

13 Digit ISBNs and Alexandria

Technical Note Summary

This document explains which versions of Alexandria support 13 digit ISBNs and the scope of that support.

ISBN is an acronym for International Standard Book Number and is assigned to each new book by the book's publisher. In 2004, the Library of Congress announced plans to migrate from 10 digit ISBNs to 13 digit ISBNs. The announcement can be found on the Library of Congress's web site at <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/13digit.html>. (For the purposes of this document, we will refer to the 10 digit ISBN format as 'ISBN 10' and the 13 digit ISBN format as 'ISBN 13'.)

Alexandria versions released prior to 2005 will not have support for ISBN 13. The oldest version of Alexandria that does have some support for ISBN 13 is 5.4.4.5. Alexandria version 5.5.0.0 and later have full support for ISBN 13 and are recommended for all customers.

Alexandria 5.5.0.0 and later

All versions of Alexandria beginning with 5.5 have full ISBN 13 support. This includes the ability to import records with 13 digit ISBNs, an ISBN editor to add multiple ISBNs, an ISBN Conversion utility, a Check Digit utility, and the ability to search multiple 10 and 13 digit ISBNs.

Importing 13 digit ISBNs requires no special settings or manipulation by you or your vendors. Alexandria treats the 020 MARC tag as a repeatable tag and will import and update records with multiple ISBNs.

The ISBN Editor is found on the main Item Management window. You will notice that 'ISBN/ISSN' is in blue and can be clicked to bring up the editor to easily add more ISBNs. Click in an empty box and type or scan in a new ISBN.

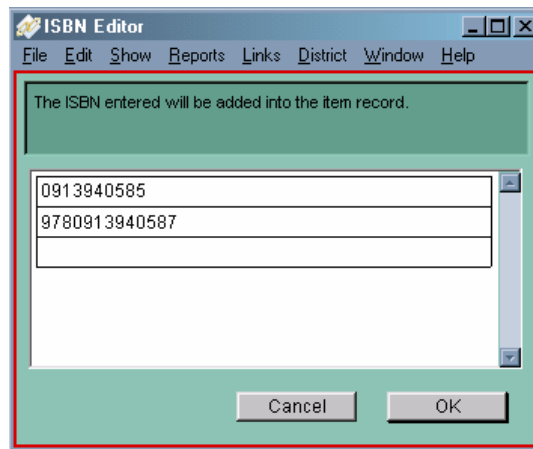


Figure 1

To access the ISBN Check Digit and Conversion utility, open up the Item Management window. Click on Items along the top, then choose ‘Show ISBN calculator’ at the bottom of the menu. This will open a new, smaller window in which you can switch between the Check Digit Calculator and the ISBN Converter by clicking the little down arrow next to ‘Check Digit Calculator’ or ‘ISBN Converter.’

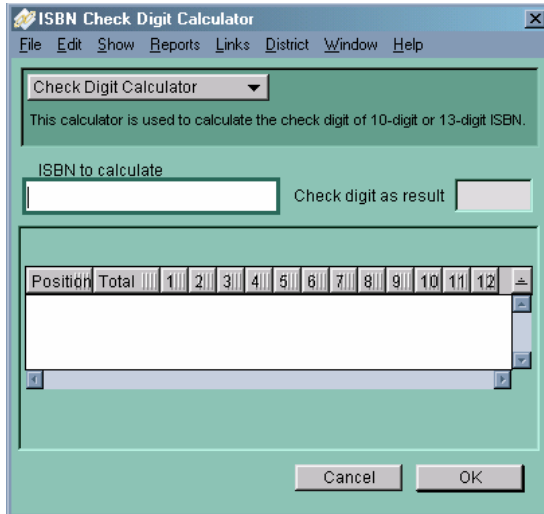


Figure 2

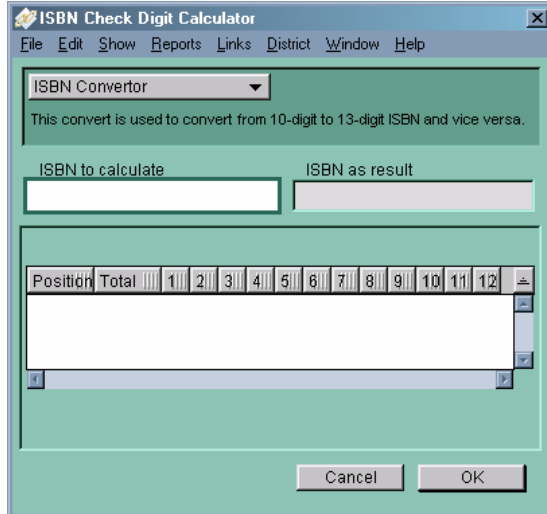


Figure 3

The Check Digit Calculator can be used to verify the validity of any 10 or 13 digit ISBN. In the ‘ISBN to Calculate’ field, type or scan in a 10 or 13 digit ISBN excluding any dashes or spaces, and click OK. If the ‘Check digit as result’ box matches the last character of the ISBN you entered, then the number is valid. If the result is different than the ISBN entered, then it does not conform to the algorithm used to create ISBNs and is invalid.

