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Standard**

ISO 24183

**Technical communication —
Vocabulary**

Communication technique — Vocabulaire

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

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 ISO 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).

ISO draws attention to the possibility that the implementation of this document may involve the use of (a) patent(s). ISO takes no position concerning the evidence, validity or applicability of any claimed patent rights in respect thereof. As of the date of publication of this document, ISO had not received notice of (a) patent(s) which may be required to implement this document. However, implementers are cautioned that this may not represent the latest information, which may be obtained from the patent database available at www.iso.org/patents. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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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.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Language and terminology*.

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.

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Introduction

Suppliers of goods and services provide information for the use of their products, such as instructions, manuals, service information, information for assembly or troubleshooting information. Technical communication is the process of defining, creating and delivering these information products for the safe, effective and efficient use of supported products.

A standardized common terminology as provided in this document helps to prevent misunderstandings and disputes between acquirers and suppliers of information products as well as between manufacturers and customers. A standardized terminology for technical communication will support both acquirers and suppliers of information products. Organizations that provide information products can formulate more precise requirements, and providers can deliver information products according to specifications.

A standardized common terminology also helps to foster mutual understanding, both within the technical communication community and in contact with other relevant communities, such as the language services industry. Furthermore, this document can be used as a basis for researching and teaching technical communication in various settings.

[Annex A](#) contains two concept models that illustrate the interrelations between some key concepts in technical communication.

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Technical communication — Vocabulary

1 Scope

This document defines terms for the theory and application of technical communication. It prepares the terminological background for all other standards in the field of technical communication by providing precise definitions and standardized terms for basic concepts in this domain.

This document is applicable to persons creating information products in the field of technical communication or using these information products professionally.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

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

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

3.1 Core concepts

3.1.1

technical communication

DEPRECATED: technical writing

process of defining and creating *information for use* (3.1.2) to be delivered as *information products* (3.1.4) for the safe, effective and efficient use of a *supported product* (3.1.5) throughout its life cycle

Note 1 to entry: Technical communication includes all modes, such as *text* (3.7.1.2), image, *audio* (3.7.1.3) and all media, e.g. printed manuals, tutorial videos, *online help* (3.8.1.2).

Note 2 to entry: The term "technical writing" should not be used as a synonym for "technical communication" as it is considered a part of a technical communication.

Note 3 to entry: In some contexts, the term "technical communication" can refer to more general communicative acts concerning products, such as e-mail communication between engineers.

3.1.2

information for use

information identified and collected during the information development process

3.1.3

product

result of an action or process

Note 1 to entry: Products can be physical products, technical systems, software and services.

3.1.4

information product

product (3.1.3) consisting of *information for use* (3.1.2) that is delivered for the safe, effective and efficient use of a *supported product* (3.1.5)

Note 1 to entry: Information products can also be generated during runtime of a content delivery system.

Note 2 to entry: Information products can contain *conceptual information* (3.4.2), *instructional information* (3.4.3) or *reference information* (3.4.4).

Note 3 to entry: Information products come in various forms, such as *manuals* (3.8.1.1) or *online help* (3.8.1.2).

3.1.5

supported product

product (3.1.3) to which an *information product* (3.1.4) relates

EXAMPLE

- industrial products (e.g. machinery, components, devices, equipment);
- consumer products (e.g. household appliances, audio-visual devices, communication devices, do-it-yourself products);
- medical devices, equipment and systems;
- complex systems of systems (e.g. industrial plants, refineries, production sites, data centres);
- means of transport (e.g. cars, trucks, ships, airplanes);
- application software (e.g. office software, web applications);
- software for operation and automatic control of systems;
- technical services.

Note 1 to entry: An information product is an essential component of a supported product.

[SOURCE: IEC/IEEE 82079-1:2019, 3.40, modified — "the information for use" has been replaced by "an information product" in the definition. The EXAMPLE and Note 1 to entry have been added.] 24183-2024

3.1.6

content

information in any form

EXAMPLE *Text* (3.7.1.2), *audio* (3.7.1.3), video.

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2023, 3.1.2]

3.1.7

technical documentation

set of *information products* (3.1.4) provided by the supplier of a *supported product* (3.1.5)

3.1.8

technical communicator

DEPRECATED: technical writer

person who develops *information for use* (3.1.2)

Note 1 to entry: The role of a technical communicator can include researching product information, defining target audience information needs, ensuring that legal and normative requirements are met, authoring *texts* (3.7.1.2), creating safety instructions and coordinating *translations* (3.6.3.1).

Note 2 to entry: The term "technical writer" should not be used because it no longer reflects the variety of modes and media in current use.

3.1.9

information structure

organization of *information for use* (3.1.2) in order to optimize presentation and understanding

3.1.10

structuring method

content organization according to semantic or functional criteria in order to ensure *consistency* (3.6.5.1.6) and interchangeability of information

3.1.11

style guide

set of specifications designed to ensure *information quality* (3.6.5.1) and *information product quality* (3.6.5.2)

Note 1 to entry: Style guides should take into account information quality principles such as *completeness* (3.6.5.1.1) and *consistency* (3.6.5.1.5) as well as information product quality criteria such as *usability* (3.6.5.2.2) and *readability* (3.6.5.2.4).

