

Using your own ISBN

An ISBN is the unique product identifier that allows your book to be sold via bookshops and via the book trade. To sell your book commercially, you will need an ISBN (the only exception is if you intend to publish an ebook via Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing). Most Matador authors opt to use an ISBN supplied by Matador from our own allocation (an ISBN which identifies Matador as the publisher and distributor of that book). However, it is possible to use your own ISBN on your book. If you do opt to do this, however, then there are some key facts you must be aware of, as it has implications far beyond just the actual number allocated.

I want to use my own ISBN. What do I need to know?

We work with many authors who supply their own ISBN and this is generally not an issue. There are some things for you to understand if providing your own ISBN to ensure that your book's availability and information is not compromised. We have included a copy of *Nielsen's Flowchart for New Publishers* as part of this factsheet, which gives a concise overview of the responsibilities you have as the ISBN owner, and all the relevant contact addresses. The main points we must clarify are:

1. If you supply us with an ISBN for your book, *you* are classed as the publisher of that book – and *you* are responsible for sending, updating and maintaining the accuracy of the bibliographic data (metadata) associated with your book, which *you* supply to the bibliographic data agency (Nielsen). Nielsen will *not* allow us to change any other publisher's bibliographic data.
2. If we are handling the distribution of your book for you, then you will need to tell Nielsen that we are acting as your distributor. If you do not do this, we shall not be sent bookshop / wholesaler orders for your book. We cannot notify the agency on your behalf. Similarly, if we stop being the distributor for the title, you'll also need to tell Nielsen and supply them with new details for order routing.
3. If you wish to self-distribute your book (i.e. Matador are *not* listed as your distributor), then you will be responsible for all order fulfillment, and we shall be unable to sell or store your book stock for you (unless you wish us to sell the book via our online webshop, in which case we shall request a limited number of copies for order fulfilment).
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5. As the ISBN owner, you will be responsible for emailing the cover image of your book to Nielsen once it is approved. If you do not do this, your book jacket won't appear on any retailers' websites.
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9. Matador supplies several other bibliographic data authorities both in the UK and overseas, such as Bowker and BDS, to ensure as wide a coverage of our titles' availability as possible. We are not able to do this for ISBNs registered in the name of another publisher and you'd need to investigate sending your data to these firms yourself.
10. For authors publishing under their own ISBN number (and thus imprint) we cannot place their book with our team of sales representatives. We use Star Book Sales to represent us as a publisher; if you publish in the name of a different publisher, then Star do not represent you as a publisher, so they cannot handle the sale of your book

How do I purchase ISBNs?

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How many ISBNs do I have to buy?

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Matador buys ISBNs in blocks of 1000, so we can allocate a single ISBN to an author's book. However, the ISBN remains a Matador ISBN; should you decide to republish your book elsewhere, you would need to assign a new ISBN to the book.

What is the link between ISBN and information about the book

The ISBN is the unique product identifier, but you still have to tell Nielsen about the book itself – this then forms the information about the book that will appear on retailers' websites (i.e. Amazon) and on retailers' in-house systems (i.e. the computers booksellers use in-store to look up books and place orders). When you buy your own ISBNs you are responsible for letting Nielsen know title information and for keeping that up to date. Usually you fill in the New Title Information form once you apply for your ISBNs, and at that stage you will need to supply them with all the relevant information about the title, including distributor and readership details, which you then need to keep updated.

Does publishing using a Matador ISBN affect my rights?

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Most of our authors choose to publish using a Matador ISBN, because the Matador name is well known within the book retail trade as a high quality publisher with sound retail distribution and marketing. As a new publisher, authors publishing under their own imprint need to convince retailers to stock their book, which is harder with an unknown publisher.

We are happy to publish either using a Matador or your own ISBN number and associated imprint name.

If I want to use one of Matador's ISBNs and not buy my own, what do I need to know?

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2. By using a Matador ISBN we also set up the distribution of the title (as all retailers will recognise the distribution route from the bibliographic data we supply along with the ISBN). If at any stage, you wish to take control of your own distribution, we shall have to either make you the distributor of the title or make your book out of print. As we are the owners of the Matador ISBN, please talk to us about this before deciding to take control of your own distribution so that we can ensure a smooth transition.
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