The 2-digit code used to identify each issue. **See also 'Issue Numbering' – p 17 for guidance on numbering different types and frequencies of magazines**. The add-on changes for every issue therefore a new barcode symbol is required for each issue.

### **Note:**

It is important that all partwork barcodes are 977-prefixed EAN-13s on the actual magazine to ensure the issue sequence numbers (issue numbers) can be managed in accordance with existing barcode standards.

i.e. 978 prefixed barcodes should not be used and extended to 15 digits by adding an issue add-on.

## BARCODING OF MAGAZINE 'MULTIPACKS' & NON STANDARD MAGAZINE PRODUCT

### Code '50' Barcodes

These guidelines have been published to ensure that quality and consistency are achieved throughout the supply chain for all non-standard magazine products.

An example of non-standard magazine product is where publishers create a "value pack" containing selected magazines and distribute the pack under a separate unique banner.

#### **Guidelines**

- Magazine value packs must have a clearly visible printed barcode on the front of the pack that complies with existing magazine industry best practice.
- The bar code symbol size must correspond with current PPA/ANMW barcode best practice guidelines. Minimum size 80% magnification with maximum 50% truncation.
- Issue number and recall dates should also be included near the barcode symbol, located within the surrounding white panel.
- Issue numbering must follow the same principles used for standard magazines.
- Single one-off issues should be coded as Issue 01.
- The name on the National Title File / internal issue file should be the same as the name on the '50' barcode product.
- For products supplied within the value packs
  - All barcodes must be removed from the magazine copies contained within the pack.
  - In place of the barcode, copies to be printed with the legend '*SOLD AS PART OF A VALUE-PACK. NOT FOR RESALE*'
  - Cover price to be printed on the product to qualify for ABC inclusion, but should be 'crossed through' to avoid ambiguity.

#### *Structure of the '50' barcode*

- The first 10 digits will be unique to each value pack series comprising:
  - 50 - Country code
  - nnnnn - Five digit manufacturer code as allocated by GS1 (UK)
  - nnn - Sequential code – starting 001 - issued by publisher/distributor systems to identify series
- The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> digits will start from 00 and will increment by one whenever the price of the product is amended.
- The 13<sup>th</sup> digit is a check-sum to verify the digits 1-12
- The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> digits are the (last 2 digits of) the issue number

## **POLYBAGGED MAGAZINE PRODUCT – BARCODE POSITIONING**

Whilst the quality of barcode production across the industry has generally improved in recent years, the increasing use of polybags by publishers to enhance their consumer offer has created some new scanning challenges

Polybags can make it difficult for retailers and wholesalers to read a magazine's barcode and increase the risk of incurring the additional costs associated with non-scanning product; financially, operationally and in terms of compromised data and reporting

Publishers are therefore asked for their support in helping their supply chain partners to scan barcodes correctly and efficiently. Scanning problems can be avoided if Publishers consider the following suggestions;

- Position the barcode on the magazine where it can be read easily, even when bagged. Some publishers have printed barcodes on the back of their products
- Ensure the barcode on the magazine is not obscured by any cover mounts that could become loose inside the polybag
- Ensure the barcode on the magazine is not obscured by any graphics or other printing on the bag

Another option is to print the barcode directly onto the polybag itself. In these instances please ensure it is;

- Printed to the same production specification as required for all barcodes
- Positioned at least 20mm from any edge, either on the front or the back of the bag
- Positioned where it is likely to lay flat and not wrinkle when gifts are included in the bag
- If the bag contains more than 1 magazine, please ensure that individual barcodes on the separate titles are removed and cannot be scanned in error (see page 24 for full guidelines on barcodes for multipacks)

## **BARCODING FOR NEWSPAPERS**

### **GS1 Newspaper barcoding standards**

Newspaper GS1 barcodes are formulated in the following standard as agreed between GS1 and the International Centre for the Registration of Serial Publications (ISSN).

#### **Daily publications -**

The standard for the representation of the ISSN number on daily papers is as follows:

**977 SSSSSS P D C WW**

**977** is the prefix allocated by GS1 for ISSN numbers.

**SSSSSS** is the ISSN number minus its check digit.

**P** is used to indicate a change in price. A price change is indicated by a change in the digit.

**D** is used to indicate the day of the week. The day number runs sequentially from one through to seven. Monday is the first day of the week.

**C** is the standard GTIN check digit.

**WW** is the week number and is represented by a two digit add-on symbol.

### **Weekly Publications -**

The standard for the representation of the ISSN number on weekly papers is as follows:

**977 SSSSSS PP C WW**

**977, SSSSSS, C & WW** is the same as the standard for daily publications.

**PP** is used to indicate a change in price. A price change is indicated by increasing the value of the digit by one. A change to the retail price must be reflected by a change in the PP section of the number to ensure the customer is charged the correct price at the point of sale.

### **Issue Numbering**

Issue numbering is controlled by the publisher who should ensure correct use according to the following standard.

The week number is the International Standards Organisation (ISO) week number. Week 1 is the first week containing 4 or more days in the new year. Weeks are numbered sequentially (from 1 to 52 or 53) and the cover date will relate to this number.



## **BAR CODING FOR PROMOTIONAL VOUCHERS (COUPONS)**

The use of EAN 13 barcodes is essential to enable prompt and efficient processing of vouchers through the supply chain. Voucher barcodes have a different structure to publication barcodes and require a coupon issuer number that can be obtained from:

**GS1 UK**  
Hasilwood House  
60 Bishopsgate  
London  
EC2N 4AW  
Tel: 020 7092 3500  
Helpdesk: 0808 178 8799 / 020 7092 3501  
Fax: 020 7681 2290  
E-mail: [info@gs1uk.org](mailto:info@gs1uk.org)  
Internet: <http://www.gs1uk.org>

N.B. Numbers are only issued to GS1 member companies.

A new voucher barcode must be allocated for each new voucher value and redemption period. Voucher barcodes must not be reused within a 3-year period.

### **PRODUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The size and definition of printed barcodes should follow international standards to ensure detection and "read" by electronic barcode reading equipment.
- Bar codes should be placed where they cannot be rendered "unreadable" as a result of a newsagent's stamp or reader handwriting.
- Voucher bar codes must be unique for each promotion and should not be reused within three years.
- UVNs (Unique Voucher Numbers) can be obtained for publisher reference but are not mandatory as the barcode provides a unique reference.
- The barcode should be printed wherever possible on a white background and depending on the print process, should be sized in line with industry standard cover barcodes for newspapers and magazines. This includes the light margins that surround the barcode and are safeguarded by the leading digit 9 on the left-hand side and the light margin chevron on the right hand side.
- Key lines should not be printed near to the barcode.

