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# Information technology — Generic coding of moving pictures and associated audio information —

## Part 1: **Systems**

*Technologies de l'information — Codage générique des images animées et du son associé —*

*Partie 1: Systèmes*



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**INTERNATIONAL STANDARD ISO/IEC 13818-1**
**RECOMMENDATION ITU-T H.222.0**

# Information technology – Generic coding of moving pictures and associated audio information: Systems


## Summary

This Recommendation | International Standard specifies the system layer of the coding. It was developed in 1994 to principally support the combination and synchronization of video and audio coding methods defined in ISO/IEC 13818 Part 2 (ITU-T H.262) and Part 3. Since 1994, this standard has been extended to support additional video coding specifications (e.g., ISO/IEC 14496-2, ITU-T H.264 | ISO/IEC 14496-10, ITU-T H.265 | ISO/IEC 23008-2 and ITU-T T.800 | ISO/IEC 15444-1 Annex M JPEG 2000 video), audio coding specifications (e.g., ISO/IEC 13818-7 and ISO/IEC 14496-3), system streams (e.g., ISO/IEC 14496-1 and ISO/IEC 15938-1), ISO/IEC 23009-1 dynamic adaptive streaming over HTTP (DASH), ISO/IEC 13818-11 intellectual property management and protection (IPMP) as well as generic metadata. The system layer supports six basic functions:

1) the synchronization of multiple compressed streams on decoding;
2) the interleaving of multiple compressed streams into a single stream;
3) the initialization of buffering for decoding start up;
4) continuous buffer management;
5) time identification; and
6) multiplexing and signalling of various components in a system stream.

Recommendation ITU-T H.222.0 | ISO/IEC 13818-1 multiplexed bit stream is either a transport stream or a program stream. Both streams are constructed from packetized elementary stream (PES) packets and packets containing other necessary information. Both stream types support multiplexing of video and audio compressed streams from one program with a common time base. The transport stream additionally supports the multiplexing of video and audio compressed streams from multiple programs with independent time bases. For almost error-free environments the program stream is generally more appropriate, supporting software processing of program information. The transport stream is more suitable for use in environments where errors are likely.

Recommendation ITU-T H.222.0 | ISO/IEC 13818-1 multiplexed bit stream, whether a transport stream or a program stream, is constructed in two layers: the outermost layer is the system layer, and the innermost is the compression layer. The system layer provides the functions necessary for using one or more compressed data streams in a system. The video and audio parts of this Specification define the compression coding layer for audio and video data. Coding of other types of data is not defined by this Recommendation | International Standard, but is supported by the system layer provided that the other types of data adhere to the constraints defined in this Recommendation | International Standard.




## History

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The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), which meets every four years, establishes the topics for study by the ITU-T study groups which, in turn, produce Recommendations on these topics.

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In some areas of information technology which fall within ITU-T's purview, the necessary standards are prepared on a collaborative basis with ISO and IEC.

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As of the date of approval of this Recommendation, ITU had received notice of intellectual property, protected by patents, which may be required to implement this Recommendation. However, implementers are cautioned that this may not represent the latest information and are therefore strongly urged to consult the TSB patent database at http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/ipr/.

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**Introduction**

The systems part of this Recommendation | International Standard addresses the combining of one or more elementary streams of video and audio, as well as other data, into single or multiple streams which are suitable for storage or transmission. Systems coding follows the syntactical and semantic rules imposed by this Specification and provides information to enable synchronized decoding of decoder buffers over a wide range of retrieval or receipt conditions.

System coding shall be specified in two forms: the transport stream and the program stream. Each is optimized for a different set of applications. Both the transport stream and program stream defined in this Recommendation | International Standard provide coding syntax which is necessary and sufficient to synchronize the decoding and presentation of the video and audio information, while ensuring that data buffers in the decoders do not overflow or underflow. Information is coded in the syntax using time stamps concerning the decoding and presentation of coded audio and visual data and time stamps concerning the delivery of the data stream itself. Both stream definitions are packet-oriented multiplexes.

The basic multiplexing approach for single video and audio elementary streams is illustrated in Figure Intro. 1. The video and audio data is encoded as described in Rec. ITU-T H.262 | ISO/IEC 13818-2 and ISO/IEC 13818-3. The resulting compressed elementary streams are packetized to produce PES packets. Information needed to use PES packets independently of either transport streams or program streams may be added when PES packets are formed. This information is not needed and need not be added when PES packets are further combined with system level information to form transport streams or program streams. This systems standard covers those processes to the right of the vertical dashed line.

