

Activity Report 2023 Executive Summary

As the ISSN International Centre approaches its fiftieth anniversary in 2025, it remains committed to fostering strong relationships with ISSN National Centres and their host organizations. This commitment is critical to maintaining the network's influence and credibility in the midst of geopolitical tensions and economic challenges. Despite rising costs due to these tensions, the ISSN International Centre has continued to make significant IT investments to modernize its systems, which are essential for identifying journals and serial publications worldwide.

Total Numbers at a Glance (% year increase)

2,344,415 confirmed records (+2,5%)

372,404 online resource records (+7%)

64,012 OA titles in ROAD (+10%)

Key Points

Geopolitical and Economic Impact: Geopolitical tensions and economic crises have increased the Center's fixed costs. Extreme weather and inflation have exacerbated these conditions.

IT Investments: The Center has prioritized IT investments to modernize its information systems, which are critical to its mission. These investments have required budget reductions in less critical areas.

Data Protection: Measures have been taken to protect data and servers, including replicating data on multiple continents and identifying a trusted partner for data extraction when needed.

ISSN+ Application: Continued development of the ISSN+ data production application has improved data quality and functionality, with significant corrections made before records are imported into the portal.

Portal Updates: The ISSN Portal, with 2,344,415 confirmed ISSN, is now updated hourly, providing greater visibility and centralized identification for various stakeholders.

Portal overhaul project: A project was launched to overhaul the portal's outdated technical infrastructure, with the aim of integrating different levels of information and services. This project is part of the strategic plan for 2025-2029.

ISSN Network Overview

In 2023, the ISSN network maintained its 93 member countries. Efforts are underway to add new members such as the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Slovakia in 2024.

Governance and Operations

Governing Board: The composition of the Governing Board remained unchanged in 2023, with representatives from 10 member countries, with France and UNESCO holding permanent seats.

National Centers: The 48th meeting of ISSN National Center Directors was held in Brussels with strong participation both in person and online. The main workshops focused on the ISSN+ data production tool

In 2023

191,447 new and updated records from National Centers

2,582 ISSN assigned by ISSN IC

3,139 OA records added to ROAD by ISSN IC

3,624,085 visits recorded on the ISSN Portal

2020-2024 Strategic Plan Progress

1. Improve interoperability: Ongoing work to integrate ISNIs with ISSN Portal data.
2. Network expansion: No new centers established in 2023, but several countries in the process of joining.
3. Standards implementation: Creation of new MARC21 fields for cluster ISSNs, with full implementation expected in 2024.
4. ISSN assignment to new continuing resources: Published and adopted updated definitions and data encoding values for continuing resources.
5. PID management: Development of a URN:ISSN resolver to handle URLs, with further updates planned.
6. Expansion of the Keepers Registry: Aim to include 20 repositories by 2024, with 19 participating by the end of 2023.

Activities and Services

Development of the ISSN Portal: The portal now contains over 2.34 million confirmed ISSNs, with significant improvements in data quality and error correction.

Publisher services: 3,210 new ISSN applications processed, primarily from publishers in Hong Kong, S.A.R., China, and Pakistan.

Collaboration with Springer-Nature: Improved workflow for provisional and confirmed ISSN assignments.

Collaborations and Partnerships

Mir@bel network: Partnership to enrich databases and correct inconsistencies.

Ex Libris: Corrected approximately 250 ROAD records through reported erroneous URLs and titles.

Keepers Registry: New agencies and exchanged data enable the associated metadata in the portal to be corrected, and increase the number of archived resources.

Transfer Alerting Service: Continued collaboration with NISO Transfer Group to manage publisher changes for journal titles.

Technical and IT Developments

ISSN+ Tool: Focus on enhancing the production tool and integrating it with the new portal.

Portal Redesign: Ongoing development for a new, integrated ISSN portal, with an expected MVP launch in 2024.

Use of IT tools: Use of Gitlab, Freescout, Jira, Xwiki, Weblate, and Mailjet to improve operational efficiency and collaboration.

Sales

In 2023, total sales for the ISSN International Centre increased by 2.3% compared to 2022 but were slightly lower than 2021 revenues. Key revenue sources remained portal subscriptions and full data files, with portal subscriptions making up 57.72% of total revenue and full data files 17.81%.

Portal Subscriptions: Revenue increased due to higher customer usage and a 2% rise in subscription costs.

Full Data Files: Sales declined from 2022 levels.

OAI-PMH Sales: Revenues increased in 2023.

API Service: Seventeen customers subscribed, with four new test accounts created, primarily used by university libraries and multinational publishers.

Customer demographics remained consistent, predominantly from North America and Europe, with academic libraries as the largest category. Sales of ISSN credits saw a 9% increase compared to 2022.

Communications and Marketing

Promotional activities: Focused on renewing subscriptions, promoting new services, and expanding the customer base in Europe.

Customer survey: Conducted to understand customer needs and usage patterns to guide future portal enhancements.

Social media and events: Active engagement through social media, the monthly newsletter, and participation in industry events such as UKSG, IFLA WLIC, and Frankfurt Book Fair.

Conclusion

The ISSN International Center has made significant progress in enhancing data interoperability, expanding its network and improving service quality. Strategic initiatives and technological advances are laying the groundwork for continued growth and improved service to publishers, libraries and other stakeholders. The launch of the new ISSN Portal will further streamline operations and improve the user experience.

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