**For full details on producing promotional vouchers for use in the newstrade, please see:**

**Press Distribution Forum Best Practice  
Guidance on the Design, Production and Processing of Vouchers within the News Industry**

**Available on line at: [www.anmw.co.uk](http://www.anmw.co.uk) and [www.ppa.co.uk](http://www.ppa.co.uk) and  
[www.pressdistributionforum.com](http://www.pressdistributionforum.com)**

## COUPON CODING GUIDELINES

**A national money-off coupon code structure has been defined by GS1 UK. This allows the barcoding of many types of coupons, especially manufacturers' and retailers' promotional coupons.**

Luncheon vouchers, gift, book and record tokens, and government food and clothes vouchers can also be coded this way.

Coded coupons have several advantages:

- The efficiency of coupon handling and reconciliation is increased;
- Sorting and administration of coupons is made easier, and associated costs reduced;
- Payment can be made by the coupon issuer to the retailer on the basis of data made from scanning systems
- More accurate data from coupon redemption can be made available to the issuers of coupons more quickly;
- Various levels of validation can be facilitated, minimising the problem of misredemption.

### ***Coupon Code Structure***

Two prefixes have been reserved for use on EAN-13 barcoded redemption coupons.

**Prefix 98** will be used together with a numbering authority prefix to form an international coupon code for use on coupons that might cross international boundaries.

**Prefix 99** has been reserved for national coupon structures. The code for use in the UK is as follows: 99 YYYY NNN VVV C where YYYY is the coupon issuer number; NNN is the coupon reference number; VVV is the redemption value and C is the check digit. The encoded redemption value must equal the declared face value of the coupon.

Coupon issuer numbers can be obtained from GS1 UK, and allow an issuer to number up to 1000 coupons before another number is required.

Coupon reference numbers are used to identify individual coupon promotions. Every different coupon promotion, redemption and validity period should be allocated a different number. Coupon numbers may be re-used 36 months after the issue of the coupon with that number.

The redemption value of the coupon is directly represented from 1p (VVV = 001) to £9.98 (VVV = 998). The decimal point is fixed. For values greater than £9.98 the code 999 is used and the redemption value is key-entered at the checkout. Coupons that offer free goods may be encoded by using a zero redemption value (VVV=000). This is then taken as a prompt within retailers' systems for entering the actual value of the product, which may vary at different outlets.

Companies wishing to use this type of promotion should consult their retail customers before introducing such coupon codes.

The diagram on the following page shows the key features required to achieve a successful voucher for transaction through the Newstrade.

**For full details on producing promotional vouchers for use in the newstrade, please see:**

**Press Distribution Forum Best Practice  
Guidance on the Design, Production and Processing of Vouchers within the News Industry**

Available on line at: [www.anmw.co.uk](http://www.anmw.co.uk) and [www.ppa.co.uk](http://www.ppa.co.uk) and  
[www.pressdistributionforum.com](http://www.pressdistributionforum.com)

## THE PPA 'SMART PUBLISHER'S GUIDE TO VOUCHER SCHEME SAFETY':

### PLEASE ...

<b>Be Clear</b>	<b>Make sure voucher wording is legal, unambiguous &amp; clear for the consumer and retailer to understand.</b>								
<b>Be Certain</b>	The voucher must clearly state the <b>cash value</b> and the <b>product</b> . (eg: 'Save 50p Off' Maximag issue dated xxx). The offer must be <b>clear and easily understandable</b> to the retailer to ensure acceptance at the till.								
<b>Be In Time</b>	Show the <b>consumer redemption date</b> clearly on the front of the voucher All redemption periods should meet the minimum industry requirements: <table border="1" data-bbox="399 649 1356 896"> <tr> <td><b>Min consumer redemption period</b></td> <td><b>28 days after off sale</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Min retail redemption period - additional</b></td> <td><b>14 days</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Min wholesaler redemption period - additional</b></td> <td><b>42 days</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total number of days after off sale</b></td> <td><b>84 days</b></td> </tr> </table> <p>(To support reducing retailer shrink, wholesalers will credit late retailers voucher returns providing they are within the wholesaler's redemption period).</p>	<b>Min consumer redemption period</b>	<b>28 days after off sale</b>	<b>Min retail redemption period - additional</b>	<b>14 days</b>	<b>Min wholesaler redemption period - additional</b>	<b>42 days</b>	<b>Total number of days after off sale</b>	<b>84 days</b>
<b>Min consumer redemption period</b>	<b>28 days after off sale</b>								
<b>Min retail redemption period - additional</b>	<b>14 days</b>								
<b>Min wholesaler redemption period - additional</b>	<b>42 days</b>								
<b>Total number of days after off sale</b>	<b>84 days</b>								
<b>Be Alert</b>	Certain retailers do not require the product to be present in order to redeem the voucher. They may redeem vouchers against any product in the shopping basket. Work with retailers to discourage this practice.  Consider limiting voucher campaigns to retailers who <b>do</b> require the product to be present. <b>See reverse side for advice on wording.</b>								
<b>Be Watchful</b>	Vouchers are as good as cash. This fact has not escaped a number of unscrupulous individuals who specialise in acquiring large quantities of vouchers & attempt to turn them into ready money through the redemption houses. Keep in touch with your distributor and redemption house to monitor such activity.								
<b>Protect Yourself</b>	Review redemption patterns with your distributor and the redemption house. If there is evidence of blatant mal-redemption, you may choose <b>not</b> to pay out to some claimants. <b>But be sure to include wording to this effect on the voucher.</b>								
<b>Cheap ... Means Cheerful</b>	High value vouchers are attractive to readers ... and also all the wrong kinds of people (see above). Keep the value of your vouchers <b>appropriate</b> to the product <b>and</b> the promotional medium. As a general rule don't put high value vouchers in low price media.								
<b>Watch the News</b>	Consider your promotional media carefully. Newspapers give wide coverage to your voucher promotion but also put temptation into many more hands. Be aware of the risks as well as the opportunities.								
<b>Mind the Net</b>	Don't get caught out by the internet. Online vouchers can be printed many times. Some may get redeemed against your magazine, but not necessarily all. For some people the Internet is literally a licence to print money!								
<b>Stay Single</b>	PPA recommends avoiding multiple issue vouchers. Retailers may redeem more than one voucher simultaneously and not necessarily against the intended title or issue.								

... and please **be supportive** of the efforts of the PPA, the ANMW, the Institute of Sales Promotion and many others who invest time, money & effort into preserving the integrity of vouchers as an important promotional opportunity.

**For further information please contact: Retail at PPA – [membership@ppa.co.uk](mailto:membership@ppa.co.uk)**

# Standard Voucher Specifications

Discount value must be in bold type.

