

International Standard Audiovisual Numbers (ISAN)

From March 2009, UK Film Council requires registered ISAN numbers to be provided as part of the delivery requirements for feature films receiving Lottery production funding (Premiere Fund and New Cinema Fund).

This will be extended to films receiving money from the Prints and Advertising Fund in late spring 2009, to coincide with the next update of the guidelines for that scheme.

Short films are not included in the requirement at this stage, but makers of short films may like to consider the advantages of ISAN registration, particularly if they plan to seek commercial or other distribution.

What is an ISAN number?

It is a 24 digit number (plus two check digits) that uniquely identifies each audiovisual work and its versions (e.g. different languages, territories, episodes, ratings, edits, etc). In this respect it can be compared to the ISBN system used in book publishing.

To see what an ISAN number looks like, go to: <http://www.isan.org.uk/what/>

What are the advantages of having an ISAN number?

There are many advantages in having a unique identification number for each film:

- Avoids confusion between different films with the same title
- Avoids confusion if the release title is different from the working title
- Distinguishes different versions of the same film
- Helps identify films in anti-piracy software
- Helps track films in royalty payment systems
- Can be attached to digital files for digital distribution of films
- Makes it easier to combine film tracking data (box office, DVD sales, VoD etc)
- Makes it easier to combine film listing information (e.g. on www.FindAnyFilm.com)
- ISAN is compulsory for Blu-Ray distribution
- Provides an ID number for films in film archives and libraries and helps different archives and libraries compare and combine information easily
- Helps web commerce in films (c.f. how Amazon shows ISBNs for books)

Where do I get it from?

You can apply for an ISAN number from an ISAN registration agency in the UK or overseas.

The UK-based agency is:

ISAN UK Ltd
c/o PACT
3rd Floor Fitzrovia House
153-157 Cleveland Street
London, W1T 6QW
Tel: +44 (0)7973 366 190

info@isan.org.uk
<http://www.isan.org.uk/>

The Independent Film & Television Alliance® (IFTA®) also has a registration agency:

IFTA ISAN RA*
c/o IFTA
10850 Wilshire Boulevard,
9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90024
Tel: 001-310-446-1035
erosen@ifta-online.org
<http://www.ifta-online.org>

*Available to non-members as well as members of IFTA®

What does it cost?

If you register via ISAN UK the costs are:

A one-off account registration fee of £80.
£10.50 per title.
£3.00 per version of the same title

Discounted rates are offered for bulk uploads of library titles.

If you register via IFTA ISAN RA the costs are:

No account registration fee.
US\$35 per title
US\$10 per version of the same title

Discounted rates are offered to IFTA® members.

THE ABOVE PRICES ARE AS AT JANUARY 2009. PLEASE CHECK WITH THE REGISTRATION AGENCIES WHEN APPLYING.

Is my film already registered?

It may be, especially if you are applying to UK Film Council at the distribution stage. Look up your title at: www.isan.org to see if it is already registered.

Where is the central ISAN database?

The single, global database is located at the ISAN international Agency (ISAN-IA) in Geneva. It stores the ISAN numbers and an amount of "metadata" about each audiovisual work (reference year, actors, director, language, etc) that enables each individual

audiovisual work and all its versions to be uniquely identified, ensuring unique one-to-one matching of audiovisual work and ISAN number.

For more information see: <http://www.isan.org/>