

# Going on a Book Hunt? 2

**Tracking animals involves knowing their habits, excellent observation skills and being able to 'read the environment'. Finding a book is much easier ... if you know its isbn!**

## **WHAT IS AN ISBN?**

Apart from identical reprints, EVERY book published is given a unique ISBN so it can be identified, tracked and marketed. An ISBN is an International Standard Book Number and is 13 digits long if assigned after January 1, 2007 or 10 digits long if assigned before 2007. The thirteen digits are divided into five parts of variable length which may be separated by a space or hyphen:

1. A GS1 (global standards) prefix: 978 or 979;
2. A group identifier (language-sharing country group). English speaking countries have a single digit identifier of 0 or 1.
3. A publisher identifier (approx 680 000 of these have been assigned to date);
4. The title or edition identifier. Publishers receive a block of numbers which they can allocate to their titles. When they run out they can ask for a new block.
5. A checksum character or check digit (calculated by a mathematical equation).

An ISBN is usually found on the back cover of a book. It can be easily converted into a barcode for scanning in warehouses, shops and so on.

If you have the ISBN of a book you can find out many other important things about it eg its title, author, publisher, distributor, when it published and so on. There are a number of websites that can assist with this tracking.

## **Answer the following questions based on the information you have read.**

1. In what Dewey subject class would you find a book about:
  - a. South Africa? .....
  - b. The works of Rudyard Kipling? .....
  - c. Pachyderms? .....
  - e. Hinduism? .....
2. Name three advantages of the Dewey Decimal System:
  - a. ....
  - b. ....
  - c. ....
3. How old was Dewey when he first developed his library classification system? .....
4. What is the maximum number that could appear before the decimals in the Dewey system? .....
5. A book has an isbn of 1-86509-933-3. What do you know about its publication date?  
.....
6. In general terms, how many publishers are there in the world? .....
7. How would isbns be beneficial to:
  - a. Book shop owners? .....
  - b. Publishers? .....
  - c. Readers? .....