'OFF' must be written in capitals & in bold type

DO NOT state the discounted cover price of the mag with the voucher discount. ALWAYS state 'money' OFF.

**Save £1.20 OFF**  
**September Issue**

MY Magazine

The Monthly Women's Magazine which is published.....  
**'Just for You'**

This section (shaded) is free to include a promotional message.

**The coupon must state:**

- Discount off the magazine
- Product
- Issue
- Valid until date.

**Save £1.20 OFF**  
**September Issue**

Offer Valid Until 1<sup>st</sup> September 20XX

**To the customer:** This coupon can be used in part payment against MY MAGAZINE issue dated **September (on sale 04/08/12)**. One coupon per item purchased. Please do not attempt to redeem this coupon against any other product or issue as refusal to accept may cause embarrassment. Voucher expires 28/09/12. Offer subject to availability.

**To the retailer:** Please accept this £1.20 coupon as payment towards a copy of MY MAGAZINE issue dated **September 2012 (on sale 04/08/12)**. One coupon per item purchased. The issuer reserves the right to refuse payment against incorrectly redeemed coupons. Claims to your supplying wholesaler must be made by **12/10/12**. A 2p handling allowance is credited for each coupon redeemed.

**To the wholesaler:** Please credit the retailer for a normal sale, plus a handling charge of 2p.

**Wholesalers & organizations sending coupons direct to clearing houses:** Please submit coupons to: Valassis Ltd, Dept. XXXX, Bangrave Road, Weldon South, Corby, Northants, NN17 1NN by 23/11/12 Coupon value 0.001p.

**OFFERS VALID IN THE UK ONLY.**  
**NCH NO: 112233444**



Min height 19mm

Min width 22mm

4 mm

The barcode must be 4mm away from dotted lines to the right hand side or below.

The barcode needs to have a clear white space around it of 2mm on the left and right & 1 mm at the top & bottom.

Max height 92mm

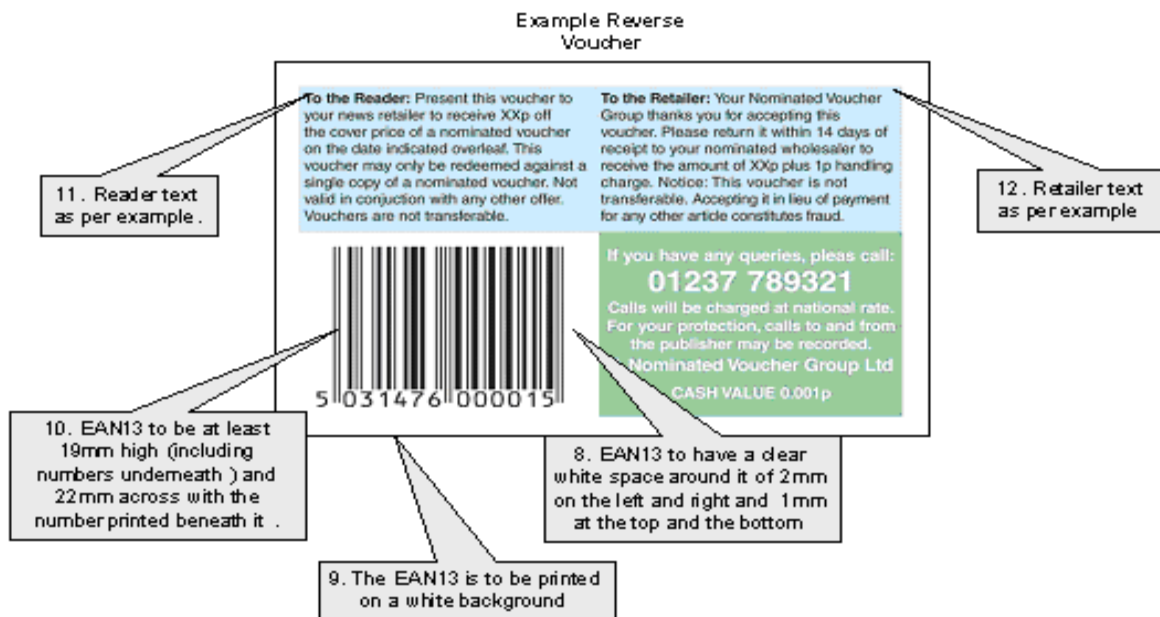
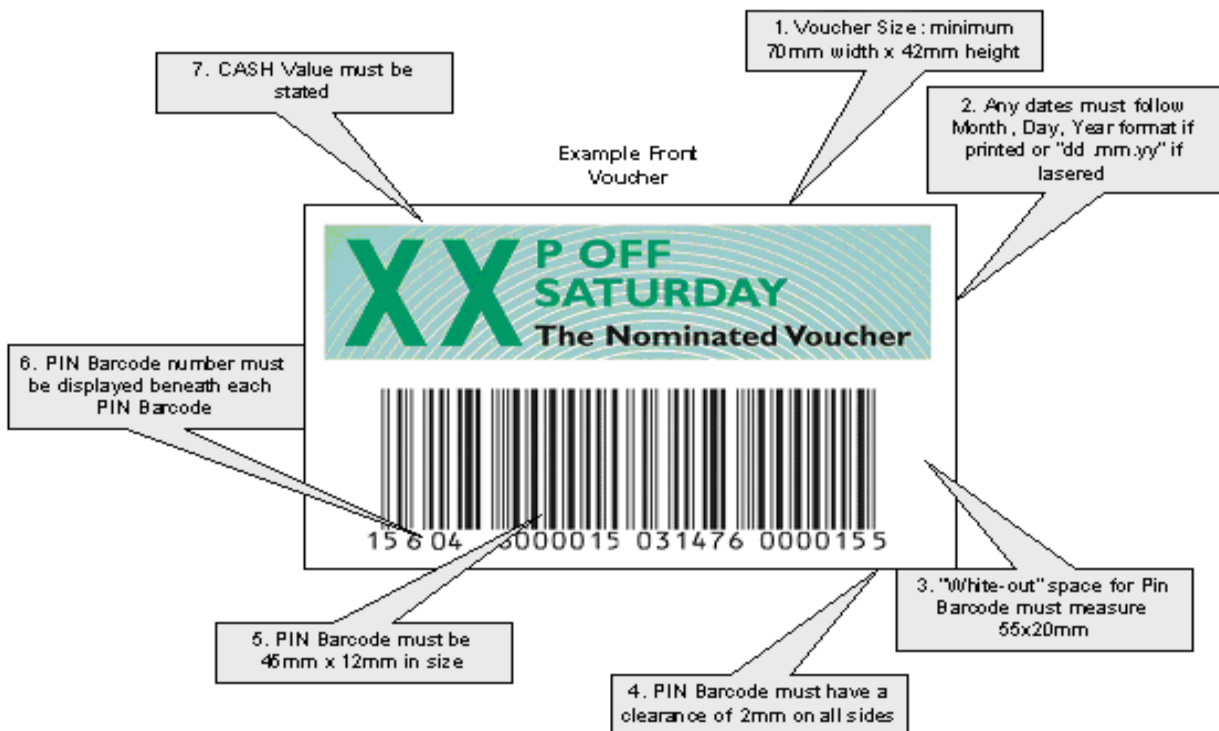
Min height 42mm

