

# **Standard Technical Report Number Format and Creation**

**Abstract:** In order to improve access to technical reports and assist in bringing order and uniformity to that form of technical literature, this standard specifies the format for a Standard Technical Report Number (STRN). It describes how and where the number should be assigned and used, and calls for a central authority to coordinate and monitor such assignments. The STRN consists of two groups of characters: the first indicates the issuing organization and includes the optional subdivisions or series, and the second provides a sequential number. Provision has been made for the year of publication as a recommended part of the sequential number.

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**An American National Standard  
Developed by the  
National Information Standards Organization**

**Approved October 8, 1996 by the  
American National Standards Institute**

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# Foreword

(This foreword is not part of the American National Standard for Standard Technical Report Number Format and Creation, ANSI/NISO Z39.23-1997. It is included for information only.)

This standard, ANSI/NISO Z39.23-1997, is intended for use with both publicly distributed and in-house technical reports. Its numbering format is flexible so that it can meet the diversified needs of different groups in either computer or manual operations. The standard should be used in conjunction with ANSI/NISO Z39.18-1995, Scientific and Technical Reports—Elements, Organization, and Design.

ANSI/NISO Z39.23-1997 was originally developed in 1974. It was first revised in 1983 by Subcommittee 32 on Technical Report Numbering of American National Standards Committee Z39, which in 1983 became the National Information Standards Organization. The standard was further revised in 1990 to provide more latitude in constructing the report number by allowing for more characters, greater variability of

separators, and coordination of volume and set numbers. This most recent revision expands the sequential group to 16 characters to accommodate a four-digit year identifier.

Suggestions for improving this standard are welcome. They should be sent to the National Information Standards Organization, 4733 Bethesda Avenue, Suite 300, Bethesda, MD 20814, 301-654-2512.

This standard was processed and approved for submittal to ANSI by the National Information Standards Organization. It was balloted by the NISO Voting Members March 23, 1996 - June 28, 1996. It will next be reviewed in 2002. NISO approval of this standard does not necessarily imply that all Voting Members voted for its approval. At the time it approved this standard, NISO had the following Voting Members:

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# Standard Technical Report Number Format and Creation

## 1. Purpose, Scope, and Use

The purpose of this standard is to provide a uniform format for the creation of unique but compatible technical report numbers. The use of this standard will enable issuing organizations to assign their report numbers so that the numbers will be compatible in format with those assigned by others. Indexing services will be able to provide lists of technical reports by number without confusion. Similarly, libraries, information centers, and other technical report users will be able to identify, locate, and easily organize report literature according to a consistent and accepted pattern. The standard will also enable users to cite reports efficiently and accurately.

The Standard Technical Report Number (STRN) shall be used with all technical reports, including those produced in nonprint media. The report number shall appear in an upper corner on both the cover and title page and on the spine of a bound report if space permits so that a user will not have to remove the report from a shelf to read the number. A report number is composed of an alphanumeric report code (2-16 characters), a 2-character group separator, and a sequential group of 1-16 characters indicating the year, sequence of report issuance, and identifying characters for supplements, revisions, drafts, etc., as appropriate. The report number shall appear on all copies of each report.

## 2. Referenced Standards

This standard is intended for use in conjunction with the following American National Standards. When this standard is superseded by a revision approved by the American National Standards Institute, consult the revision.

ANSI/NISO Z39.18-1995, *Scientific and Technical Reports — Elements, Organization, and Design*.

ISO 10444:1994, *Information and Documentation — International Standard Technical Report Number (ISRN)*.

ISO 3166:1993, *Information and Documentation — Codes for the Representation of Names of Countries*.

## 3. Definitions

**Country Code.** A code added to a **Standard Technical Report Number** to indicate country of publication. The code is optional and is not part of the Standard Technical Report Number (see 4.6).

**Group Separator.** A double hyphen (--) used to separate the **report code** from the **sequential group** in the Standard Technical Report Number.

**ISRN.** The identifying label used as a prefix to the Standard Technical Report Number. It is not part of the Standard Technical Report Number. The label stands for International Standard Report Number.

