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Information technology - Keyboard layouts for text and office systems - Part 1: General principles governing keyboard layouts

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Partie 1: Principes généraux pour la disposition des claviers

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STANDARD

ISO/IEC
9995-1

Third edition
2009-10-15

**Information technology — Keyboard
layouts for text and office systems —**

Part 1:

**General principles governing keyboard
layouts**

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*Technologies de l'information — Disposition des claviers conçus pour la
bureautique —*
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Reference number
ISO/IEC 9995-1:2009(E)



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ISO/IEC 9995-1:2009(E)

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.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of the joint technical committee is to prepare International Standards. 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.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO/IEC 9995-1 was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 35, *User interfaces*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO/IEC 9995-1:2006), which has been technically revised.

The main modifications to the set of parts of ISO/IEC 9995 are as follows.

- The editing section (Part 5) and the function section (Part 6) are merged into one editing and function section (Part 5).
- The new edition reduces the number of zones.
- The new edition relaxes the rules for allocation of symbols of group 1, level 3 in certain situations and more precise multiple group support is added.
- Part 3 adds support of extra Latin characters and adds multiple diacritics entry support for one character.

ISO/IEC 9995 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Information technology — Keyboard layouts for text and office systems*:

- *Part 1 : General principles governing keyboard layouts*
- *Part 2 : Alphanumeric section*
- *Part 3 : Complementary layouts of the alphanumeric zone of the alphanumeric section*
- *Part 4 : Numeric section*
- *Part 5 : Editing and function section*
- *Part 7 : Symbols used to represent functions*
- *Part 8 : Allocation of letters to the keys of a numeric keypad*

Introduction

ISO/IEC 9995 defines a framework for the layout of all alphanumeric and numeric keyboards across the widest spectrum of today's and upcoming applications using keyboards. The functions to be performed by keyboards are grouped into three categories that correspond to the main physical sections of the keyboard.

Application of ISO/IEC 9995 in the design of keyboards will provide the user with a unified, predictable user-machine interface by dividing the keyboard into functional areas and sections and allocating functions to keys. One of the major tasks of a universal-usage keyboard is to accommodate the larger sets of characters required by the various applications for which keyboards are used today. This was achieved by permitting the allocation of more than one graphic character or control function to each of the keys of a keyboard, predominantly in the alphanumeric section.

ISO/IEC 9995 specifies the requirements for keyboard layouts and allocation of keycap imprints (including letters, numerals, symbols, and other markings) on alphanumeric and numeric input devices for all types of information and communication technology apparatus and systems including:

- personal computers, workstations, computer terminals, visual display terminals (VDTs);
- electronic typewriters and other machines with alphanumeric and numeric keyboards;
- mobile computer systems including ultra-mobile personal computers (UMPCs), personal digital assistants (PDAs) and multimedia devices with hardware keyboards (e.g. linear keyboards, foldable keyboards) or virtual keyboards (e.g. touchscreens, projection keyboards);
- electronic document scanners and multifunction devices incorporating alphanumeric and/or numeric keyboards;
- calculators, telephones and automated teller machines having alphanumeric and/or numeric keypads/keyboards.

The primary layout within the alphanumeric zone is established in most countries by a national standard or by national usage. Allocation guidelines are provided in ISO/IEC 9995-2. Complementary layouts are specified in ISO/IEC 9995-3.

ISO/IEC 9995 specifies the allocation of functions (graphic characters and/or control functions) to keys. The graphic characters and the control functions have been given common names intended to be familiar to the users of a keyboard. In general, keyboards are not expected to generate coded control functions, but the operation of a control function key can cause a number of coded control functions to appear in data interchange to achieve the desired effect.

The effects of those keys that affect keyboard states are specified in other parts of ISO/IEC 9995.

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Information technology — Keyboard layouts for text and office systems —

Part 1: General principles governing keyboard layouts

1 Scope

This part of ISO/IEC 9995 identifies the sections of the keyboard and specifies the general shape and relative placement of the sections. Spacing of keys and physical characteristics are covered, as are the principles governing the placement of characters and symbols on keys.