Max width 128mm, Min width 70mm

**EXAMPLE COUPON**



## VOUCHER SPECIFICATION WHERE PIN BAR CODES ARE USED



## FAQs & GUIDANCE FOR PUBLISHERS

### 1. Why do I need a barcode?

The barcode provides a unique means of identifying magazine issues electronically at all stages of the distribution chain up to final sale by the retailer, or for processing unsolds. It is essential to monitoring distribution and sales in today's electronic trading environment.

### 2. What is the difference between a barcode & an ISSN?

The ISSN is the International Standard Serial Number – a unique 8-digit cataloguing number assigned to each magazine title by the ISSN UK Centre at the British Library. The first 7 of the 8 digits are used within the publication barcode, digits 4 – 10. They are the element that makes it unique. See 'Components of the Barcode' – page 8.

### 3. Are there Special Rules for One-Shots and Specials?

Yes! As outlined above, barcodes for magazines include the unique ISSN number. This is appropriate because they publish issues 'serially'. The same principle applies to 'specials' that have a 'serial frequency', even though that may only be once a year. Pure 'One Shot' titles, published once only, are not permitted to use an ISSN within their bar code. Publishers of such titles must apply to the ISBN Centre for an International Standard Book Number - ISBN. (See Appendix D for details).

### 4. What do I do if I want to export my magazine? Do all countries use the same system?

There are no internationally binding agreements on cover bar code standards for magazines. First check whether bar coding of copies is required in overseas markets. If so, publishers should make arrangements to have their exported copies 'stickered' to conform with the requirements of individual export markets.

### 5. What can I do if I have two different issues of the same magazine out at the same time?

This should not present problems at wholesale level if the two different issues are correctly identified by different issue numbers in the two digit 'Issue Add-On' section of the barcode. Publishers may need to brief retailers separately as their systems only scan the first 13 digits (which may be the same on both issues).

### 6. Where do I put the barcode on the cover?

For normal A4 and A5 Magazines, there is only 1 requirement. It should be on the front cover but away from folds, creases, bands or any subsequently attached gifts.

Every magazine front cover is set up differently and to expect them all to fit one scenario isn't realistic. However the cover designer must be made aware that without a barcode that is easily found the EPOS sales data may be lost.

Care must be taken when an issue is going to be gifted or polybagged. The issue barcode must be visible after the product is "finished"

### 7. What can I do if the barcode doesn't scan?

Publishers should take all possible steps to verify the 'scan ability' of bar codes before they enter the supply chain. Unscannable bar codes prevent the collection of accurate epos sales information and cause problems in the accurate scanning of unsolds. Publishers must contact wholesalers immediately if they become aware of an unscannable bar code on any product. If over-stickering is necessary this will be at the publisher's cost.

### 8. What can I do if the printed barcode differs to the details sent on the publisher's EDI Issue File?

- Issue not packed at wholesale

If the issue has not been packed the publisher should resend the issue file data using the correct bar code etc.

EDI trading partners should be contacted to give them as much notice as possible to make corrective action.

- Issue packed at wholesale

If the title has already been packed problems may occur with retail EPOS data.

A communication to all EPOS users advising them of the difference is required.

Publishers should also alert the ANMW / NFRN to advise retailers via the National Title File email alerts.

As some wholesaler systems lock the bar code data when it is packed a new file is of no value.

Publishers should ensure that the bar code is corrected from the next issue.

## **9. What can I do if the issue indicator is wrong?**

- Issue not packed at wholesale

If the title has not been packed resend the issue file data using the correct issue indicator.

Contact EDI partners to give them as much notice as possible to make corrective action.

- Issue packed at wholesale

If the Issue Indicator has already been used that year on another issue it could be treated as a supplementary supply when the magazine is booked in.

Wholesalers must be communicated to give them as much notice as possible to make corrective action. Data integrity cannot be guaranteed for both issues and net sales will be corrupted impacting on future copy allocation & retail shrink.

If the issue indicator has not yet been used potentially it will become a duplicate when the issue indicator catches up to the correct issue. For this scenario the publisher must use an issue id 99 to make it unique.

If the title has been packed there will be problems with data integrity for this and the other edition that has potentially a duplicate issue.

Publishers should alert the ANMW / NFRN to advise retailers on the National Title File email alerts.

As some wholesaler systems lock the bar code data when it is packed a new file is of no value.

Publishers should ensure that the Issue indicator is corrected from the next issue

## **10. What can I do if the ISSN is incorrect?**

- Issue not packed at wholesale

If the title has not been packed resend the issue file data using the correct ISSN data.

Contact EDI partners to give them as much notice as possible to make corrective action.

- Packed at wholesale

Wholesalers must be communicated to give them as much notice as possible to make corrective action.

Publishers should alert the ANMW and NFRN to advise retailers on the National Title File email alerts. Publishers should ensure that the ISSN is corrected from the next issue

## 11. What can I do if the barcode on the issue is the same as a different magazine issue?

This scenario generates major data integrity issues at both retail and wholesale and subsequently the distributor.

As the distributor has sent the expected bar code to the wholesaler in advance, that barcode will be in the wholesalers' Goods In bar code stations waiting for the title to arrive.

Scenario 1 - The Goods In scanner scans the bar code and if the incorrectly barcoded title arrives first there is a chance the wrong title will be selected, packed and invoiced to retailers.

Scenario 2 - If the wholesaler identifies in advance that the barcode is incorrect they then book in the title without the barcode and manually select the correct title code.

This enables the wholesaler to pack the title to the correct customers but the problem is then transferred to the retailer. If they are an EPOS retailer, they will charge the wrong title and wrong price to the consumer.

It will be impossible to separate returns against the correct title.

The only solution to maintain data integrity is to sticker over the incorrect bar code with the correct one.

## 12. What if the name on the cover is different to that advised by publishers & to the National Title File?

The full title name on the issue file must be corrected and a changes file sent to wholesalers and subsequently the National Title File.

To ensure compliance on the next packed issue the distributor must advise the wholesaler via email / phone.