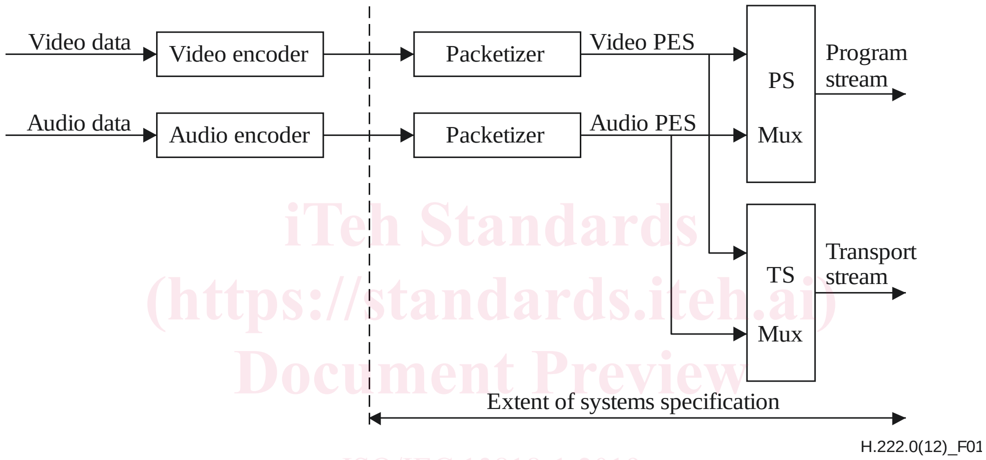




**Figure Intro. 1 – Simplified overview of the scope of this Recommendation | International Standard**

The program stream is analogous and similar to the ISO/IEC 11172 systems layer. It results from combining one or more streams of PES packets, which have a common time base, into a single stream.

For applications that require the elementary streams that comprise a single program to be in separate streams that are not multiplexed, the elementary streams can also be encoded as separate program streams, one per elementary stream, with a common time base. In this case the values encoded in the SCR fields of the various streams shall be consistent.

Like the single program stream, all elementary streams can be decoded with synchronization.

The program stream is designed for use in relatively error-free environments and is suitable for applications which may involve software processing of system information such as interactive multi-media applications. Program stream packets may be of variable and relatively great length.

The transport stream combines one or more programs with one or more independent time bases into a single stream. PES packets made up of elementary streams that form a program share a common timebase. The transport stream is designed for use in environments where errors are likely, such as storage or transmission in lossy or noisy media. Transport stream packets are 188 bytes in length.

Program and transport streams are designed for different applications and their definitions do not strictly follow a layered model. It is possible and reasonable to convert from one to the other; however, one is not a subset or superset of the other. In particular, extracting the contents of a program from a transport stream and creating a valid program stream is possible and is accomplished through the common interchange format of PES packets, but not all of the fields needed in a program stream are contained within the transport stream; some must be derived. The transport stream may be used to span a range of layers in a layered model, and is designed for efficiency and ease of implementation in high bandwidth applications.

The scope of syntactical and semantic rules set forth in the systems specification differs: the syntactical rules apply to systems layer coding only, and do not extend to the compression layer coding of the video and audio specifications; by contrast, the semantic rules apply to the combined stream in its entirety.

The systems specification does not specify the architecture or implementation of encoders or decoders, nor those of multiplexors or demultiplexors. However, bit stream properties do impose functional and performance requirements on encoders, decoders, multiplexors and demultiplexors. For instance, encoders must meet minimum clock tolerance requirements. Notwithstanding this and other requirements, a considerable degree of freedom exists in the design and implementation of encoders, decoders, multiplexors, and demultiplexors.

### Intro. 1 Transport stream

The transport stream is a stream definition which is tailored for communicating or storing one or more programs of coded data according to Rec. ITU-T H.262 | ISO/IEC 13818-2 and ISO/IEC 13818-3 and other data in environments in which significant errors may occur. Such errors may be manifested as bit value errors or loss of packets.

Transport streams may be either fixed or variable rate. In either case the constituent elementary streams may either be fixed or variable rate. The syntax and semantic constraints on the stream are identical in each of these cases. The transport stream rate is defined by the values and locations of program clock reference (PCR) fields, which in general are separate PCR fields for each program.

There are some difficulties with constructing and delivering a transport stream containing multiple programs with independent time bases such that the overall bit rate is variable. Refer to 2.4.2.3.

The transport stream may be constructed by any method that results in a valid stream. It is possible to construct transport streams containing one or more programs from elementary coded data streams, from program streams, or from other transport streams which may themselves contain one or more programs.

The transport stream is designed in such a way that several operations on a transport stream are possible with minimum effort. Among these are:



1) Retrieve the coded data from one program within the transport stream, decode it and present the decoded results as shown in Figure Intro. 2.
2) Extract the transport stream packets from one program within the transport stream and produce as output a different transport stream with only that one program as shown in Figure Intro. 3.
3) Extract the transport stream packets of one or more programs from one or more transport streams and produce as output a different transport stream (not illustrated).
4) Extract the contents of one program from the transport stream and produce as output a program stream containing that one program as shown in Figure Intro. 4.
5) Take a program stream, convert it into a transport stream to carry it over a lossy environment, and then recover a valid, and in certain cases, identical program stream.



