



30 Years of URNs: national libraries as case studies

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FAIRCORE4EOSC
Core Components Supporting a FAIR EOSC



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Uniform Resource Name

- Internet standard ([RFC 8141](#)) – introduced in 1994, syntax in 1997
- Globally unique and persistent
- Can be actionable or non-actionable
- Used widely with different namespace identifiers registered with the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, e.g. URN:DOI, URN:ISBN
- Independent in governance and technology

URNs in National Libraries

- Used with the namespace identifier National Bibliography Number (NBN) → URN:NBNs
- 13 national libraries act as URN:NBN providers
- 172 million URN:NBNs issued since the late 1990s
- Providers work independently → no central organisation, cf. DOI
- URN:NBN is well-represented in EU-level PID policy discussions, but overall has poor visibility



Developing URN:NBNs

- NLF a partner in the [FAIRCORE4EOSC project](#)
- Aims for NLF:
 - Strengthen longevity and sustainability of URN:NBNs
 - Develop a URN:NBN provider network to map out current use, development needs, and explore collaborative potential
- [URN:NBN Landscape Report](#) by NLF, published May 2024



<https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe2024052134041>

URN:NBNs: beyond the status quo

- URN:NBN providers are getting organised to tackle limited resources and technical innovation → NLF organised the first URN:NBN webinar in May 2024
- URN:NBN Provider Network?
 - Share policies, provide communal problem solving, e.g. for broadened URN:NBN use – metadata, new media, new providers etc.
 - Produce best practice policies and guidance
 - Develop co-run larger projects, e.g. for technical development



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