

# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

# ISO 15707

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## Information and documentation — International Standard Musical Work Code (ISWC)

*Information et documentation — Code international normalisé des œuvres  
musicales (ISWC)*



Reference number  
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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 3.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this International Standard may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

International Standard ISO 15707 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 9, *Presentation, identification and description of documents*, in collaboration with the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC).

Annex A forms a normative part of this International Standard. Annexes B and C are for information only.

## Introduction

The International Standard Musical Work Code (ISWC) system was developed by the member societies of the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC). CISAC's purpose in creating an ISWC for musical works is to enable more efficient administration of rights to those works on a worldwide basis. The ISWC provides an efficient means of identifying musical works in computer databases and related documentation and for the exchange of information between rights societies, publishers, record companies and other interested parties on an international level.



# Information and documentation — International Standard Musical Work Code (ISWC)

## 1 Scope

This International Standard specifies a means of uniquely identifying a musical work. It standardizes and promotes internationally the use of a standard identification code so that musical works can be uniquely distinguished from one another within computer databases and related documentation and for the purposes of collecting societies involved in the administration of rights to such works.

The International Standard Musical Work Code (ISWC) identifies musical works as intangible creations. It is not used to identify manifestations of or objects related to a musical work. Such manifestations and objects are the subject of separate identification systems, such as the International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) for sound recordings, the International Standard Music Number (ISMN) for printed music, and the International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISAN) for audiovisual works.

Guidelines for the use of ISWC are given in normative annex A.

## 2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

### 2.1

#### **check digit**

added digit which may be used to verify the accuracy of a standard number through a mathematical relationship to the digits contained in that number

NOTE Adapted from ISO 7064:1983.

### 2.2

#### **musical work**

work composed of a combination of sounds, with or without accompanying text

### 2.3

#### **work**

distinct, abstract creation of the mind whose existence is revealed through one or more expressions (e.g. a performance) or manifestations (e.g. an object)

## 3 Construction of an ISWC

### 3.1 Basic construction

An ISWC consists of a prefix element followed by nine digits and a check digit, as follows:

- prefix element (1 character);
- work identifier (9 digits);
- check digit (1 digit).

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When an ISWC is written or printed, the letters ISWC shall precede it. For ease of reading only, hyphens and dots may be used as separators between the elements of the identifier.

### EXAMPLE

ISWC T-034.524.680-1

### 3.2 Prefix element

The first element of an ISWC shall be the letter "T". If necessary, the International ISWC Agency may, at its discretion, designate another alphanumeric character in place of "T" in order to expand the numbering capacity of the ISWC system and/or to indicate the beginning of a new phase in the assignment of ISWC to musical works.

### 3.3 Work identifier

The second element of an ISWC shall be the work identifier. The work identifier is a 9-digit numeric code.

Work identifiers for musical works shall be in the numeric range of 000000001 – 999999999.

### 3.4 Check digit

The third element of an ISWC shall be the check digit. The check digit of an ISWC is calculated on a weighted modulus 10.

The formula for calculating the check digit is shown in informative annex B.

## 4 Administration

The Registration Authority for this International Standard shall be the International ISWC Agency<sup>1)</sup>.

The ISWC shall be administered by the International ISWC Agency and by other appropriate ISWC agencies appointed by the International Agency for that purpose.

## 5 Association of an ISWC with descriptive metadata

An ISWC shall be associated with descriptive data (see informative annex C) about the musical work it identifies by means of a database repository maintained by the specific ISWC agency which registered that work.

## 6 Association of an ISWC with digital content

An ISWC may be associated with digital expressions and manifestations of a musical work by employing appropriate techniques (e.g. encryption and watermarking) to facilitate tracking the use of that work.

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## Annex A (normative)

### Guidelines for the use of an ISWC

#### A.1 Works for which an ISWC may be allocated

##### A.1.1 Eligible repertoire

An ISWC may be assigned to any musical work, published or unpublished, newly created or already existing, irrespective of its copyright status.

Modified versions, excerpts and composite musical works shall be allocated an ISWC separate from the ISWC of the work(s) from which they are derived.

Examples of modified versions are as follows:

- changes to the content of a musical work, with the exception of minor alterations;
- new arrangements (e.g. a Bach Invention for Piano, arranged for chamber orchestra);
- translations of the literary text of a musical work.

Examples of excerpts are as follows:

- movements and other principal divisions of a musical work which might be known as something other than the title for the entire work (e.g. “Ode to Joy”, the last movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony);
- any work that is recognized as being an excerpt from a larger work, even though the type of excerpt may be unknown.

Examples of composite works are as follows:

- a medley consisting of existing works or excerpts of such works performed in a continuous sequence;
- a work containing samples of pre-existing works, such as a new song in which a rap lyric is sung over a rhythm track from a previously recorded work.