3.1.12

single source publishing

content management approach which allows the same source *content* (3.1.6) to be delivered across different forms of media and more than once

3.1.13

terminology

set of designations and concepts belonging to one domain or subject

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019, 3.1.11]

3.1.14

terminology work

work concerned with the systematic collection, description, processing and presentation of concepts and their designations

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019, 3.5.1, modified — admitted term "terminology management" and Notes 1 and 2 to entry have been removed.]

3.1.15

translatability

ease of rendering *content* (3.1.6) from one language or culture to another

3.2 Concepts relating to users

3.2.1

user

person who interacts with a *supported product* (3.1.5)

Note 1 to entry: Users can be part of a specific *target audience* (3.2.2).

Note 2 to entry: "User" can include persons who install, operate, service, maintain or dispose of the *product* (3.1.3).

[SOURCE: IEC/IEEE 82079-1:2019, 3.47, modified — "product" has been replaced by "a supported product" in the definition. A new Note 1 to entry has been added. The former Note 1 to entry has been renumbered as Note 2 to entry.]

3.2.2

target audience

audience

group of persons for whom an *information product* (3.1.4) is intended

Note 1 to entry: A target audience can consist of specific *users* (3.2.1) or other persons.

[SOURCE: IEC/IEEE 82079-1:2019, 3.42, modified — "information for use" has been replaced by "an information product" and "by the supplier" has been deleted in the definition. The admitted term "audience" and Note 1 to entry have been added.]

3.2.3 skilled person

person with relevant technical education, training and/or experience

[SOURCE: IEC/IEEE 82079-1:2019, 3.36, modified — "individual" has been replaced by "person", "or" has been replaced by "and/or" and "to enable perceiving risks and avoiding hazards occurring during use of a product" has been deleted in the definition.]

3.3 Concepts relating to product and information life cycles

3.3.1 put into service

prepare a system for its *intended use* ([3.6.4.1](#))

3.3.2 put out of service, verb

change a system from an operational status to a non-operational status

3.3.3 product life cycle

period of time from the first idea to the ultimate *disposal* ([3.3.4.10](#)) or *recycling* ([3.3.4.11](#)) of a *product* ([3.1.3](#))

Note 1 to entry: The product life cycle is divided into defined periods called phases in which activities that belong together are grouped, e.g. product concept, design, production. The beginning and end of phases require definite decisions.

[SOURCE: ISO 15226:1999, 3.7, modified — "or recycling" has been added in the definition. "(e.g. releases)" has been deleted.]

3.3.4 product life cycle phase

stage in the *product life cycle* ([3.3.3](#))

EXAMPLE Design, development, *storage* ([3.3.4.8](#)), transport, *installation* ([3.3.4.1](#)), *commissioning* ([3.3.4.2](#)), *operation* ([3.3.4.4](#)), troubleshooting, *maintenance* ([3.3.4.5](#)), *repair* ([3.3.4.6](#)), *decommissioning* ([3.3.4.9](#)), dismantling, *disposal* ([3.3.4.10](#)).

3.3.4.1 installation

product life cycle phase ([3.3.4](#)) in which a *product* ([3.1.3](#)) is prepared such that it fulfils its *intended use* ([3.6.4.1](#))

3.3.4.2 commissioning

procedures prior, or related, to the handing over of a physical *product* ([3.1.3](#)) ready to be placed into service

Note 1 to entry: Commissioning can include final acceptance testing, the handing over of relevant documentation for the *supported product* ([3.1.5](#)) or instructing personnel.

[SOURCE: IEC/IEEE 82079-1:2019, 3.2, modified — "physical" added before "product" in the definition.]

3.3.4.3 setup

process by which a system or component is prepared for *operation* ([3.3.4.4](#))

**3.3.4.4
operation**

product life cycle phase (3.3.4) comprising all technical, administrative and managerial actions, other than *maintenance* (3.3.4.5) actions, that result in the *supported product* (3.1.5) functioning according to its *intended use* (3.6.4.1)

**3.3.4.5
maintenance**

set of actions intended to retain a *product* (3.1.3) in, or restore it to, a useful and safe condition, in which it can perform the *intended use* (3.6.4.1)

**3.3.4.6
repair**

corrective *maintenance* (3.3.4.5) of defective or damaged parts or functions of a *product* (3.1.3)

[SOURCE: IEC/IEEE 82079-1:2019, 3.31]

**3.3.4.7
emergency operation**

set of actions and functions intended to end or avert an emergency situation

[SOURCE: ISO 12100:2010, 3.39, modified — "all" has been replaced by "set of" at the beginning of the definition.]

**3.3.4.7.1
emergency stop**

emergency operation (3.3.4.7) by means of a single human action

**3.3.4.8
storage**

life cycle phase of a physical *product* (3.1.3) being kept available in an adequate environment

**3.3.4.9
decommissioning**

life cycle phase of a physical *product* (3.1.3) being *put out of service* (3.3.2) permanently

**3.3.4.10
disposal**

life cycle phase of a physical *product* (3.1.3) describing its elimination or repurposing

**3.3.4.11
recycling**

life cycle phase involving the repurposing of a material or component which has previously been processed for inclusion in a *product* (3.1.3)

[SOURCE: ISO 10209:2022, 3.13.5, modified — "action of reprocessing" has been replaced by "life cycle phase involving the repurposing" at the beginning of the definition.]

3.4 Concepts relating to information for use

**3.4.1
information type**

class of information determined according to structural principles

**3.4.2
conceptual information**

information for use (3.1.2) which explains and describes the relevant operating principles of the *supported product* (3.1.5)

EXAMPLE *Functional description* (3.4.2.1).