Figure Intro. 2 and Figure Intro. 3 illustrate prototypical demultiplexing and decoding systems which take as input a transport stream. Figure Intro. 2 illustrates the first case, where a transport stream is directly demultiplexed and decoded. Transport streams are constructed in two layers:

– a system layer; and
– a compression layer.

The input stream to the transport stream decoder has a system layer wrapped about a compression layer. Input streams to the video and audio decoders have only the compression layer.

Operations performed by the prototypical decoder which accepts transport streams either apply to the entire transport stream ("multiplex-wide operations"), or to individual elementary streams ("stream-specific operations"). The transport stream system layer is divided into two sub-layers, one for multiplex-wide operations (the transport stream packet layer), and one for stream-specific operations (the PES packet layer).

A prototypical decoder for transport streams, including audio and video, is also depicted in Figure Intro. 2 to illustrate the function of a decoder. The architecture is not unique – some system decoder functions, such as decoder timing control, might equally well be distributed among elementary stream decoders and the channel-specific decoder – but this figure is useful for discussion. Likewise, indication of errors detected by the channel-specific decoder to the individual audio and video decoders may be performed in various ways and such communication paths are not shown in the diagram. The prototypical decoder design does not imply any normative requirement for the design of a transport stream decoder. Indeed non-audio/video data is also allowed, but not shown.

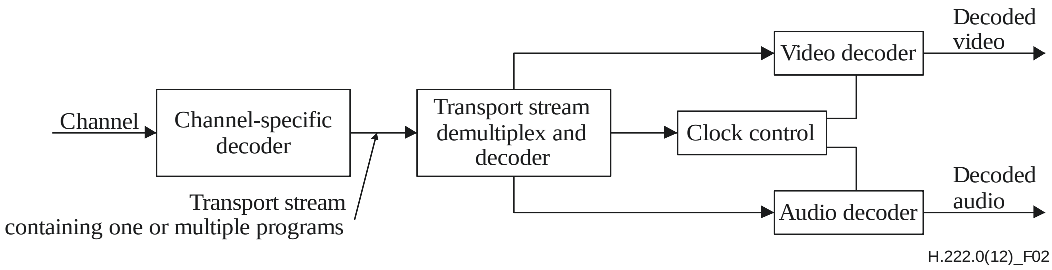


**Figure Intro. 2 – Prototypical transport demultiplexing and decoding example**

Figure Intro. 3 illustrates the second case, where a transport stream containing multiple programs is converted into a transport stream containing a single program. In this case the re-multiplexing operation may necessitate the correction of program clock reference (PCR) values to account for changes in the PCR locations in the bit stream.

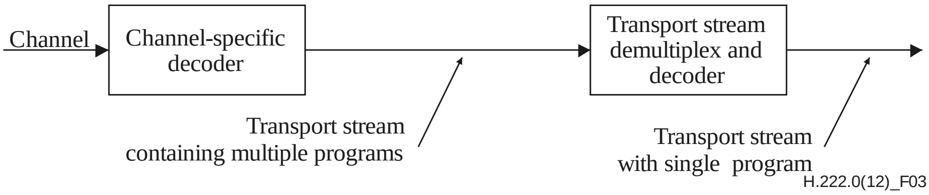


**Figure Intro. 3 – Prototypical transport multiplexing example**

Figure Intro. 4 illustrates a case in which a multi-program transport stream is first demultiplexed and then converted into a program stream.

Figures Intro. 3 and Intro. 4 indicate that it is possible and reasonable to convert between different types and configurations of transport streams. There are specific fields defined in the transport stream and program stream syntax which facilitate the conversions illustrated. There is no requirement that specific implementations of demultiplexors or decoders include all of these functions.



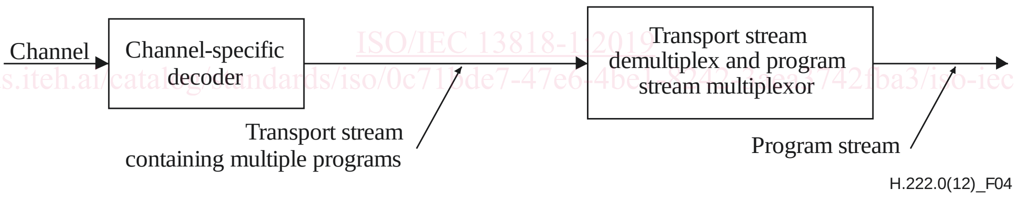


**Figure Intro. 4 – Prototypical transport stream to program stream conversion**

## Intro. 2 Program stream

The program stream is a stream definition which is tailored for communicating or storing one program of coded data and other data in environments where errors are very unlikely, and where processing of system coding, e.g., by software, is a major consideration.