The ISBN Conversion Utility can be used to convert 10 digit ISBNs to 13 digits and vice-versa. If you type or scan in a 10 digit ISBN and click OK, Alexandria will calculate the 13 digit ISBN. If you type or scan in a 13 digit ISBN and click OK, Alexandria will calculate the 10 digit number; however, not all 13 digit ISBNs can be converted to 10 digits. You can copy and paste the result into the ISBN editor to update the record.

Lastly, the 5.5.0.0 and later versions of Alexandria provide a new utility that can globally update all or some of your records to include a 13 digit ISBN. The utility can also update those records that only have 13 digit ISBNs with their 10 digit counterpart. You can find this utility under File, and then Utilities. Leave the ‘Utility Type,’ set to ‘Items.’ For ‘Operation,’ choose ‘Convert ISBN.’ Under the second ‘Operation’ drop-down, choose either ‘From 10 to 13’ to update records with their 13 digit ISBN, or ‘From 13 to 10’ to update records with their 10 digit ISBN. Please note that for the utility to add a 13 digit ISBN to a record, that record already has to have a 10 digit ISBN. Also, to add a 10 digit ISBN to a record, the record needs to already have a 13 digit ISBN and can be converted to 10 digits. Not all 13 digit ISBNs can be converted to 10 digits. For ‘Select by’ you can choose All Items to update all your items, or choose one of the selections below to update only a section of your collection.

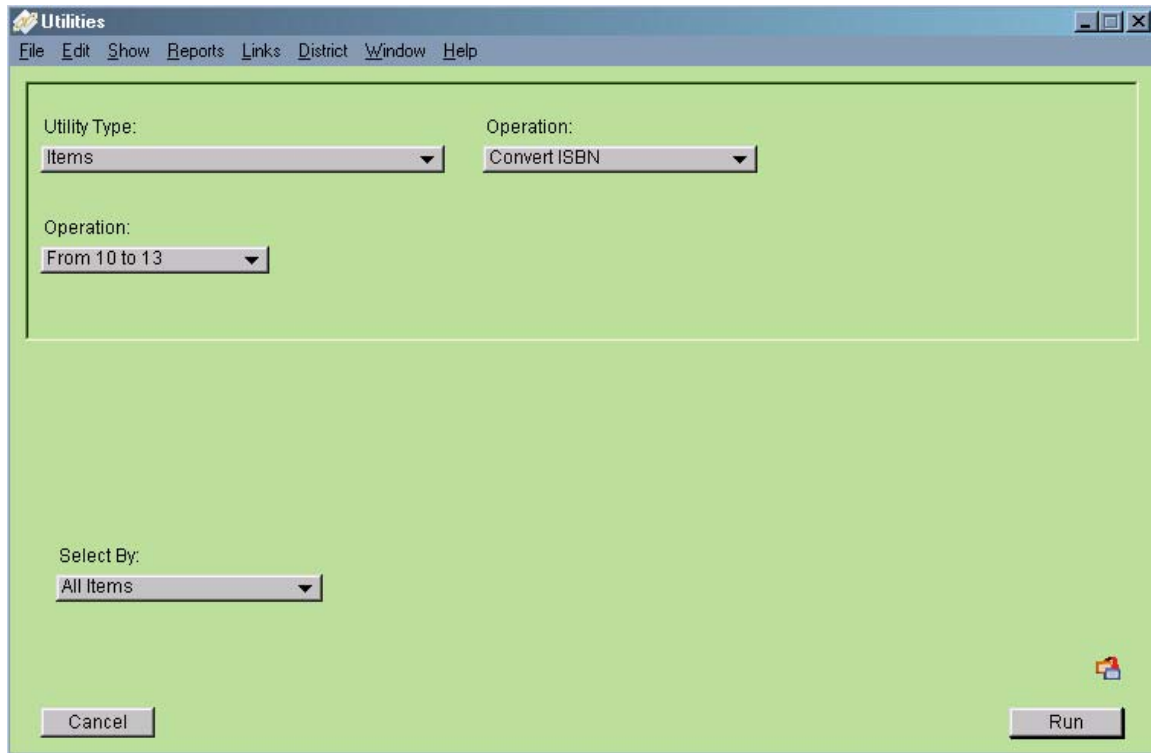


Figure 4

Alexandria 5.4.4.5

In Alexandria 5.4.4.5, a 13 digit ISBN can only be added by using the MARC View or by importing new records that contain the 10 digit ISBN in the first 020 tag and the 13 digit ISBN in a second 020 tag. If the ISBN 13 number is in the first 020 tag, then Alexandria will truncate it on import. In addition, although you can type in a 13 digit number in the ISBN field on the normal view, it, too, will get truncated down to 10 digits after saving the record.