**Local Suffix.** An optional field that permits the issuing organization or corporate entity to add information. It is not a part of the Standard Technical Report Number.

**Report Code.** The first portion of the Standard Technical Report Number. It designates the issuing organization or corporate entity and, in some cases, a series or a special series issued cooperatively by two or more organizations.

**Scientific and Technical Report** (hereafter referred to as "report"). A document that conveys the results of basic or applied research and support decisions based on those results. A report includes the ancillary information necessary for interpreting, applying, and replicating the results or techniques of an investigation. The primary purposes of such a report are to disseminate the results of scientific and technical research and to recommend action.

A report has a unique, issuer-supplied report number and may have a contract or grant number and an accession or acquisition number. A report also exhibits some or all of the following characteristics:

1. Its readership may be limited, its distribution may be limited or restricted, and its contents may include classified, proprietary, or copyrighted information.
2. It may be written for an individual or organization as a contractual requirement to recount a total research story, including full discussions of unsuccessful approaches.
3. It is not usually published or made available through the commercial publishing trade; it is often available through a nonprofit governmental entity (for example, the National Technical Information Service or the Government Printing Office).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Z39.18-1995, *Scientific and Technical Reports—Elements, Organization, and Design*

**Sequential Group.** The second portion of the Standard Technical Report Number. It follows the **group separator** and constitutes the portion of the Standard Technical Report Number that is assigned in sequence by each report-issuing entity.

**Standard Technical Report Number.** The complete, formatted, alphanumeric designation that is usually the primary means of identifying a specific technical report.

**Subdivider.** A diagonal (/) or a single hyphen (-). Either or both may be used in the **report code** and **sequential group** to specify subdivisions of the parental organization or corporate entity, or to separate a series designation from the parental organization's symbol.

#### 4. Creating the Standard Technical Report Number

A Standard Technical Report Number consists of two essential parts: a report code and a sequential group. The Standard Technical Report Number should be preceded by the identifying label ISRN. The ISRN label is not part of the 34-character report number.

The report code and sequential group, separated by the group separator (a double hyphen), constitute the Standard Technical Report Number and both parts shall be present in every number.

The maximum number of characters for a Standard Technical Report Number is 34, including any subdividers and the group separator. Of these 34 characters, no more than 16, including subdividers, shall constitute the report code and no more than 16 characters, including subdividers shall constitute the sequential group. Two characters are required for the group separator.

##### 4.1 Report Code

The first character of the report code shall be an uppercase letter; the remaining characters may be uppercase alphabetic characters or numeric characters. The report code shall have a minimum of two characters and a maximum of 16. Other than the alphabetic and number characters permitted above, the only other characters that may be used within this code are subdividers (see 4.4.). For a description of the maintenance agency that coordinates the assignment of report codes refer to section 7.

##### 4.2 Sequential Group

The sequential group may be composed of three

parts: the first part preferably contains the four digits of the year of publication. The second part, preceded by a subdivider, is a sequential number; the numbers should all be arabic numerals. The third part may consist of uppercase alphabetic characters and arabic numbers pertaining to volumes, supplements, revisions, drafts, etc., and shall be separated from the second part by a subdivider. The total number of characters for the sequential group, including all parts and all subdividers shall not exceed 16 (see 4.4). If a year of publication is not given, then the first two parts may be nothing more than a single section consisting of a sequential number. Also, the third part may or may not be present. The provision for a third part is to permit supplements, revisions, and the like to have the same core number as the original report.

##### 4.3 Group Separator

The group separator is a two-character double hyphen (--) and shall be used to separate the report code from the sequential group. The double hyphen may not be used elsewhere in the Standard Technical Report Number.

##### 4.4 Subdivider

Subdividers, consisting of diagonals (/) and/or single hyphens (-) may be employed in both the report code and sequential group in any position after the first two characters. The absence of a subdivider from a report code indicates that no expression of a subdivision or series is intended.