The wholesaler will have to advise the retailers of the name change so they can update their records.

## 13. What can I do if the issue description is different to the National Title File?

The issue description i.e. Winter, August, etc is key to the retailer removing the correct issue from their shelves. Having an incorrect issue description increases the risk of retailer unsolds and early returns.

Where the issue description has been incorrectly advised on the issue file the distributor must correct the data and send a change record.

## 14. How can I manage pricing?

### A - Handling a price change & getting the barcode right

Price changes – either up or down - should be dealt with by **increasing** the value of the Sequence Variant digits (11&12) by '01'. Changes to the Sequence Variant require re-calculation of the Check Digit (13).

### B - Permanent price changes

Eg.

Good Housekeeping increased in price from £2.80 to £2.90 from the May-10 Issue

The April issue had a bar code of 9770017208 **17 1** 04

The May issue has a bar code of 9770017208 **18 8** 05

### C - Temporary price changes

Special rules apply to temporary price changes. For a first special price issue digits 11 & 12 should be amended to read '99' a second special price issue should use '98' and subsequent issues should reduce similarly ...97, 96 etc.

When you revert to the original price, simply revert to the last normal price bar code used.

The bar code sequence variant must be changed as detailed in the example below.

Example 1:

TV & Satellite i/d 13Dec 9771369900 06 5 50 90p

TV & Satellite i/d 20-27Dec 9771369900 **93 5 51 160p**

N.B. This is a one off special price increase and an initial sequence variant of 99 has been used and stepped down by 1 over the last 7 years to this year read 93

Example 2:

TV & Satellite i/d 03Jan 9771369900 06 5 01 90p

TV & Satellite i/d 13Dec 9771369900 **07 2 02 50p**

N.B. This indicates another temporary price reduction and the sequence variance has increased by 1 to 07

#### **D - What if the cover price on the cover is different to the retailer's title file?**

The cover price on the cover is the price the retailer will charge the customer.

EPOS retailers hold the expected price as advised by the distributor and making a late change increases the risk of the retailer charging an incorrect price to the customer at the till.

Depending on the type of product the wholesaler may pick up the error at Goods In and correct the pricing sending an accurate retail price on their delivery notes. The retailer may then pick up the price change and charge their consumer a correct price.

However, if the title is a weekly and is packed Time Sensitive, the retailers packing documents are produced in advance of the goods being received and in this scenario the retail customer would be reliant on picking up the price difference themselves from the front cover.

If the change is picked up late i.e. at the publishers' distribution centre, the correct price and barcode must be sent to wholesalers to update both their own systems and the National Title File. The National Title File would recognise the late change and this would be posted as a late change on the website.

The distributor must advise wholesalers by email / telephone to give them as much notice to correct their data in advance of the product arriving at the warehouse.

#### **E - What if the publisher notifies the wrong price indicator in their EDI Issue File?**

- **Not packed at wholesale**

If the title has not been packed the publisher should resend the issue file data using the correct barcode etc.

Publishers should also contact EDI trading partners to give them as much notice as possible to make corrective action.

- **Packed at wholesale**

Wholesalers must be informed to give them as much notice as possible to make corrective action.

Publishers should also inform the ANMW / NFRN to advise retailers on the National Title File email alerts.

Publishers should take action to ensure that the bar code price indicator is corrected from the next issue.

#### **15. Are there any special considerations for products with gifts?**

Ensure that the gift does not obscure any part of the barcode as this will lead to difficulties in scanning the product and may result in faulty sales data being recorded.

Publishers should ensure that gifts do NOT have barcodes of their own.

**16. What do I need to do if a magazine changes distributor?**

Publishers must ensure that bar codes are not duplicated by the application of different rules.

**17. What do I need to know about ISSUE FILE rules?**

Wholesalers receive basic cover information from publisher/distributor EDI 'Issue' files in advance of the on sale date. With this information they populate the National Title File (NTF) and it is used as the basis of the delivery and returns recall notes provided to retailers.

It is essential that publishers take the greatest care in ensuring that all issue file information transmitted is of the highest possible standard of accuracy. Where changes to the information are unavoidable, they should be communicated in sufficient time for wholesalers to take appropriate action.

**18. What if the bar code is the same as another magazine or another issue?**

**19. What if the printed cover price is different from the one advised on the EDI Issue File?**

**20. What if the title on the cover is different from the one advised on the EDI Issue File?**

**21. What if the cover issue description is different from the one advised on the EDI Issue File?**

Publishers/distributors should notify wholesalers immediately if any such problems become known, and reissue corrected information via their EDI Issue File.

Wholesalers may be able to rectify such problems electronically through their operational systems if notified in time.

If this is not possible, wholesalers will charge publishers/distributors for such breaches of best practise standards, in line with their published rate cards.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**AIM UK** - the official independent industry association for manufacturers and distributors of automatic data collection and identification equipment, systems and services.

**ANMW – Association of Newspaper and Magazine Wholesalers.** The UK trade association that represents newspaper and magazine wholesalers' interests. (See 'Useful Contacts' section below).

**EAN-13** - the internationally recognised standard format of barcoding. Used for identifying magazines in accordance with rules defined by the Periodical Barcode Association (PBA).

**EAN-15** – a barcoding format based on EAN-13 rules, used uniquely to identify magazines by issue. A two-digit 'add-on' signifying the issue is added to the EAN 13 bar code symbol.

**EDI - Electronic Data Interchange:** computer to computer transmission of information between two trading partners in the supply chain.

**GS1** – The international governing body for the GS1 system of supply chain standards. They used to be known as EAN International.

**GS1 UK** - the UK body responsible for administering, developing and promoting GS1 identification numbering and barcoding standards. Part of the global GS1 organisation. Previously known as 'e.centre'.

**GS1 General Specifications** - a manual describing the GS1 system for article numbering and for machine-readable barcodes.

**GLOBAL TRADE ITEM NUMBER (GTIN)** – The international standard number used to identify any trade item. For Example: 977 + ISSN + sequence variant + check digit.

**ISBN –International Standard Book Number.** An ISBN is an International Standard Book Number. It is a 13-digit number (EAN 13 format) starting 978 or 979 obtained from The ISBN Agency for the UK and Republic of Ireland. ISBN numbers are issued for books and 'one-off' magazine publications only.

**ISSN - International Standard Serial Number.** An 8-digit cataloguing number conforming to international standards & issued by the ISSN UK Centre. (British Library). A key component of the magazine barcode. No magazine may be transmitted in the EDI Issue File without a properly constituted barcode. The eighth digit is a check digit, and removed when used within a bar code.

