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## Information technology — User interfaces — Universal interface for human language selection

*Technologies de l'information — Interfaces utilisateur — Interface  
universelle de sélection d'une langue*

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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.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

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

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

In many instances, a user is starting a new dialogue with an information technology device, and one of the first things to do is to select a language that both the user and the information technology device can handle. Having a universal interface diminishes the problems for the user significantly.

There can be ways to expedite the selection of a language and this document specifies a number of situations to be considered.

This document builds on ISO/IEC TR 15440.

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# Information technology — User interfaces — Universal interface for human language selection

## 1 Scope

This document describes the method for selection of a language in information and communication (ICT) devices. This document is intended to apply to the user interface design of ICT devices which have a function for setting the appropriate language environment when an end-user wants to initiate its operation.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements 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/IEC 9995-1, *Information technology — Keyboard layouts for text and office systems — Part 1: General principles governing keyboard layouts*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 9995-1 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### application

classification of computer programs designed to perform specific tasks, such as word processing, database management, or graphics

## 4 Interface for human language selection

### 4.1 General

An application program and the ICT system should have one or more methods to select the human language that is used in the user interface. These methods should be available at any time.

### 4.2 Graphical symbol and icons for human language selection

#### 4.2.1 General

A standardized graphical symbol or icon should be displayed at the initial stage of the presentation flow.

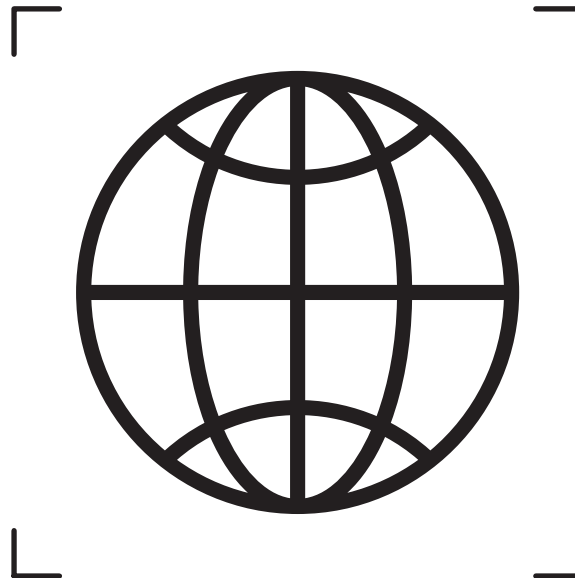
#### 4.2.2 Graphical symbol and associated icon

The icon (and associated symbol) specified in this document allows the presentation of a menu listing human languages.

It is recommended not to use a flag for a country for indicating human languages, as more than one language could be spoken in a country, and the language can be used in more than one country.

The standard graphical symbol for human language selection should be as shown in [Figure 1](#).

The associated icon shown in [Figure 2](#) is an example.



**Figure 1 — Standard graphical symbol for language selection**  
(IEC 60417-6415)



**Figure 2 — Associated icon example**

Note that colour and shape in [Figure 2](#) are just an example of application of the standard icon.

### 4.3 Non-graphical method for human language selection

#### 4.3.1 General

In some cases, it is not possible to display a graphical symbol, for instance in the initial phases of a system boot, or when the user has vision problems.

#### 4.3.2 Text based language selection

Methods like the ones described in [Annex A](#) should be used.



#### 4.3.3 Audio-based language selection

If speech selection is used, an audio signal should prompt the user for the language. The user should then say the name of the language in the language itself, or the corresponding language code specified in ISO 639.

#### 4.3.4 Tactile-based language selection

If tactile selection is used, a tactile representation of the language selection icon should be presented to the user. The user should then enter in Braille the name of the language in the language itself, or the corresponding language code specified in ISO 639.

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