##### 4.5 Local Suffix

An optional local suffix may be of any length, and it may include any alphabetic or numeric characters and the characters comma (,), diagonal (/), and full stop (.). It can indicate the type of publication, type of nonprint media, series, in-house number, subject, language, etc. When a local suffix is used, it shall be preceded by a plus sign (+) as a delimiter, and shall immediately follow the sequential group (or optional country code, see section 4.6).

##### 4.6 Country Code

An optional country code may be added if deemed necessary. If it is added, it should be the ISO 3166 2-alpha code preceded by a plus sign (+) and added as a suffix to the sequential group, but preceding the local suffix.

#### 5. Formatting of the Standard Technical Report Number

The format of the Standard Technical Report Number, showing maximum length and use of



subdividers, is given in Figure 1. The letters ISRN serve as an identifying label — they are not part of the report number.

**5.1 ISRN**

While this standard—ANSI/NISO Z39.23—is not an international standard, Standard Technical Report Numbers will appear in international publications and in documents published outside the United States. Therefore, the Standard Technical Report Number shall be preceded by the letters ISRN. This conforms to the format of Standard Technical Report Numbers cited in ISO 10444:1994, Information and Documentation-International Standard Technical Report Number (ISRN). The addition of an alphabetic prefix is consistent with the convention for the well-established and well-known identifiers for book and serial literature, ISBN and ISSN.

**5.2 Report Code**

The report code may designate an issuing agency or corporate entity without subdivisions.

*Examples:*

METPRO  
(Metallurgical Processing Corporation)  
MPC  
(Metallurgical Processing Corporation)

Either of these codes could be chosen provided neither has been previously registered with the maintenance agency (see Section 7.1).

In addition, the report may designate a subdivision, or a series, or both, through the use of subdividers that may be placed in any position from the third to the fifteenth character.

*Examples:*

METPRO-CB-562  
(Metallurgical Processing Corporation. Chicago Branch. Project 562)  
METPRO/ED  
(Metallurgical Processing Corporation. Electrical Division)

In lieu of, or in addition to an organizational subdivision, a series designator such as TR (technical report), TN (technical note), or nonprint format, such as DK (diskette), etc., may be used in the report code. Such a designator should be placed immediately preceding the group separator.

*Examples:*

METPRO/TR  
(Metallurgical Processing Corporation. Technical Report)  
METPRO/ED/DK  
(Metallurgical Processing Corporation. Electrical Division. Diskette)

**5.3 Group Separator**

The group separator, a double hyphen (--), divides the report code from the sequential group and may be inserted in any position depending on the length of the report code.