**LIGHT MARGINS** - the clear area, which must surround a barcode symbol.

**LIGHT MARGIN INDICATORS** - marks (e.g. chevrons) to indicate the light margins of barcode symbols.

**MAGNIFICATION FACTOR** - the factor used to multiply the standard dimensions specified for a barcode symbol, to obtain the actual dimensions at which the symbol must appear on the packaging.

**NewPET** – Newstrade and Publishing EDI Technical user group – Industry wide user group that develops and promotes EDI standards.

**PPA** - Professional Publishers Association: the UK trade association for magazine publishers.

**VERIFICATION** - a means by which barcode symbols can be analysed to check whether they meet a given specification, and to identify specific deviations from the ideal dimensions.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: USEFUL CONTACTS

<p><b>Professional Publishers Association</b> White Collar Factory 1 Old Street Yard London EC1Y 8AF Tel: 020 7404 4166 Fax: 020 7404 4167</p> <p>e-mail: <a href="mailto:membership@ppa.co.uk">membership@ppa.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.ppa.co.uk">http://www.ppa.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>ANMW</b></p> <p>Information Services:</p> <p>Howard Birch Rowan House, Cherry Orchard North, Kembrey Park, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 8UH</p> <p>Tel: 01793 563692</p>
<p><b>ISSN UK Centre</b> The British Library Boston Spa Wetherby West Yorkshire LS23 7BQ</p> <p>Tel:01937 546 959 Fax:01937 546 562 e-mail: <a href="mailto:ISSN-UK@bl.uk">ISSN-UK@bl.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.bl.uk">http://www.bl.uk</a></p> <p>Open between 1000hrs and 1200hrs only</p>	<p><b>ISBN UK Agency</b> 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Midas House, 62 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 6LQ</p> <p>Tel: 0870 7778712 Fax: 0870 7778714 e-mail: <a href="mailto:isbn@nielsenbookdata.co.uk">isbn@nielsenbookdata.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://isbn.nielsonbook.co.uk">http://isbn.nielsonbook.co.uk</a></p>
<p><b>GS1 UK</b> Hasilwood House 60 Bishopsgate London EC2N 4AW</p> <p>Tel: 020 7092 3500 Helpdesk: 0808 178 8799 / 020 7092 3501 Fax: 020 7681 2290 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@gs1uk.org">info@gs1uk.org</a> Internet: <a href="http://www.gs1uk.org">http://www.gs1uk.org</a></p>	<p><b>NewPET</b> Newstrade and Publishing EDI Technical User Group Contacts: David Blackett – Chair Tel: 020 7603 8773 Mobile: 07930 385180 Email: <a href="mailto:blackett@boltblue.com">blackett@boltblue.com</a></p> <p>Rachel Moden – Technical Services Panel Tel: 01733 882401 Mobile: 077770 671354 Email: <a href="mailto:rachel.moden@flgroup.co.uk">rachel.moden@flgroup.co.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Barcode Advisory Service</b></p> <p>Tel: 01869 351289</p>	



## APPENDIX B: BARCODE IMAGE SUPPLIERS

### **Axicon Auto ID Ltd**

Church Road  
Weston-on-the-Green  
Bicester  
Oxfordshire  
OX25 3QP  
Email: [info@axicon.com](mailto:info@axicon.com)  
[www.axicon.com](http://www.axicon.com)  
Tel: 01869 351 166  
Fax: 01869 351 205

### **Barcode Services**

Bedford House  
Main St, Cotesbach  
Lutterworth, LEICS  
LE17 4HX  
Email: [barcodeservices@btinternet.com](mailto:barcodeservices@btinternet.com)  
Tel: 01455 552 005  
Fax: 01455 550 981

### **Bar Code Systems Ltd**

Wesley House 3 Temple Mills  
Temple Lane  
Marlow  
SL7 1SA  
Direct tel: 01628 828 882

## SUPPLIER OF BARCODE SOFTWARE

### **Agamik**

Cathlaw House  
Torpichen, West Lothian  
Scotland  
EH48 4NW  
Tel: 01506 650 163  
Fax: 01506 630 216  
Website: [www.agamik.co.uk](http://www.agamik.co.uk)

### **Computalabel International Ltd**

Scraptoft  
Leicestershire  
LE7 9TF  
Tel: 01162 557 898  
Fax: 01162 255 7899

## APPENDIX C: ISSN UK Centre

### What is an ISSN?

The International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) is an internationally accepted number, which identifies the title of serial publications. It is an eight-digit number consisting of seven digits plus a check digit, which enables a computer to recognise when the number is incorrectly cited.

The check digit may be an X; otherwise the ISSN is fully numeric.

The ISSN is not connected with ownership of the journal, nor does it confer copyright or protect the title of the serial from use by other publishers. The ISSN is not related to legal deposit. Under the Copyright Act of 1911, as amended by the British Library Act of 1972, all publications, including individual issues of serials, must be deposited with the British Library whether they carry an ISSN or not.

### Who uses an ISSN?

**Publishers** who wish to identify their serial publications and incorporate a barcode on the magazine, journal or newspaper for sale via the major retailers.

**Libraries**, which use the ISSN as a fundamental identifier for distinguishing between identical serial titles and facilitating checking and ordering procedures, collection management, legal deposit, interlibrary loans etc.

**Catalogue databases**, which use the ISSN as a record control number and can, make use of the records on the ISSN register.

**Documentation centres and databases** which handle bibliographic references and use the ISSN for more accurate serials citation, abstracting and indexing services etc.

**Subscription agencies** that act as intermediaries between publishers and their customers use the ISSN to ensure the correct serial publication is ordered.

**Academics** who wish to cite in full details of publications for research purposes.

**Retailers / wholesalers** who use ISSN based barcodes within their own internal systems in order to assess and control magazine/newspaper circulation.

### What are ISSN's assigned to?

The ISSN UK Centre is responsible for assigning ISSN to serials published in the United Kingdom alone.

ISSN are assigned to the titles of serial publications in accordance with the definition below:

A continuing resource in any medium, issued in a succession of discrete parts [and having a common title], usually bearing numbering, that has no predetermined conclusion. Examples of serials include journals, magazines, electronic journals, ongoing directories, annual reports, newspapers, and monographic series.

ISSN may also be assigned to online journal titles, CD-ROMs and diskettes that are intended to be issued on a continuous basis. Different editions of serials must have different ISSN. This applies to different language editions, regional editions and different physical formats (e.g. CD-ROM, online and print versions of a journal title have separate numbers). However ISSN are not assigned to Internet resources consisting predominantly of links, nor individual or company home pages including Web logs.