To manually add a 13 digit ISBN to an existing record, bring up the title under Show – Items. Click on Items along the top and then choose ‘Switch to MARC view.’ Click on the plus icon along the top, then choose “020 – International Standard Book Number” from the drop-down menu. Type or scan in the 13 digit ISBN and click Save.

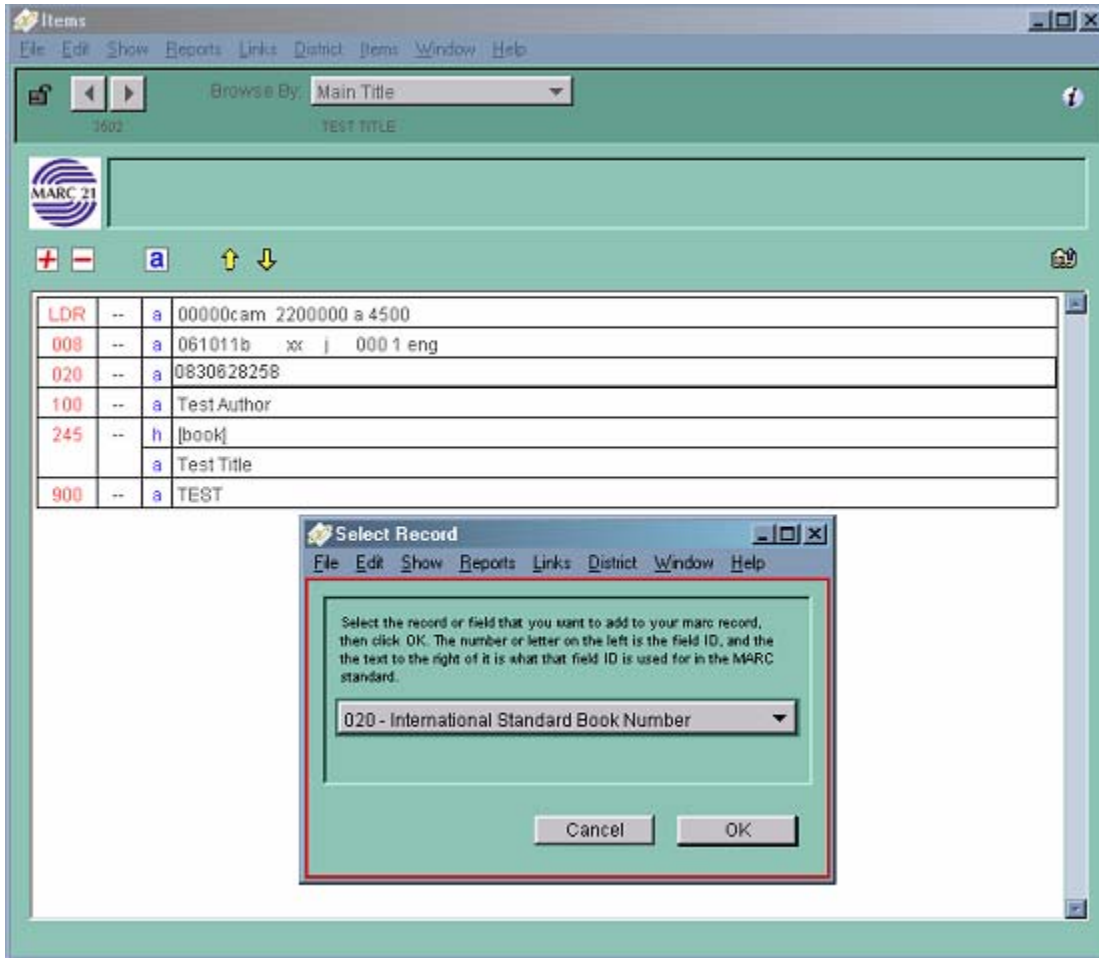


Figure 5

Alexandria 5.4.4.5 only indexes the first ISBN, therefore, you will not be able to search for the 13 digit ISBN. If an item with both ISBNs is looked up in the Researcher, however, the Details window for the book will show all ISBNs.

At the time of this writing, we highly recommend updating to Alexandria version 5.5.2.1 or later to ensure seamless migration to the new ISBN 13 format. For additional information on Alexandria and ISBN 13, please contact our Technical Support staff at support@companioncorp.com or call 1-800-347-4942.