



## Report on ISNI related activities 2010 – 2011

Submitted to the CENL Board by Anila Angjeli (BnF) and Andrew MacEwan (BL), representatives of the CENL at the ISNI-IA Board of Directors

The International Standard Name Identifier (ISNI – ISO 27729) is an ISO certified global standard designed to uniquely identify the millions of contributors to creative works, including writers, artists, creators, performers, researchers, producers, publishers and more across multiple fields of creative activity. ISNI is designed as a bridge between existing proprietary right holder identification systems, and public resource discovery tools.

The ISNI International Agency, responsible for ISNI's administration and governance, was officially incorporated by its six founding members – CISAC, IFRRO, IPDA, ProQuest, OCLC and the Conference of European National Librarians (Represented by Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the British Library) – as a London-based not-for-profit organisation on December 22nd, 2010. The consortium members represent more than 300 rights management societies and 26,000 libraries worldwide.

From 2006 to 2009 the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the British Library have joined their efforts to promote the role of libraries in the setup of the future ISNI standard, through their representatives within the ISO TC 46/SC9/WG 6 ISNI international group of experts ([www.isni.org](http://www.isni.org)).

In early 2010 the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the British Library recommended that CENL have the seat on the ISNI Board of directors to strengthen the role of national libraries in the development of ISNI and to ensure that the information needs of library users are central. BL and BnF would jointly represent the wider CENL community. BL and BnF would pay the membership subscription jointly. There would be no financial impact on CENL. CENL appreciated this initiative and accepted the offer.

In November 2010 Elisabeth Niggemann signed, as Chair of the CENL and on behalf of the CENL, the Articles of Association regarding the legal incorporation of the ISNI-IA, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the founding members for the setup of the ISNI initial database. The latter is being implemented by OCLC.

At its meeting on 13 December 2010 the CENL Executive Committee approved a resolution authorizing the BL and the BnF to continue to act on behalf of CENL on the Board of Directors of the ISNI International Agency. The CENL resolution states that:

“In undertaking the role of a Corporate Director on behalf of CENL, the BL and the BnF will be jointly responsible for the financial commitments of CENL as a founding member: specifically by paying the first 3 years annual subscriptions to the ISNI-IA, set at 12,500 Euros per year in the MoU. The BL and BnF will further jointly discharge all the membership obligations as outlined in the MoU, and will receive reimbursement of their subscriptions as they become due and available.”

On 22 January 2011 the ISNI-IA publicly announced its incorporation and mission through a press release where all the founding members were presented; the members also expressed themselves about the importance of the ISNI identifier in their respective business.

ISNI-IA held its first Board of Directors meeting, on March 11, in London. The election of the officers was carried out by nomination of the following:

President: François Xavier Nuttall (CISAC) – formerly convener of the TC 46/SC9/WG6  
Treasurer: Olav Stokkmo (IFRRO)  
Secretary: Andrew MacEwan (representing CENL)



Given that the Board of Directors is made up of only six members (1 representative per each founding member organization), Andrew MacEwan (BL) and Anila Angjeli (BnF) will sit on the Board on a rotation basis. Both CENL representatives agreed that Andrew MacEwan represents CENL during 2011. They will however consult each other on each and every decision.

The other nominees on the Board of Directors are:

Tim Babbitt (ProQuest)  
Janifer Gatenby (OCLC)  
Jose Luis Sevillano (IPDA)

Observers:

Anila Angjeli (CENL)  
David Grundy (ALCS)  
Beat Barblan (Bowker/ProQuest)

A Technical Advisory Sub-Committee, headed by Janifer Gatenby from OCLC, was also created to address all the issues related to the creation of the initial database and to the data quality assessment. The members are:

Anila Angjeli (BnF)  
Andrew Mac Ewan (BL)  
David Grundy (ALCS)

The ISNI-IA is carrying out a range of activities comprising:

- Company administrative issues
  - o An agreement is signed between ISNI-IA and OCLC regarding the set up and the hosting of the ISNI system
  - o A services agreement between ISNI-IA and ALCS (Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society) is underway. ALCS will perform the administrative functions associated with the running of ISNI-IA as a UK company including conducting of finances (invoices and payments).
- Relations with ISO
  - o The Registration Authority agreement with ISO is being negotiated
- Strategic prospective plan on the development of the ISNI system
  - o Prospective work for the creation of the international network of Registration Agencies that are likely to make the overall system work
  - o Pricing policy
  - o Communications with other related initiatives (NISO I2 –institution identifier, ORCID (Open Researcher Contributor ID), etc.)
- Communication actions
  - o Press release (here above cited)
  - o Publications in professional reviews
  - o Conference presentations, e.g. World Copyright Summit
- Set up of ISNI initial database and assignment of the first set of ISNIs – the Initial Database is due by October 2011
  - o Technical specifications of the system
  - o Initial download and processing of incoming data from different sources
  - o Verification and quality control work

Some considerations regarding the role of the libraries in the ISNI system and that of the BnF and the BL in particular:

The base cross domain file for ISNI is VIAF, the Virtual International Authority File, created over the last 6 years by combining the authority files of 19 major sources, mostly national libraries. Data files from the founding members of the ISNI-IA are progressively



being matched against VIAF. The matching techniques of VIAF have been adapted and employed in the ISNI system.

The BnF and the BL, given their specific expertise in authority control and their ability to deal with all areas of culture and knowledge, have already started to provide quality review for ISNIs assigned and ISNI assignment failures. They are given full edit access to the production database of ISNI. They are collaborating with the technical OCLC ISNI team in the Netherlands in refining the matching algorithms and developing the workflows required to provide robust quality assurance for the whole initial ISNI database.

Strategic importance of ISNI in connecting European cultural heritage information resources:

The BnF and the BL consider their quality review work they accomplish for ISNI as part of their strategic work in accurately identifying and linking cultural heritage information related resources. This work benefits the authority control performed on a daily basis in each of the libraries. It helps to create synergy in meaningfully and efficiently connecting initiatives and articulating efforts at a European and even at international level: Authority files of each library with VIAF, VIAF with ISNI, ISNI as a bridge identifier enabling the rights management administration (in projects like ARROW), ISNI facilitating the connection of resources in The European Library and Europeana, etc.

Strategic importance of ISNI in delivering improved resource discovery at ever increasing levels of granularity:

In addition to strengthening links across the cultural domain ISNI will also provide an opportunity for libraries to better manage identities in the domain of international scholarly research published in journals and institutional repositories by joining up data on researchers across all disciplines, including sciences and technology. The initial database will join up data from the UK's JISC Names project and ProQuest's Scholar Universe and international Theses databases, which facilitate discovery of researchers' published output in the domain of scholarly print and electronic journals.