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Applications of serial numbering

Serial number arithmetic

See also

Notes and references

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Many computer programs come with serial numbers, often called "Compact Disc keys", and the installers often require the user to enter a valid serial number to continue. These numbers are verified using a certain [algorithm](#) to avoid usage of counterfeit keys.

Serial numbers also help track down [counterfeit currency](#), because in some countries, each [banknote](#) has a unique serial number.

The [International Standard Serial Number](#) or ISSN seen on magazines and other periodicals, an equivalent to the [International Standard Book Number](#) (ISBN) applied to books, is serially assigned but takes its name from the [library science](#) use of serial to mean a periodical.

Certificates and [Certificate Authorities](#) (CA) are necessary for widespread use of [cryptography](#). These depend on applying mathematically rigorous serial numbers and serial number arithmetic

The term "serial number" is also used in military formations as an alternative to the expression "[service number](#)"^[*citation needed*]. In [air forces](#) the serial number is used to uniquely identify individual aircraft and is usually painted on both sides of the aircraft fuselage, most often in the tail area, although in some cases the serial is painted on the side of the aircraft's fin/rudder(s). Because of this, the serial number is sometimes called a "tail number".

Main article: [United Kingdom military aircraft serials](#)

In the case of the UK [Royal Air Force](#) (RAF) the "Serial" takes the form of two letters followed by three numbers, e.g., *BT308*—the prototype [Avro Lancaster](#), or *XS903*—an [English Electric Lightning F.6](#) at one time based at RAF [Binbrook](#) [1]^[*c*]. During the [Second World War](#) RAF aircraft carrying [secret](#) equipment or that were in themselves secret had "G" added to the end of the serial, the "G" signifying "Guard", denoting that the aircraft was to have an armed guard at all times while on the ground, e.g., *LZ548/G*—the prototype [de Havilland Vampire jet fighter](#), or *ML926/G*—a [de Havilland Mosquito XVI](#) experimentally fitted with [H2S radar](#). Prior to this two-letter, three-number scheme, the RAF and preceding [Royal Flying Corps](#) (RFC) utilised a serial consisting of a letter followed by four figures, e.g., *D8096* - a [Bristol F.2 Fighter](#) currently owned by the [Shuttleworth Collection](#), or *K5054* - the prototype [Supermarine Spitfire](#). The serial number follows the aircraft throughout its period of service.

Recently, [FDA](#) published a draft guidance for the industry to adopt the idea on prescription drug packages ^[1]. This measure will enhance the [traceability](#) of the drugs available on the market and add the strength of depleting [counterfeit drugs](#).

Serial number arithmetic

Main article: [Serial Number Arithmetic](#)

Serial numbers are often used in [network protocols](#). However, most sequence numbers in computer protocols are limited to a fixed number of bits, and will [wrap around](#) after a sufficiently many numbers have been allocated. Thus, recently-allocated serial numbers may duplicate very old serial numbers, but not other recently-allocated serial numbers. To avoid ambiguity with these non-unique numbers, RFC 1982, "Serial Number Arithmetic" defines special rules for calculations involving these kinds of serial numbers.

[Lollipop sequence number spaces](#) are a more recent and sophisticated scheme for dealing with finite-sized sequence numbers in protocols.

See also

- [Numbering scheme](#)
- [Names of numbers in English](#)
- [Product key](#)
- [United Kingdom military aircraft serials](#)
- [United States military aircraft serials](#)

Notes and references

Elz, R., and R. Bush, RFC 1982 "Serial Number Arithmetic", Network Working Group, August 1996.

Plummer, William W. "Sequence Number Arithmetic"^[*c*]. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Bolt Beranek and Newman, Inc., 21 September 1978.

1. ↑ Food and Drug Administration. "Guidance for Industry Standards for Securing the Drug Supply Chain - Standardized Numerical Identification for Prescription Drug Packages Draft Guidance"^[*c*]. Retrieved 19 April 2009.

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[*dead link*]

External links

- [ISSN Home page](#)^[*c*]

Category: Serial numbers

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