

# Policy on Product Identification and Bar Coding

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For Books and Other Products  
Offered to Barnes & Noble

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Revised  
March 2, 2009

**BARNES & NOBLE**  
BOOKSELLERS

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## Introduction

This document contains the guidelines for product identification and bar coding for books and other products offered to Barnes & Noble. It applies to products shipped to:

- All Barnes & Noble distribution centers
- Barnes & Noble stores.

Shipments to Barnes & Noble College Stores are not covered by these guidelines.

## Compliance

Compliance with the specifications and instructions in this document is essential to enable Barnes & Noble to offer the books and other products of our vendors to our customers in an efficient and timely manner. It is also a significant factor in our being able to reorder promptly to replace sales.

Action that may be taken by Barnes & Noble in the event of products not marked in compliance with these guidelines is described in the *Efficient Receipts Program* (also posted on our website).

### **Single Identifier and Bar Code**

Compliance is expected with the requirement on Page 3 that there be a single identifier and a single bar code on all publications and products.

Backlist books originally printed with more than one bar code must display a single identifier and a single bar code. Non-compliant bar codes on previously existing backlist stock may be overstickered at the publisher's option.

### **Vendors Active Before January 1, 2009**

Vendors active with Barnes & Noble before January 1, 2009, are expected to be in full compliance, or actively working toward compliance, with all provisions of the Barnes & Noble vendor guidelines.

### **Vendors New After January 1, 2009**

Vendors new to Barnes & Noble after January 1, 2009, are expected to be in full compliance, or actively working toward compliance, within 60 days of selection as a vendor.

### **Questions?**

Your Barnes & Noble DC Vendor Contact can provide answers for questions regarding the procedures and related operational practices described in the guidelines.

## Changes Since Original Issue

The Barnes & Noble *Policy on Product Identification and Bar Coding* was first issued in this format on May 31, 2005. In revisions of the guidelines since then, the following changes have been made:

### Changes in This Revision

- The specification for minimum acceptable bar code size has been changed to address problems with bar scanning in our stores and distribution centers. Bar codes reduced to a size less than 80% of the GS1 standard are non-compliant.

Please see revised statements on Page 4 for books and book-like products, and on Page 7 for non-book products.

### Changes in Previous Revisions

- Incremental Order Quantity (IOQ) packaging discussion was removed from this guideline and included in *Business Procedures For Supporting the Barnes & Noble Specialty Departments*.
- The section on Assortments, Displays, and Pre-Packs was removed from this document and the material covered was expanded and included in other guidelines. Please see *Carton Specifications And Labeling Guidelines*, *Business Procedures For Supplying Books to Barnes & Noble*, and *Business Procedures For Supporting the Barnes & Noble Specialty Departments*.
- The policy on product identifiers for non-book products has been reworded. Source marked non-ISBN identifiers are preferred on products new to Barnes & Noble. When Barnes & Noble has assigned an ISBN to a non-book product, vendors must continue to use that ISBN to ensure sales data and reordering continuity (Page 6).
- Each carton of an assortment requiring more than one carton must be treated as a unit and assigned an identifier. (Page 6)
- Beginning with 2007 publications, the human-readable ISBN must be shown in ISBN-13 format. The legacy ISBN-10 equivalent may be shown also at the option of the publisher. (Page 2)
- Identifiers that are numbers with a prefix of '979' but are not valid ISBNs issued by an ISBN agency are non compliant. (Page 2)
- Only one identifier and bar code may be assigned to a book (Page 2 and Page 3) or a non-book product (Page 4).
- A minimum acceptable bar code size for compliance is specified (Page 3 and Page 5).
- The Bookland EAN on Cover 2 (inside front cover) of strippable paperback books must be located as described on Page 3.
- Identifier terminology used in this policy reflects movement toward global standardization: GTIN-12 is used instead of U.P.C. and GTIN-13 is used instead of EAN-13. Legacy terminology is shown in parenthesis.  
Bar code terminology differs in some cases from associated identifier terminology; for example, the GTIN-12 is encoded in U.P.C. symbology.