Program streams may be either fixed or variable rate. In either case, the constituent elementary streams may be either fixed or variable rate. The syntax and semantics constraints on the stream are identical in each case. The program stream rate is defined by the values and locations of the system clock reference (SCR) and mux_rate fields.

A prototypical audio/video program stream decoder system is depicted in Figure Intro. 5. The architecture is not unique – system decoder functions including decoder timing control might as equally well be distributed among elementary stream decoders and the channel-specific decoder – but this figure is useful for discussion. The prototypical decoder design does not imply any normative requirement for the design of a program stream decoder. Indeed non-audio/video data is also allowed, but not shown.

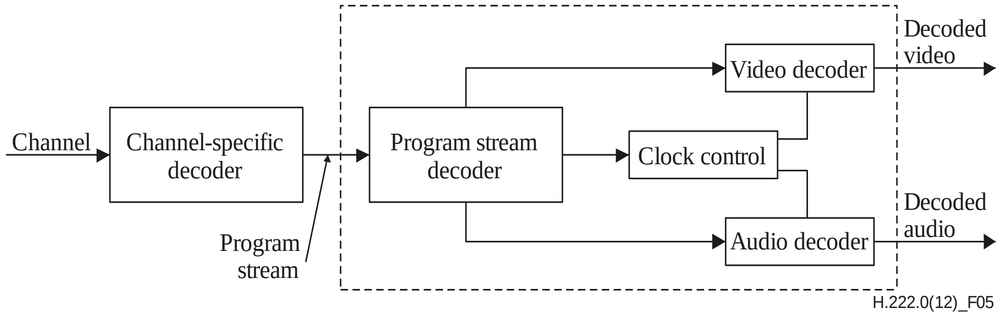


**Figure Intro. 5 – Prototypical decoder for program streams**

The prototypical decoder for program streams shown in Figure Intro. 5 is composed of system, video and audio decoders conforming to Parts 1, 2 and 3, respectively, of ISO/IEC 13818. In this decoder, the multiplexed coded representation of one or more audio and/or video streams is assumed to be stored or communicated on some channel in some channel-specific format. The channel-specific format is not governed by this Recommendation | International Standard, nor is the channel-specific decoding part of the prototypical decoder.

The prototypical decoder accepts as input a program stream and relies on a program stream decoder to extract timing information from the stream. The program stream decoder demultiplexes the stream, and the elementary streams so produced serve as inputs to video and audio decoders, whose outputs are decoded video and audio signals. Included in the design, but not shown in the figure, is the flow of timing information among the program stream decoder, the video and audio decoders, and the channel-specific decoder. The video and audio decoders are synchronized with each other and with the channel using this timing information.

Program streams are constructed in two layers: a system layer and a compression layer. The input stream to the program stream decoder has a system layer wrapped about a compression layer. Input streams to the video and audio decoders have only the compression layer.



Operations performed by the prototypical decoder either apply to the entire program stream ("multiplex-wide operations"), or to individual elementary streams ("stream-specific operations"). The program stream system layer is divided into two sub-layers, one for multiplex-wide operations (the pack layer), and one for stream-specific operations (the PES packet layer).

### Intro. 3 Conversion between transport stream and program stream



It may be possible and reasonable to convert between transport streams and program streams by means of PES packets. This results from the specification of transport stream and program stream as embodied in 2.4.1 and 2.5.1 of the normative requirements of this Recommendation | International Standard. PES packets may, with some constraints, be mapped directly from the payload of one multiplexed bit stream into the payload of another multiplexed bit stream. It is possible to identify the correct order of PES packets in a program to assist with this if the program_packet_sequence_counter is present in all PES packets.

Certain other information necessary for conversion, e.g., the relationship between elementary streams, is available in tables and headers in both streams. Such data, if available, shall be correct in any stream before and after conversion.

### Intro. 4 Packetized elementary stream

Transport streams and program streams are each logically constructed from PES packets, as indicated in the syntax definitions in 2.4.3.6. PES packets shall be used to convert between transport streams and program streams; in some cases the PES packets need not be modified when performing such conversions. PES packets may be much larger than the size of a transport stream packet.

A continuous sequence of PES packets of one elementary stream with one stream ID may be used to construct a PES Stream. When PES packets are used to form a PES stream, they shall include elementary stream clock reference (ESCR) fields and elementary stream rate (ES_Rate) fields, with constraints as defined in 2.4.3.8. The PES stream data shall be contiguous bytes from the elementary stream in their original order. PES streams do not contain some necessary system information which is contained in program streams and transport streams. Examples include the information in the pack header, system header, program stream map, program stream directory, program map table, and elements of the transport stream packet syntax.