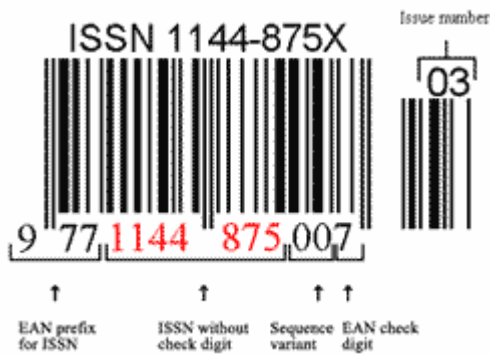
ISSN should **not** be assigned to one-off publications, magazine specials, newspaper specials, finite publications including partworks, serials not intended for general circulation, calendars, diaries or posters.

## ISSN and bar codes

The ISSN was developed by the International Standards Organisation (ISO) because of the need for a brief unique and unambiguous identification code for serial publications. An eight digit number was considered by ISO to be sufficient as the basis for numbering the entire population of serials.

When the bar coding system was set up for serials, it was realised that the ISSN as a unique identifying number for the title could be used as part of the bar code to identify the serial. The ISSN is therefore the title identifier in the bar code.

Magazine bar codes are represented in EAN format with a 2 digit add-on code. The bar code is constructed in the following way:



It should be remembered that the ISSN UK Centre is concerned with the titles of serials, and their identification. The Centre issues the ISSN not the bar code. If publishers have queries about the ISSN, then they should contact the [Centre](#), but if they have a query about the bar code itself they should contact the [Professional Publishers Association](#).

## Printing the ISSN

The number should be printed thus: ISSN 0000-0000. It should be preceded by the initials ISSN followed by a single space; then the first four digits; then a hyphen; then the last four digits.

This form of presentation has no particular significance but it is intended to make the ISSN easier to read and to recognise internationally. The ISSN should preferably be printed on the top right-hand corner of the cover of a printed journal. However, if design, binding or other considerations mean the cover is unsuitable the number may be printed in some other prominent position, for example along with other bibliographical information such as the name of the publisher. In electronic resources the ISSN should appear on the title screen or main menu and, if applicable, on any labels permanently affixed to the publication. The printing of the number is voluntary, but is recommended in order to gain the full benefits of the ISSN system.

## What is the difference between ISSN and ISBN?

The ISSN identifies the title of a serial and stays the same from issue to issue unless the title changes, at which a point a new ISSN needs to be assigned. The ISBN (International Standard Book Number) represents a single volume such as a novel, a monograph, a specific title within a monographic series or a specific issue of an annual or yearbook. ISBN are issued by the [Standard Book Numbering Agency](#). The two systems are complementary and can be used together on the same publication. On an annual, for example, the ISBN will identify a specific volume (e.g. 1996 edition, 1997 edition) whilst the ISSN identifies the title and stays the same each year. ISBN should not be assigned to specific issues of periodicals and should not usually be assigned to any title published more frequently than once a year.

A fundamental difference between the two systems / numbers is that the stem of the ISBN identifies the publisher whereas the ISSN contains no publisher identifier. The ISSN is a purely arbitrary number that remains linked to the serial even when the responsibility for the serial passes from one publisher to another.

### **The ISSN system**

The ISSN network consists of more than seventy national centres worldwide that are responsible for assigning ISSN to serials published in their own countries. The system is co-ordinated by the [International Centre](#) in Paris who also takes the responsibility for assigning numbers to serials published in countries that do not have their own national ISSN Centre and to serials published by International Organisations.

The ISSN UK Centre, which is part of the British Library, is responsible for assigning ISSN to serials published in the United Kingdom. Serials published elsewhere, regardless of whether they are distributed in Great Britain or not, should obtain an ISSN from the relevant foreign ISSN Centre.

### **Obtaining an ISSN**

ISSN numbers can be issued in advance of publication via the [British Library Website](#) which can be completed and sent online, or printed out and faxed / posted to us. The form is also available as a [pdf](#) that can be emailed to you. It is not possible to assign ISSN over the telephone. The basic information required is:

Proposed title (working titles / project titles are not sufficient);  
Frequency of publication;  
Proposed start date (month / year);  
Publisher name and address.

The Centre will also need to receive a copy of the first issue on publication in order to validate our records. This copy will be passed through to the Legal Deposit Office and subsequent issues can be sent directly to them.

In the case of ISSN requests made for existing serials, we will need to receive an application form completed with the information as above, together with:

For print publications, a copy of a recent issue;

For on-line journals, either the URL or any passwords required (as requested on the form); or a printout of the title screen, and any screens giving publisher information (i.e. company name and the place of publication).

For CD-ROM or diskette journals, a sample copy or a printout of the title screen together with copies of the labelling, documentation and packaging;

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Can I obtain a batch of ISSN?**

Unlike the ISBN (International Standard Book Numbers), ISSN cannot be issued to publishers in batches, as the Centre needs to maintain accurate records on which numbers have been assigned to which titles.

#### **Why do some ISSN have an 'X' at the end?**

The ISSN is composed of eight digits, the eighth being a check digit. Normally the number consists of Arabic numerals, but occasionally, due to the formula used to calculate an ISSN, an upper case 'X' appears as the check digit.

### **How do I obtain a magazine / newspaper bar code?**

A magazine / newspaper bar code comprises a number of elements of which the ISSN expresses the title information. The ISSN UK Centre issues ISSN, however it is the responsibility of the publisher to construct the rest of the bar code and arrange for the bar code film to be drawn up. The typical steps in the process are as follows:

- Apply to the [ISSN UK Centre](#) for an ISSN;
- Construct the rest of the bar code (Best Practice Guidelines are available from the [Periodical Publishing Association](#) (PDF format));
- Order a bar code symbol from a film master supplier;

Incorporate in artwork for front cover and send to printer.

### **Do I need a new ISSN if the price / frequency / format of the serial changes?**

ISSN are not affected by any of the above. Publishers who use magazine bar codes will need to alter the sequence variant in the bar code to express price changes. The only circumstance under which a new ISSN is allocated is when the title of the serial changes.

### **Does a serial need a new ISSN if the publisher changes?**

The ISSN is not related to ownership of a journal and does not confer copyright. A new number will be required if the change of publisher results in a change of serial title.

### **Do I need to send your Centre all the issues of my serial?**

The ISSN UK Centre only needs to see one copy in order to assign / validate an ISSN. Subsequent issues should be sent directly to the Legal Deposit Office in accordance with the Copyright Act of 1911.

### **Do I need a new ISSN if I want to relaunch my magazine?**

If a magazine is being relaunched with the same title then the existing ISSN is still valid for use, even if there has been a publishing gap. No new ISSN should be assigned in this circumstance. If a serial reverts to a title that it has held previously a new ISSN will need to be assigned. The publisher cannot revert to using the previous ISSN.