**Other changes primarily editorial in nature have been made to clarify descriptions and to bring ISBN references into compliance with the recent redefinition of the ISBN as a 13-digit identifier. As a result, it may appear that an element has been changed, depending on a previous interpretation by the reader.**

**Vendors are strongly encouraged to review this document in its entirety to ensure that our policies relating to product identification and bar coding are clearly understood and to verify their understanding with their DC Vendor Contact.**

## BISG Product Identification Policy

The Board of Directors, Book Industry Study Group (BISG), approved BISG Policy 001, *Product Identification*, on September 18, 2003, and reaffirmed it on September 23, 2004.

The BISG Board of Directors also approved BISG Policy POL-0701, *Elimination of Dual Identifiers on Books and Related Information Products*, on March 18, 2007.

This policy calls for a single identifier and a single bar code on a book or other product. The policy also provides guidance in the form of a recommendation as to which identifier should be assigned to a given product or class of products.

**Barnes & Noble supports both these policies in their entirety. The BISG policies are available at:**

<http://www.bisg.org/what-we-do-cat-4-policy-statements.php>

This Barnes & Noble policy has been developed in compliance with the two BISG policies.

## Identification For Books and Related Information Products

- All books and related information products offered to Barnes & Noble must be identified with an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) issued to the publisher by an ISBN agency affiliated with the International ISBN Agency.
- Identifying a book with a GTIN-12 (U.P.C.) is non-compliant with this policy.
- In keeping with BISG Policy POL-0107, books and related information products include:
  - Printed books and pamphlets, including guide books and instructional manuals intended for a wide audience
  - Books such as almanacs and devotional guides that include date references but are not intended as time determination instruments (not primarily as calendars)
  - Books in Braille
  - Publications or copies of physical publications in digitized form on various physical media such as tape, cassettes, CD-ROMs, DVDs, etc.
  - Educational or instructional matter; including text, pictures, graphic images, video, and software; on various physical media such as tape, cassettes, CD-ROMs, DVDs, etc.
  - Audio books (talking books) on various physical media such as tape, cassettes, CD-ROMs, DVDs, etc.
  - Mixed media publications where the principal constituent is text
  - Maps, in various forms and media, except maps intended primarily for decoration or amusement
- In accordance with international agreement, the formerly 10-digit ISBN was redefined as a 13-digit identifier effective January 1, 2007. Information on the revised definition and conversion of legacy ISBNs (ISBN-10s) to the new format is available on the BISG website:  
<http://www.bisg.org/isbn-13/index.html>
- Beginning with 2007 publications, the human-readable ISBN above the bar code on Cover 4 must be in 13-digit ISBN format. Where there is a legacy ISBN-10 equivalent, it may be shown also at the option of the publisher.
- All ISBNs converted from legacy ISBN-10 format will begin with the prefix '978'. Some new ISBNs issued by ISBN agencies will also begin with the prefix '978'. In the future, ISBN agencies will also issue ISBNs with the prefix '979'.
- A book (other than bound sheet music) identified with a number prefixed with '979' that is not an ISBN issued by an ISBN agency will be considered in non-compliance.

## Bar Coding Books and Related Information Product

### Bookland EAN

- All books and related information products offered to Barnes & Noble must be marked with a single Bookland EAN bar code in “picket fence” orientation along the lower edge of Cover 4 (back cover).
- Detailed information on the Bookland EAN bar code and its placement on books is available on the BISG website:

<http://www.bisg.org/what-we-do-cat-12-barcodes-labels.php>

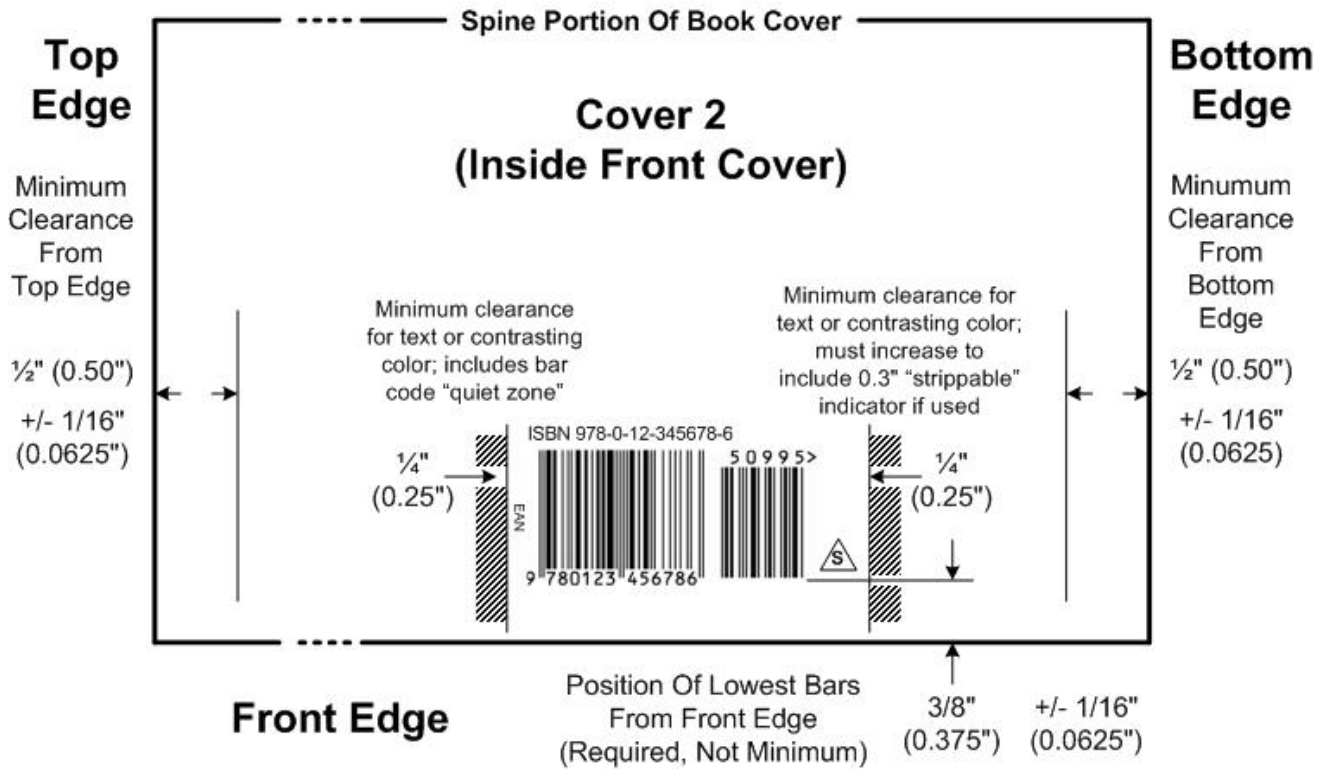
- The full size representation of the Bookland EAN as recommended by BISG is shown below.



