



Understanding Variant ISBN™ and Its Role in Texas SB13



**Redefining
Discoverability.™**

Better discovery through the best metadata management.

Mitinet.com

800-824-6272 | info@mitinet.com



Legislative Compliance

Mitinet recently met with representatives from the office of **Texas State Senator Angela Paxton, the author of Senate Bill 13 (SB13)**, at the State Capitol. During the discussion, the Senator's staff noted that multiple editions of the same title can complicate compliance with SB13 and shared concerns about potential abuses they had observed.

We explained that many librarians have asked Mitinet for clear guidance in navigating SB13. After carefully reviewing the bill, we developed the concept of **Variant ISBN™** to help districts comply with both the *letter* and the *intent* of the law. We emphasized that Mitinet's commitment is to ensure Variant ISBNs provide librarians with a transparent, standards-based method for identifying equivalent editions across formats.

While the Senator's office could not formally endorse the **Variant ISBN™** approach, **they had no objections to the approach** and acknowledged its potential to provide meaningful support to librarians across Texas. This acknowledgment is important: it provides librarians with the assurance that using Variant ISBNs is a safe and compliant way to meet SB13 requirements. By documenting this meeting, Mitinet seeks to give librarians the confidence that this method is aligned with legislative intent and can be applied without fear of non-compliance.

What is a Variant ISBN™?

A **Variant ISBN™** is an International Standard Book Number assigned to a version of a book that is **identical in content** to another edition but differs in **format, binding, distribution source, or language**.

Examples that qualify as Variant ISBNs include:

- Hardcover, paperback, or library-bound editions
- Rebound copies
- eBooks
- Braille editions
- Audiobooks (unaltered, full text)
- Foreign-market editions in the same language with identical content
- Faithful translations – editions in another language that preserve the original text *without adaptation, abridgment, or added commentary*

What Does Not Qualify as a Variant ISBN

The following represent **new or altered editions** and therefore do **not** qualify as a Variant ISBNs:

- **Revised editions** – substantive updates, new chapters, or reorganized content
- **Expanded or abridged editions** – added or remove content or additions of external links
- **Annotated or critical editions** – added commentary, footnotes, or scholarly apparatus
- **Student/teacher/instructor editions** – added exercises, guides, or teaching notes
- **Workbooks or activity books** – supplemental material, not identical to the original
- **Adapted or abridged translations** – translations that simplify, shorten, lengthen, added commentary or otherwise alter the intellectual content
- **Adaptations/abridgments** – simplified, shortened, or retold versions (e.g., junior, graphic novel)
- **Special illustrated or deluxe editions** – added artwork, photographs, or bonus content

How Variant ISBNs Support SB13

Under **Sec. 33.026(f)(2)** of SB13, a district may acquire additional copies of a title **without repeating the district review process** only if the **ISBN** already exists in the district's **library catalog**.

By identifying and recording all Variant ISBNs for an approved title in the catalog, districts can:

- Ensure that equivalent editions across different formats are properly recognized as “already in the catalog.”
- Confidently source additional copies from multiple vendors or bindings without triggering unnecessary reviews.
- Avoid redundant administrative work while still maintaining compliance with both the letter and intent of SB13.

Legislative Alignment

This approach directly supports SB13's intent by:

- Reducing redundant administrative work
- Maintaining transparency in acquisition decisions
- Ensuring consistent application of policy across districts
- Preserving local control while providing a clear, standards-based mechanism for compliance

Cataloging Best Practice

Mitinet's **Variant ISBN** feature adds alternate ISBNs to **MARC tag 024**, while preserving the **020 tag** for the primary ISBN.

- **020** = ISBN of the item in hand (primary record)
- **024** = Additional identifiers, including Variant ISBNs
 - \$q = Qualifier — Variant ISBNs will be clearly indicated with the qualifier “Variant ISBN” in subfield \$q, alongside the format/binding (e.g., paperback, hardcover, eBook).

Example:

```
020 ## $a 9780316015844 $q hardcover
024 7# $a 9780316015851 $q paperback $q Variant ISBN $2 isbn
024 7# $a 9780316015868 $q library bound $q Variant ISBN $2 isbn
024 7# $a 9780316015882 $q Spanish edition $q Variant ISBN $2 isbn
```

This approach ensures:

- **Standards compliance** — 020 remains clean for the primary ISBN
- **Transparency** — Variant ISBNs are explicitly labeled in \$q
- **Automation** — Systems can match equivalent editions for SB13 Sec. 33.026(f)(2) compliance

Conclusion

By clearly identifying and cataloging Variant ISBNs, librarians can streamline SB13 compliance, reduce redundant reviews, and ensure that equivalent editions are recognized across formats. This approach not only preserves cataloging standards but also protects valuable staff time and district resources.

Mitinet is deeply committed to supporting librarians everywhere—providing the tools, expertise, and ongoing guidance needed to navigate daily metadata challenges with confidence, while helping to build strong, transparent collections that serve both patrons and students.

For more information or a demo, visit www.mitinet.com or contact **wecare@mitinet.com / 800-824-6272**

Variant ISBN™ is a trademark of Mitinet, Inc.



Mitinet.com

800-824-6272 | info@mitinet.com