#### A.2 Administration of the ISWC system

##### A.2.1 International ISWC Agency

The Registration Authority for this International Standard shall be the International ISWC Agency. The International ISWC Agency shall appoint ISWC agencies for specific regions and/or sectors and shall allocate blocks of ISWC to them according to their requirements.

## **A.2.2 Regional and sectoral ISWC agencies**

There shall be ISWC agencies<sup>2)</sup> for the administration and allocation of the ISWC in specific regions and/or sectors.

The main criteria taken into account by the International ISWC Agency in appointing an ISWC agency for a specific region or sector shall be as follows:

- a) the ability of the candidate agency to manage a musical repertoire for its specified area of jurisdiction;
- b) the authority of the candidate agency to solve issues relating to the unique identification of musical works in its specified area of jurisdiction;
- c) the capacity of the candidate agency to exchange information with other agencies of the ISWC system for musical works, and to apply common rules and practices of the ISWC system as defined in the ISWC agencies' manual.

## **A.3 Allocation of an ISWC**

**A.3.1** An ISWC shall be allocated to a musical work by an ISWC agency upon request from a rights society that is affiliated with that agency and which currently represents one of the work's creators (e.g. composer, author or arranger). In cases where a creator is not represented by a copyright society that is affiliated with an ISWC agency, the creator may request an ISWC agency to allocate ISWC to works on his behalf.

**A.3.2** In cases where more than one ISWC agency is involved, by virtue of a work being co-written or its creator(s) being affiliated with more than one rights agency, the ISWC may be allocated by any one of the agencies involved after first confirming that an ISWC has not yet been allocated to that work by any other ISWC agency.

**A.3.3** For a creator whose works are in the public domain, a specific ISWC agency shall be designated to assign ISWC to that creator's works, by arrangement with the International ISWC Agency.

**A.3.4** Following the allocation of an ISWC, the ISWC agency involved shall immediately register that ISWC and its supporting data with appropriate notifications to the parties involved.

**A.3.5** The same ISWC shall not be allocated to more than one musical work.

**A.3.6** If more than one ISWC has inadvertently been assigned to the same musical work, each of those ISWCs may remain in circulation for that work.

**A.3.7** Once allocated, an ISWC shall never be re-used for another musical work, even if it is found to have been issued in error.

## **A.4 Descriptive metadata**

ISWC agencies shall capture descriptive data about each musical work to which an ISWC is assigned, in accordance with the specifications of the International ISWC Agency. Elements of such descriptive data shall include, as a minimum, the following:

- a) at least one original title for the work (as defined in C.2);
- b) all creators of the work with their respective roles indicated (see C.3);

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2) ISWC agencies may be established according to national, regional, linguistic or other sectoral grouping, at the discretion of the International ISWC Agency.

- c) whether or not the work is derived from an existing work and, if so, the type of derivation (see C.4);
- d) in the case of a derived work, the ISWC of the source work(s), or the title(s) where no ISWC exists for the source work(s).

## A.5 ISWC databases

Each ISWC agency shall maintain a database of its ISWC allocations and the associated descriptive metadata. Musical works which are used internationally, or which potentially could be registered by two or more ISWC agencies, shall also have their ISWC information entered into the database of the International ISWC Agency.

The International ISWC Agency will specify the type and format of metadata associated with ISWC registrations and the policies and mechanisms by which that data may be accessed.

## A.6 Agency manual

Full details of the allocation and application of the ISWC are explained in the agencies' manual available from agencies of the ISWC system.

## Annex B (informative)

### Calculation of the check digit of an ISWC

The check digit is calculated on modulus 10 with weights from 1 to 9 assigned sequentially from left to right of the identifier. For the purpose of check-digit calculation, the value and weight applied to the prefix element shall be 1. The weight applied to the check digit is 1.

Each digit of the ISWC (excluding the check digit itself) is multiplied by the appropriate weight according to its position in the sequence. The sum of the products obtained, plus the check digit, must be divisible by 10.

The computational method for calculation of the check digit is as follows:

- a) Calculation of the sum of the products:

$$S = 1 + \sum_{i=1}^{i=9} d_i w_i$$

- b) The check digit shall be chosen so that:

$$S + d_c \text{ is divisible by 10 (e.g. remainder equal to 0)}$$

where

$d_i$  is the value of the digit in position  $i$  of the work identifier ( $i = 1$  to 9, from left to right);

$w_i$  is the weight of digit  $d_i$  (e.g. position in the sequence);

$d_c$  is the check digit.