- **Required elements** for the Bookland EAN display to be in compliance with BISG recommendations and Barnes & Noble guidelines are:
  - ISBN in the main body, with human-readable text above and below as shown
  - Suggested price encoded in the add-on, with encoded human-readable text above
  - The greater-than sign (“>”) to the right to protect the quiet zone
- **An optional element** is the human-readable display of suggested retail price above the bar code. Display of suggested retail price as shown is desirable, since it provides retail booksellers and customers a standard location to determine price. International currency abbreviations are preferred as described on the BISG website referenced above.
- Barnes & Noble supports the BISG guidelines for displaying bar codes on books:
  - Bar codes at 100% of the GS1 standard for bar coding are preferred
  - Reductions to a size no less than 80% of that standard are permitted.
  - Truncation of bar codes is not permitted (they are not to be shortened beyond the height corresponding to the reduction)
- The following will be considered non-compliant on books and related information products:
  - A bar code of any size that will not scan correctly as confirmed by a formal testing procedure
  - A bar code reduced to a size less than 80% of the GS1 standard that, in the sole determination of Barnes & Noble, does not scan reliably in our stores or distribution centers
  - A truncated bar code that, in the sole determination of Barnes & Noble, does not scan reliably in our stores or distribution centers
  - Any bar code in addition to the Bookland EAN
  - An EAN-13 bar code that is not a Bookland EAN
  - An item-specific U.P.C.
  - A Price Point U.P.C. on Cover 4 of a mass market paperback or other book or product
  - An identifier in the Bookland EAN prefixed with ‘979’ that was not issued by an ISBN agency (except for bound sheet music)

## Cover 2, Strippable Paperbacks

- A Bookland EAN bar code must appear on Cover 2 (inside front cover) of all strippable paperback books. The bar code must be in a “picket fence” orientation to the front edge of the cover (or “ladder” orientation with reference to the bottom edge) as shown in the graphic below.
- Placement may be anywhere along the front edge within the tolerances shown.
- The bar code is to be no smaller than 80% reduction from the GS1 standard.
- The bar code must not be rendered unreadable by embossing or cutouts.



- The “strippable” indicator (the letter ‘S’ in a triangle) is a required element of the information on Cover 2 of strippable paperbacks.

## Suggested Retail Price on Books

- All books offered for speculative stocking in Barnes & Noble stores must be marked with a human-readable suggested retail price (with dollar sign and decimal point). The suggested retail price must also be encoded in the add-on portion of the Bookland EAN bar code in accordance with the rules below.
- Neither a human-readable price nor a price in the bar code are required on a book purchased to fill a specific retail customer order or to be stocked only in a Barnes & Noble warehouse in anticipation of a customer order.

## Rules for Encoding Price in the Add-On Bar Code

<b>Encoding Prices in the Bookland EAN Add-On</b>		
<b>Data Stored in Add-On</b>	<b>Pricing Interpretation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
50001 – 59998	US\$0.01 – US\$99.98	Previously existing rules
59999	Price is not encoded and is understood to exceed US\$99.98. (Note: A price of US\$99.99 cannot be encoded.)	This value indicates a price greater than US\$99.98 and not encoded in the add-on, whether the price is within the expanded range or not.
10000 – 19999	US\$100.00 – US\$199.99	Recently increased range
20000 – 29999	US\$200.00 – US\$299.99	Recently increased range
30000 – 39999	US\$300.00 – US\$399.99	Recently increased range
40000 – 49999	US\$400.00 – US\$499.99	Recently increased range
<b>Other Values in the Bookland EAN Add-On</b>		
<b>Data Stored in Add-On</b>	<b>Pricing Interpretation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
00000	None Designated	Do Not Use
50000	None Designated	Do Not Use
60000 – 89999	No current meaning for price information.	Values in this range are to be ignored for pricing.
90000	Price is not encoded for this title.	90000 is understood to mean a net priced title or a title for which a list price is not suggested
90001 – 99989	No current meaning for price information.	Range reserved for industry wide uses.
99990 – 99999	Interpretation specified by NACS	Range reserved for designation by NACS for College Store uses.

