
**Information technology — Message
Handling Systems (MHS): Message transfer
system: Abstract service definition and
procedures**

*Technologies de l'information — Systèmes de messagerie (MHS): Système
de transfert de message: Procédures et définition de service abstrait*

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Printed in Switzerland

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

In the field of information technology, ISO and IEC have established a joint technical committee, ISO/IEC JTC 1. Draft International Standards adopted by the joint technical committee are circulated to national bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the national bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO/IEC 10021-4 was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 18, *Document processing and related communication*, in collaboration with ITU-T. The identical text is published as ITU-T Recommendation X.411.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/IEC 10021-4:1990), which has been technically revised. It also incorporates Amendment 1:1994, Technical Corrigendum 1:1991, Technical Corrigendum 2:1991, Technical Corrigendum 3:1992, Technical Corrigendum 4:1992, Technical Corrigendum 5:1992, Technical Corrigendum 6:1993, Technical Corrigendum 7:1994, Technical Corrigendum 8:1994 and Technical Corrigendum 9:1994.

ISO/IEC 10021 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Information technology — Message Handling Systems (MHS)*:

- *Part 1: System and Service Overview*
- *Part 2: Overall architecture*
- *Part 3: Abstract Service Definition Conventions*
- *Part 4: Message transfer system: Abstract service definition and procedures*
- *Part 5: Message store: Abstract service definition*
- *Part 6: Protocol specifications*
- *Part 7: Interpersonal Messaging System*
- *Part 8: Electronic Data Interchange Messaging Service*
- *Part 9: Electronic Data Interchange Messaging System*
- *Part 10: MHS routing*
- *Part 11: MTS routing*
- *Part 12: PICS proforma for MOTIS*
- *Part 13: PICS proforma for message transfer access protocol*
- *Part 14: PICS proforma for message store access protocol*

- *Part 15: PICS proforma for interpersonal messaging*
- *Part 16: Inter application message service definition protocol*
- *Part 17: Inter application specification*

Annexes A and C form an integral part of this part of ISO/IEC 10021. Annexes B and D are for information only.

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Introduction

This Service Definition is one of a set of Recommendations | International Standards defining Message Handling in a distributed open systems environment.

Message Handling provides for the exchange of messages between users on a store-and-forward basis. A message submitted by one user (the *originator*) is transferred through the Message Transfer System (MTS) and delivered to one or more other users (the *recipients*).

The MTS comprises a number of message-transfer-agents (MTAs), which transfer messages and deliver them to their intended recipients.

This Service Definition was developed jointly by ITU-T and ISO/IEC. It is published as common text as ITU-T Rec. X.411 | ISO/IEC 10021-4.

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