**A Simple Guide to ISBN Numbers**

**What are ISBN numbers?**

ISBN stands for “international standard book number,” this is a unique number that is used to identify books internationally. Each book as a different code.

**Why do I or don’t I need an ISBN number?**

ISBN numbers are mainly used to identify books in various distribution outlets such as Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com and other book retailers. If you plan on using your book as a workbook to distribute to clients, a manual for your staff or recipes to share at your family reunion, then you most likely do not need an ISBN number. However, if you plan on selling your book to reach the most amount of people, an ISBN number is a must.

**Self-Publishing ISBN numbers – which one should I choose?**

There are many options when choosing an ISBN number. It’s important to make the right decision for you!

**Free ISBN**

Many self-publishing companies, including IngramSpark (the self-publishing company we recommend), offer free ISBN to their authors.

The only limitations to a free ISBN like this are that you cannot control the backend metadata. This is the content that can help your book be more searchable online.

However, free ISBN numbers are great if you are on a tight budget and want to eliminate an extra cost.

**Tiny Book Course ISBN**

As a part of the Tiny Book Course, we offer a discounted ISBN numbers for you! (Available in the U.S. only) Unlike a free ISBN, we can set-up the backend metadata for you to give you the best results. Under “publisher” on Amazon or Barnes & Noble, it will say, “Tiny Book Course.”

1 ISBN is $75 (Normally $125 if purchased individually)

To obtain a Tiny Book Course ISBN number, email support@tinybookcourse.com.

**Purchasing Your Own ISBN Number**

If you are looking at your book as an extension of your business and possibly plan on writing more than one book, then purchasing your own ISBN will only help you in the long run.

Here are the few benefits of purchasing your own ISBN number:

1. Since the ISBN number is the main identifier, this means that anyone can locate the book based on the publisher. If you use a free ISBN number, it can get lost in the shuffle.
2. Owning your ISBN number also gives you access to the backend of the book. You will be in control of all the metadata, which is a component that helps get the book discovered online.
3. You can put your business name as the publisher. Many authors choose to just put their business name as the publisher on the ISBN “publisher” section.

**Where can I purchase my own ISBN number?**

If you are in the **United States**, you can purchase your ISBN at Bowker: [www.MyIdentifiers.com](http://www.MyIdentifiers.com)

If you are in **Canada**, you can get a free ISBN from your government. Find that information here: <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/isbn-canada/Pages/isbn-canada.aspx>

If are in the **U.K**. you can purchase your ISBN at Neilsen: <https://www.nielsenisbnstore.com/Home/Isbn>

If you are in **Australia**, you can purchase your ISBN at THORPE-Bowker: <https://www.myidentifiers.com.au>

**For all other countries**, check the directory here to see what is available in your area: <https://www.isbn-international.org>

**Additional FAQ’s:**

**Does my book need to be published first? Or can I buy my ISBN now?**

You can purchase an ISBN number at anytime, even before the book is written.

**Do I need a barcode, too?**

Yes, you will need a barcode for any print book. You can purchase that when you purchase your ISBN. Or, you can obtain a free barcode, by using the IngramSpark cover template here: https://myaccount.ingramspark.com/Portal/Tools/CoverTemplateGenerator

**Can I reuse my ISBN number?**

No, since each ISBN number is unique per publication or medium, you can only use one per title.

**Do I need one for every country I want to sell my book in?**

No, ISBNs are sold by the country, but you can sell your book anywhere in the world using the same ISBN number.

**If I revise my book, do I need to get a new ISBN?**

If you make simple typographical errors or minimal changes, then no, you do not need a new ISBN number. If you re-brand it as a new book or if it has completely new elements, then yes, you would need a new ISBN number.

**What about various types of print? Like if I want to publish a hardback, softback and e-book?**

Each medium requires a separate ISBN number. For example, if you choose to print a softback book and a hardcover book, each will require separate ISBN numbers.