## Identification and Bar Code For Non-Book Products

- Barnes & Noble supports the BISG Policy POL-0107, Elimination of Dual Identifiers on Books and Related Products. This policy recommends that non-book products be identified by GTIN-13 (EAN-13) or GTIN-12 (U.P.C.) identifiers that are not ISBNs and that the products display bar codes that are EAN-13 or U.P.C. (not Bookland EAN).
- In other words, ISBNs are for books, and U.P.C.s are for non-books.
- **However, for any product to which Barnes & Noble has assigned an ISBN, vendors must continue to use the ISBN to ensure sales data and reordering continuity.**
- **For products new to Barnes & Noble, Barnes & Noble accepts and prefers manufacturer (source) marking of the product with EAN (other than Bookland EAN) or U.P.C. and the corresponding bar code.**
- Although Barnes & Noble supports and prefers compliance with the BISG policy, non-book products source marked with ISBNs and displaying a Bookland EAN bar code will be accepted.
- **In any case, only a single product identifier and its associated bar code will be accepted on any product. Products displaying two or more bar codes are not compliant with these guidelines. Action that may be taken by Barnes & Noble in non-compliant situations is described in the *Efficient Receipts Program*, available on our website.**
- BISG Policy POL-0107 lists the following as products for which an ISBN is not recommended:
  - Merchandise clearly not information product
  - Ephemeral printed material such as advertising or promotional matter
  - Wall, desk, and appointment calendars that are intended primarily as time determination or time management instruments
  - Reading-related products such as reading lamps, bookends, and bookmarks
  - Greeting cards
  - Games in various physical forms and electronic media
  - Art prints and art folders without title pages and text
  - Entertainment matter, such as sound or image recordings on various media such as film, tape, cassettes, DVDs, etc.
  - Software intended for any purpose other than educational
- U.P.C. product identifiers may be obtained through GS1 US, the organization for the adoption and implementation of US supply chain standards. Contact information is shown on Page 8.
- Sources of bar code masters and bar coding information are also shown on Page 8.
- Barnes & Noble prefers bar codes at 100% of the GS1 standard.
  - Reductions to a size no less than 80% of that standard are permitted
  - Truncation of bar codes is not permitted (they are not to be shortened beyond the height corresponding to the reduction)
- The following will be considered non-compliant:
  - A bar code of any size that will not scan correctly as confirmed by a formal testing procedure
  - A bar code reduced to a size less than 80% of the GS1 standard that, in the sole determination of Barnes & Noble, does not scan reliably in our stores or distribution centers
  - A truncated bar code that, in the sole determination of Barnes & Noble, does not scan reliably in our stores or distribution centers
  - More than one bar code on a product
  - A Price Point U.P.C.

## Bar Code and Bar Coding Assistance Providers

Suppliers to Barnes & Noble have asked for assistance locating sources product bar codes. In response, Barnes & Noble is making available the following names and contact information for bar code vendors. The vendors shown provide both international and domestic services.

Barnes & Noble does not endorse or recommend these or other vendors of such products and services. However, these vendors are familiar with our guidelines and those of national and international standards organizations.

It remains the responsibility of product suppliers to obtain bar codes that meet the requirements of these guidelines.

### **Product Identification & Processing Systems**

436 East 87th Street  
New York, NY 10128

Phone: 888-783-7439

E-Mail: [bnlabels@pips.com](mailto:bnlabels@pips.com)

Website: <http://www.pips.com/>

### **Swing Labels, LLC**

2 Shaker Road, F110  
Shirley, MA 01464

Phone: 978-425-0855

E-Mail: [Swing@SwingLabels.com](mailto:Swing@SwingLabels.com)

Website: <http://www.swinglabels.com/>

### **Bar Code Graphics, Inc.**

875 N. Michigan Avenue, #2650  
Chicago, IL 60611

Phone 800-662-0701

E-Mail: [support@barcode-us.com](mailto:support@barcode-us.com)

Website: <http://www.barcode-us.com/>

## Sources of Additional Information

### **Book Industry Study Group**

370 Lexington Avenue, Suite 900  
New York, NY 10017

Phone: 646-336-7141

E-Mail: [Info@bisg.org](mailto:Info@bisg.org)

Website: <http://www.bisg.org/>

### **GS1 US (Formerly Uniform Code Council, Inc.)**

7887 Washington Village Drive, Suite 300  
Dayton, OH 45459

Phone: 937-435-3870

E-Mail: [Info@gs1us.org](mailto:Info@gs1us.org)

Website: <http://www.gs1us.org/>