#### EXAMPLE

|                |   |     |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |     |     |       |
|----------------|---|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-------|
| <b>ISWC</b>    | T | 0   | 3   | 4    | 5    | 2    | 4    | 6    | 8    | 0   | 1   |       |
| <b>Weight</b>  | 1 | 1   | 2   | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9   | 1   |       |
| <b>Product</b> | 1 | + 0 | + 6 | + 12 | + 20 | + 10 | + 24 | + 42 | + 64 | + 0 | + 1 | = 180 |

In this example,  $S = 179$ .

The check digit is chosen so that:  $S + d_c = 180$ , e.g.  $d_c = 1$ .

## Annex C (informative)

### Descriptive metadata for registration of musical works

#### C.1 General

Before allocating an ISWC to a musical work, an ISWC agency shall capture the essential descriptive data for that work, as described in C.2 to C.4.

These data elements are subject to change at the discretion of the International ISWC Agency in consultation with agencies of the ISWC system. Further details regarding descriptive metadata for the registration of musical works are available in the ISWC agencies' manual.

#### C.2 Title information

The title(s) of the musical work shall be supplied and the type of title (e.g. original title, translated title, etc.), where applicable, shall be indicated according to the categories given in Table C.1 and using the codes specified by the International ISWC Agency.

**Table C.1 — Title information for a musical work**

| Title type   | Definition of title type  |
|--|---|
| Alternate title <sup>a</sup>   | An alternative to an original title.  |
| Extra search title   | An alternate title created to aid database searching (e.g. where special characters, puns, or slang have been replaced by standardized elements). |
| First line of text   | The beginning of a text.  |
| Formal title <sup>b</sup>  | A standardized title in which the elements are arranged in a pre-determined order, such as titles created for classical works.                    |
| Incorrect title  | A spurious or unacceptable title sometimes mistakenly used for identification.  |
| Original title   | A title given to the work by its creator(s) shown in its original language.   |
| Original title translated  | An original title translated into a different language.   |
| Restricted title   | An original title from which all initial articles and punctuation have been removed.  |
| <sup>a</sup> Corresponds to "variant title" in the UNIMARC format (see [4] in the bibliography).<br><sup>b</sup> Corresponds to "uniform title" in the UNIMARC format (see [4] in the bibliography). |   |

#### C.3 Information on creator(s)

Each of the creators of a musical work shall be clearly identified and their respective roles (e.g. composers, authors, arrangers, translators, etc.) shall be indicated according to the categories given in Table C.2 and using the codes specified by the International ISWC Agency.

Table C.2 — Information on the creator(s) of a musical work

| Type of role    | Definition   |
|-----------------|--|
| Adapter         | The author, or one of the authors, of an adapted text of a musical work.                 |
| Arranger        | The modifier of musical elements in a musical work.                                      |
| Author          | The creator, or one of the creators, of the text of a musical work.                      |
| Composer        | The creator, or one of the creators, of the musical elements of a musical work.          |
| Composer/Author | The creator, or one of the creators, of text and musical elements within a musical work. |
| Sub-author      | The author of text which substitutes or modifies an existing text of musical work.       |
| Translator      | The modifier of text of a musical work into a different language.                        |

## C.4 Work derivation information

### C.4.1 Type

The supporting data shall record whether or not the work is derived from an existing work. The type of work shall be indicated in each of the categories given in Table C.3 (version, excerpt, composite), as specified by the International ISWC Agency.

Table C.3 — Information on the type of musical work

| Derivation type | Values                | Definition   |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--|
| Version type    | Original version      | The first established form of a work.  |
|                 | Modified version      | A work resulting from the alteration of another work.  |
| Composite type  | Composite of samples  | A composite work containing new material and one or more samples of pre-existing recorded works.   |
|                 | Medley                | A continuous and sequential combination of existing works or excerpts.   |
|                 | Potpourri             | A composite work with the addition of original material which have been combined to form a new work that has been published and printed. |
|                 | Unspecified composite | Works known to be a composite, but where the type of composite is unknown.   |
|                 | Non-composite         | Not a composite work   |
| Excerpt type    | Movement              | A principal division of a musical work.  |
|                 | Unspecified excerpt   | A work known to be an excerpt from another work, but where the type of excerpt is unknown.   |
|                 | Non-excerpt           | Not a part of another work   |

#### C.4.2 Information on the source work(s)

In the case of a derived work, the ISWC(s) of the source work(s) shall be recorded in the supporting data. Where no ISWC exists for a source work, the title of the source work shall be recorded in a specific field of the supporting data format.

## Bibliography

- [1] ISO 3901, *Information and documentation — International Standard Recording Code (ISRC)*.
- [2] ISO 7064:1983, *Data processing — Check character systems*.
- [3] ISO 10957, *Information and documentation — International standard music number (ISMN)*.
- [4] International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. *UNIMARC Manual. Bibliographic Format*. 2nd edition. Munich: Saur, 1994- . Looseleaf with updates. (UBCIM Publications New Series). ISBN 3-598-11211-4.





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