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Photography — Electronic still-picture cameras — Methods for measuring opto-electronic conversion functions (OECFs)

Photographie — Appareils de prises de vue électroniques — Méthodes de mesure des fonctions de conversion opto-électroniques



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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.

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

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member 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 shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 14524 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 42, *Photography*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 14524:1999), which has been technically revised.

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Introduction

This International Standard establishes standard methods for measuring the functional relationship between the focal plane log exposures or scene luminances, and the digital output levels of a digital camera. This information is required for the development and testing of digital cameras, is used in other electronic still-picture camera measurement standards and may be helpful in the processing of digital image data.

An opto-electronic conversion function (OECF) measurement standard is required for several reasons, as outlined below.

- a) Well-established measurement methods have been used to determine the characteristic curves for television cameras, where the characteristic curve is known as the “gamma correction” curve, and for silver halide photography, where the characteristic curve is known as the “H&D” or “DlogH” curve. However, these methods cannot be easily or unambiguously applied to the characterization of electronic still-picture cameras.
- b) The sampling and quantization processes found in digital systems present fundamental issues that need to be addressed in a standardized manner.
- c) The flexibility of digital systems complicates the determination and presentation of the functional relationship between the camera's optical input and digital output levels. This International Standard attempts to account for all the variables and ensure that results are presented in a consistent fashion.

The OECF of a digital camera might appear to be the analogue of the characteristic curve used in photography and television, but this observation is only partly true. Characteristic curves show the relationship between a physical input, such as log exposure or reflectance, and a physical output, such as density or volts. The OECF, on the other hand, shows the relation between a similar physical input and a digital code value assigned to the physical response produced by that input. Since this assignation can be arbitrary, digital values themselves do not have physical meaning or units. For example, a change of a factor of two in digital values could correspond to a doubling of the physical response to the input, to an order of magnitude change, or to something else, depending on how the code values are assigned.

In digital photography applications, it is generally not necessary to know the physical response produced in a digital camera. It is sufficient to know what digital values will be produced by a variety of inputs. Consequently, this International Standard does not specify how to measure the true characteristic curve of a digital camera. Rather, it specifies how to measure the relationship between the input to a digital camera and the digital code values produced. These values are only absolutely meaningful in that they represent information. The graphical reporting formats specified in this International Standard support this viewpoint by allowing OECFs to be reported with either digital code values or bits on the vertical axis. This is the convention in information theory. Users of this International Standard are advised that the actual physical response of a digital camera, or of a complete digital photography system, can be linear, logarithmic, or something else, regardless of the form of the OECF plot and whether digital code values or bits are reported on the vertical axis.

NOTE In accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, commas are used rather than full-stops as the decimal radix in this International Standard.