### **How do I protect the title of my serial?**

The ISSN will not protect the title of the serial. Taking out a trademark can only do this. Information on this can be obtained from [The Patent Office](#).

## **ISSN UK CENTRE**

The British Library, Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7BQ  
Telephone 01937-546959

Responsible for issuing ISSNs for use on newspapers, magazines, periodicals and journals.

## How can I obtain access to the ISSN register?

The international database of serials carrying ISSN is available in CD-ROM, on-line and tape formats. For subscription details and further information please contact the publisher at the following address:

ISSN International Centre  
20, rue Bachaumont  
75002 PARIS  
France  
Tel: +33 1 44 88 22 20  
Fax: +33 1 40 26 32 43  
E-mail: [issnic@issn.org](mailto:issnic@issn.org)  
[www.issn.org](http://www.issn.org)

### Contact Details:

ISSN UK Centre  
The British Library  
Boston Spa, Wetherby  
West Yorkshire  
LS23 7BQ  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1937 546959  
Fax: +44 (0)1937 546562  
Email: [issn-uk@bl.uk](mailto:issn-uk@bl.uk)

Legal Deposit Office  
The British Library  
Boston Spa, Wetherby  
West Yorkshire  
LS23 7BY  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1937 546267 (serials)  
Tel: +44 (0)1937 546268 (books)  
Email: [legal-deposit-books@bl.uk](mailto:legal-deposit-books@bl.uk)

### *ISBN*

ISBN Agency  
3rd Floor  
Midas House  
62 Goldsworth Road  
Woking  
GU21 6LQ  
Tel: +44 (0)870 777 8712  
Fax: +44 (0)870 777 8714  
Email: [isbn@nielsenbookdata.co.uk](mailto:isbn@nielsenbookdata.co.uk)  
Email: [san@nielsenbookdata.co.uk](mailto:san@nielsenbookdata.co.uk)  
[www.whitaker.co.uk](http://www.whitaker.co.uk)  
[www.sanagency.co.uk](http://www.sanagency.co.uk)

### **Bar coding:**

#### *Serials*

Professional Publishers Association  
35-38 New Bridge Street  
London  
EC4V 6BW  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7404 4166  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7404 4167  
[Best Practice Guidelines](#)

### *Copyright*

Patent Office  
Central Enquiry Unit  
Concept House  
Cardiff Road  
Newport, South Wales  
NP9 1RH  
Tel: 08459 500505 (UK)  
Tel: 44 1633 813930 (International)  
Email: [enquiries@patent.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@patent.gov.uk)  
[www.patent.gov.uk](http://www.patent.gov.uk)

#### *Newspapers*

Newspaper Society  
Bloomsbury House  
74-77 Great Russell Street  
London  
WC1B 3DA  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7636 7014  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7631 5119  
[www.newspapersoc.org.uk](http://www.newspapersoc.org.uk)

## APPENDIX D: BARCODING FOR BOOKS – ISBN

### WHAT IS AN ISBN?



The International Standard Book Number system is used globally to give a book, and any specifically related material, its own unique number to facilitate bibliographical recording and prevent errors in ordering.

ISBNs are designated to identify BOOKS and specifically related material. They must NOT be used to identify any form of product that has a 'frequency of issue' or has any kind of periodicity. By their nature they are used to identify items (books), which are single occurrences only.

Publishers can only obtain ISBNs from the ISBN agency. For publishers in the UK and Ireland, the ISBN Agency, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Midas House, 62 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6LQ (Tel: 0870 7778712), is the only body authorised to allocate UK ISBNs and should be contacted by publishing companies before publishing any titles.

#### NOTE:

From January 2007 ISBNs are 13-digit numbers beginning 978 or 979. This move is aimed to reduce pressure on the previous system, where capacity for new numbers was running low. The new format will be identical to the GS1 GTIN numbering system, the standard for bar codes printed on books.

#### ISBN AGENCY

ISBN Agency, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Midas House, 62 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6LQ (Tel: 0870 7778712), is the only body authorised to allocate UK ISBNs and should be contacted by publishing companies before publishing any titles.

The agency is responsible for allocating International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) which are based on International Standard 150 2108-1972(E). Provides general information about ISBNs and is responsible for monitoring the ISBN system in Great Britain.

## **BUREAU SERVICES**

Publishers who decide to use a specialist bureau service must ensure that the supplier is not only aware of the standards and recommendations set out in the operating manual, but is also able to meet the printer/publisher's requirements.

The following organisations can advise publishing houses regarding recognised agencies:-

AIM-UK  
The Old Vicarage  
Haley Hill  
Halifax  
West Yorkshire  
HX3 6DR

Telephone 01422-368368  
Fax 01422-355604

British Printing Industry Federation  
Farringdon Point  
29/35 Farringdon Road  
London EC1M 3JF

Telephone 020-7915 8300  
Fax 020-7405 7784  
e-mail [info@bpif.org.uk](mailto:info@bpif.org.uk)

## **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

GS1 UK  
Staple Court  
11, Staple Inn Buildings  
LONDON, WC1V 7QH  
Tel: 020 7092 3500  
Helpdesk: 0808 178 8799  
Fax: 020 7681 2290  
E-mail: [info@gs1uk.org](mailto:info@gs1uk.org)  
Internet: <http://www.gs1uk.org>

GS1 UK is the only organisation in this country to allocate GS1 Company prefixes numbers (the first digits of an ordinary EAN-13 bar code). It has negotiated with Book Industry Communication (which is a member of GS1 UK on behalf of British publishers) the GS1 guaranteed 'ISBN flag' 978 and to incorporate the ISBN into the GTIN in place of the company prefix number. The GS1 UK website has useful additional information on bar codes.

## **BOOK INDUSTRY COMMUNICATION (BIC)**

39/41 North Road, London N7 9DP  
Telephone 020-7607 0021 Fax 020-7607 0415 e-mail [brian@bic.org.uk](mailto:brian@bic.org.uk)

Established and jointly funded by the Publishers Association, the Booksellers Association, the Library Association and the British Library to develop and promote standards for information communication throughout the book industry. As a member of GS1 UK, BIC is responsible for the use of the ISBN 978/979 'flag'. Also assists publishers with any queries and information on the use of machine-readable codes.

## **PROFESSIONAL PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION (PPA)**

35-38 New Bridge Street, London EC4V 6BW  
Telephone 020-7404 4166 Fax 020-7404 4167 e-mail [retail@ppa.co.uk](mailto:retail@ppa.co.uk)

Association for magazine publishers. Monitors the use of ISSNs (International Standard Serial Numbers), the basis for GS1 bar codes used in magazines, periodicals and journals.