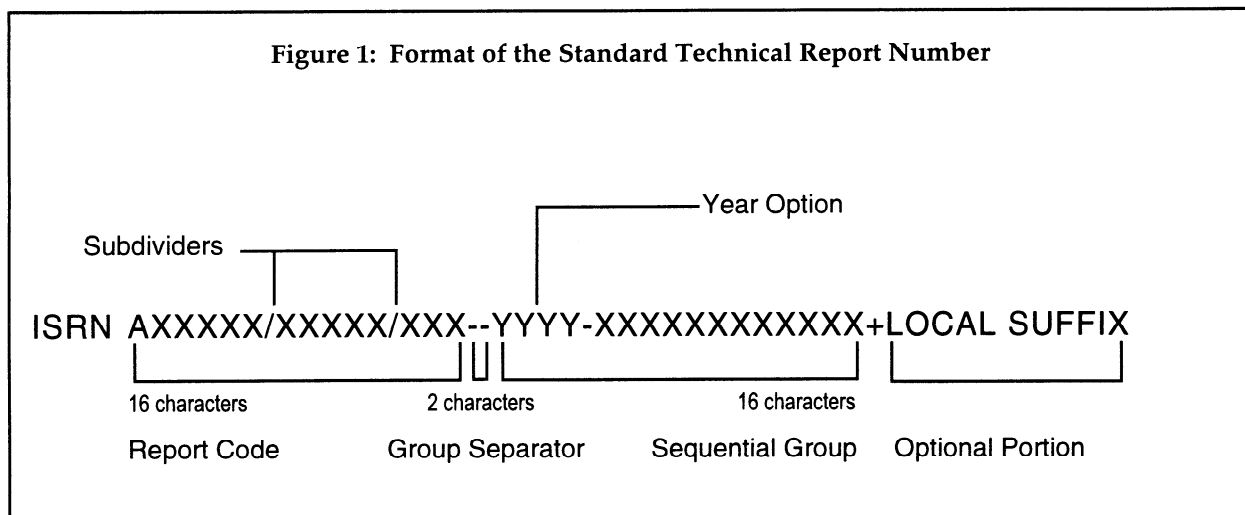
*Example:*

MPC-- METPRO/ED-- METPRO-MWD-QPR--

**5.4 Sequential Group**

With or without the year designation, the sequential group shall immediately follow the group separator.

Figure 1: Format of the Standard Technical Report Number



*Examples:*

ISRN METPRO/ERR--1995/216

(Metallurgical Processing Corporation. Engineering Research Report. 1995, 216th report)

ISRN METPRO/ERR--26715

(Metallurgical Processing Corporation. Engineering Research Report No 26715)

ISRN METPRO/ERR--1995-1784-DRAFT2

(Metallurgical Processing Corporation. Engineering Research Report, 1995, 1784th report, draft no 2)

**5.5 Local Suffix**

If a local suffix is employed, it may provide a variety of additional information intended for local or in-house use.

*Example:*

ISRN METPRO/CB/TR--1995/216+PR-ENVR-WI  
(Metallurgical Processing Corporation. Chicago Branch. Technical Report. 1995, 216th report.

This is a progress report on environmental research in Wisconsin)

**6. Characteristics of the Standard Technical Report Number**

All Standard Technical Report Numbers share common characteristics.

**6.1 Permanence**

A Standard Technical Report Number is the unique identification for a given report and shall be assigned to one report only. It is a permanent assignment and shall never be altered or replaced.

*Examples:*

ISRN METPRO--1995/1

ISRN METPRO--1995/1/V2

(Volume 2 of METPRO--1995/1)

ISRN METPRO--1995/1-R3

(Revision 3 of METPRO--1995/1)

ISRN METPRO--1995/1-PT2

(Part 2 of METPRO--1995/1)

**6.2 Placement**

The Standard Technical Report Number shall appear on all copies of a report. It shall be placed on the front cover and on the report documentation page of the original document as provided in ANSI/NISO Z39.18-1995, Scientific and Technical Reports—Elements, Organization, and Design. If a report documentation page is not employed, the Standard Technical Report Number shall be placed on the title page or on the page immediately following the front cover. On nonprint media the STRN shall be easily legible and shall be placed in a prominent position.

**6.3 ISRN Label as Prefix**

The Standard Technical Report Number shall be identified by the label "ISRN" (all uppercase letters) printed as a prefix to the report code. The ISRN is an identifying label and is not part of the report number.

**7. Application**

All Standard Technical Report Numbers shall be registered.

**7.1 Maintenance Agency**

A maintenance agency shall monitor and coordinate the assignment of unique report codes. It shall maintain a registry of report code assignments, and promote the assignment and use of the Standard Technical Report Number. See the Appendix for details on the maintenance agency for this standard.

**7.2 Assignment and Dissemination**

The assignment of unique Standard Technical Report Numbers is the function of each independent issuing agency or corporate entity. To ensure unique report codes, however, the issuing organization shall submit its proposed report code(s) to the maintenance agency for coordination, approval, and registration.

## Appendix

# Designation of Maintenance Agency

(This appendix is not part of the American National Standard for Standard Technical Report Number Format and Creation, ANSI/NISO Z39.23-1997. It is included for information only.)

The functions assigned to the maintenance agency as specified in Section 7 will be administered by the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). Questions concerning the implementation of this standard and requests for information should be directed to NTIS as follows:

### **Mail**

NTIS  
5285 Port Royal Road  
Springfield, VA 22161

### **Fax**

(703) 321-8547. Fax service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To verify receipt of your fax, call (703) 487-4679 Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.