

OCLC Openly Informatics

xISBN - Frequently Asked Questions



Or, how you can find *all* the ISBNs relating to a certain work by going to [http://xisbn.worldcat.org/webservices/xid/isbn/\[ISBN\]](http://xisbn.worldcat.org/webservices/xid/isbn/[ISBN])

1. What is the xISBN Web service?

xISBN is a Web service that supplies International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) associated with individual intellectual works, based on information in the WorldCat database. Give it one ISBN, and it returns a list of related ISBNs and selected metadata.

2. What are "related ISBNs"?

They are ISBNs of other editions or version of the same "work". For example, given the ISBN of the U.S. hardcover edition of *The Da Vinci Code*, associated ISBNs returned by this Web service might include those for the U.S. paperback; library-bound or large-print editions; audio books; foreign editions; and possibly out-of-print editions.

3. Why would I want to retrieve related ISBNs?

Books are usually referenced by ISBN. However, a user looking for a book usually isn't trying to find a specific edition—they would like to see all versions of the source work. For example, an end user may have an ISBN representing a trade paper edition, but you would like your online application to reference all versions that are in print, or in a library's case, all versions in its collection.

4. Is this Web service available now?

Yes. You can try it by entering the following address in a Web browser:

[http://xisbn.worldcat.org/webservices/xid/isbn/\[ISBN\]?method=getEditions&format=xml](http://xisbn.worldcat.org/webservices/xid/isbn/[ISBN]?method=getEditions&format=xml)

where [ISBN] is a recognized ISBN. For example,

<http://xisbn.worldcat.org/webservices/xid/isbn/0441172717?method=getEditions&format=xml>

will return a list of ISBNs for editions of Frank Herbert's *Dune*.

5. Is xISBN free?

There is no charge for low-volume, non-commercial use of the xISBN service. Commercial use or high-volume use (more than 500 requests per day) of the xISBN Web service is possible by prior arrangement. Contact OCLC Openly at <mailto:xisbn-support@oclc.org>, or call (973) 509-7800 (U.S.), for more information.

6. In what ways is the xISBN service provided?

First, as an XML Web service, via the simple URL-based protocol that is currently deployed. We will be adding OpenURL 1.0 and unAPI based interfaces as well. Local installation may also be possible for large-scale applications.

7. How often is xISBN data updated?

The xISBN data set is regenerated from WorldCat on a monthly basis.

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8. Does xISBN utilize FRBR?

Yes. FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records) is a model for grouping bibliographic records, and is widely accepted in the library and cataloging communities. The algorithms used to generate associated ISBNs in this service are based on FRBR.

9. I've also heard talk about "xID." What is that?

xID or xIdentifier is a categorical term that has been applied to services such as xISBN which perform grouping of related identifiers, such as ISBN or ISSN.

10. Is there a mailing list I can subscribe to keep informed about xISBN and other xID services?

Yes. To join the mailing list via OCLC's LISTSERV® application, please visit <http://listserv.oclc.org/scripts/wa.exe?A0=XIDENTIFIER-L>.

11. How can I learn more about my organization using or licensing xISBN?

Please contact OCLC Openly at xisbn-support@oclc.org, or call or call (973) 509-7800 (U.S.), for more information.

12. Does the original OCLC Research Web service still work?

xISBN originated from an OCLC Research project conducted by Jenny Toves and Thom Hickey. This version of the Web service was available from:

[http://old-xisbn.oclc.org/webservices/xisbn/\[ISBN\]](http://old-xisbn.oclc.org/webservices/xisbn/[ISBN])

This address continues to function, but developers are urged to begin using the "xisbn.worldcat.org". The API document of old-xisbn is available from

<http://tron.openly.com:8080/xisbnadmin/doc/oldxisbn-api.html>

13. What happens if my application makes too many requests?

The xISBN service is designed to always return valid XML. If you make too many requests, the service will return a message with *overlimit* flag.

About OCLC Openly Informatics

Founded in 1998, and a division of OCLC Online Computer Library Center since 2006, OCLC Openly Informatics is a leading provider of linking software and services for the library and information industry. We are based in Bloomfield, New Jersey, USA.

For more information

Visit us online at www.openly.com, e-mail us at info@openly.com or call us at 1-973-509-7800.