This part of ISO/IEC 9995 specifies a key numbering system which applies to all types of numeric, alphanumeric and composite keyboards of information technology equipment (ITE).

This part of ISO/IEC 9995 specifies the principles governing the placement of characters and symbols on keys used on all types of numeric, alphanumeric and composite keyboards of ITE. Although the keyboard defined by ISO/IEC 9995 can be used for different languages, the specifications are written as applying to Latin languages with a character path from left to right and a line progression from top to bottom.

This part of ISO/IEC 9995 defines characteristics related to interface 1 in Figure 1.

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2 Conformance

2.1 Conformance with ISO/IEC 9995-1

Equipment is in conformance with this part of ISO/IEC 9995 if it meets the requirements of Clauses 5 to 9. Depending on the intended purpose of the equipment, not all of the described sections and zones need to be implemented.

2.2 General conformance requirement

A keyboard which claims conformance with ISO/IEC 9995 shall as a minimum conform to this part of ISO/IEC 9995 and to all other parts which are relevant to that particular model of keyboard.

Conformance to ISO/IEC 9995-7 does not require conformance to any other part of ISO/IEC 9995.

Conformance to ISO/IEC 9995-8 does not require conformance to any other part of ISO/IEC 9995.

2.3 Claims of conformance

Any claim of conformance with ISO/IEC 9995 shall list the parts of ISO/IEC 9995 to which conformance is claimed.

ISO/IEC 9995-1:2009(E)

3 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 9241-410, *Ergonomics of human-system interaction — Part 410: Design criteria for physical input devices*

4 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

4.1 graphic character
character, other than a control function, that has a visual representation, normally handwritten, printed or displayed

4.2 primary group layout
allocation of the graphic characters of group 1 to the keys of a particular keyboard, defined by a national standard or established by common usage in a particular country or group of countries

4.3 secondary group layout
allocation of the graphic characters of group 2 to the keys of a particular keyboard

4.4 key effect
effect that results when a key is actuated, depending on the active level, and possibly by the concurrent operation of a qualifier key or keys

4.5 lock state
state set by actuating a lock key, singly or in combination with a qualifier key

4.6 level lock state
state that, if activated, will result in the generation of the characters assigned to a specific level

4.7 capitals lock state
state that, if activated, will result in the generation of the capital form of all graphic characters on the keyboard for which such a form exists

4.8 control function
action that affects the recording, processing, transmission, or interpretation of data

4.9 group
logical state of a keyboard providing access to a collection of graphic characters or elements of graphic characters

NOTE 1 A group gives access to one collection of characters. Typically, when more than one language is used, multiple groups are required.

NOTE 2 Usually these graphic characters or elements of graphic characters logically belong together and can be arranged on several levels within a group.

NOTE 3 The input of certain graphic characters, such as accented letters, can require access to more than one group.

4.10**section**

block of keys, mostly with some functional relationship

4.11**level**

logical state of a keyboard providing access to a collection of graphic characters or elements of graphic characters

NOTE 1 Usually these graphic characters or elements of graphic characters logically belong together, such as the capital forms of letters.

NOTE 2 In certain cases the level selected can also affect function keys.

4.12**active position**

character position which is to image the graphic symbol representing the next graphic character or relative to which the next control function is to be executed

NOTE In general, the active position is indicated in a display by a cursor.

4.13**group select**

function that, if activated, will change the keyboard state to produce characters from a different group

4.14**graphic symbol**

visual representation of a graphic character, a control function, or a combination of one or more graphic characters and/or control functions

4.15**level select**

function that, if activated, will change the keyboard state to produce characters from a different level

4.16**associated system**

system to which the keyboard is attached, probably consisting of a processor and software to handle the keyboard and to run application programs

4.17**qualifier key**

key whose operation has no immediate effect, but which, for as long as it is actuated, modifies the effect of other keys

NOTE A qualifier key can be, for example, a level select key or a control key.

4.18**editing key**

key whose primary purpose is the input of an editing function

4.19**function key**

key whose primary purpose is the input of a control function

4.20**graphic key**

key whose primary purpose is the input of a graphic character or of an element of a graphic character

NOTE Certain of these keys can also have a secondary purpose for input of a control function.