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Photography — Archiving systems — Imaging systems quality analysis —

Part 1: Reflective originals

Photographie — Systèmes d'archivage — Analyse de la qualité des systèmes d'image —

Partie 1: Documents réfléchissants

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Foreword

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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 documents 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).

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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 42, *Photography*.

This first edition of ISO 19264-1 cancels and replaces the first edition of ISO/TS 19264-1, which has been technically revised.

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.

Introduction

Electronic imaging systems, such as scanners and cameras, can be used for digitizing physical records, e.g. documents, pictures, maps. The resulting digital images can be more or less accurate in terms of how well they reproduce the original record's tones, colours, details, etc. These and other characteristics of a digital image can be assessed by imaging systems' quality analysis. In general, the achievable accuracy of digital reproductions depends on the nature of the original record and the digitization, especially the performance of the imaging system and the applied system settings.

In some organizations, e.g. within the archiving and cultural heritage field, where considerable resources are put into digitization projects, it is key to ensure that the required imaging systems' quality is met and that it is consistent. To this end, imaging systems' quality analysis can assist those developing or acquiring imaging systems with the assessment and verification of system performance, such as the specified resolution and dynamic range of a scanner, and the comparative performance of different imaging systems. Imaging systems' quality analysis is also used for setting up and calibrating imaging systems as well as for enhancing their performance. Finally, imaging systems' quality analysis is used for assessing accuracy and controlling imaging consistency over time. Note, that while the need to ensure imaging systems' quality is generic, the required level of imaging systems' quality and accuracy is use-case specific. For example, when digitizing watercolours it is usually essential to reach a high degree of accuracy in the capture of the colour information, while this is not normally equally critical when digitizing newspapers. Also, some image processing programs, such as Optical Character Recognition (OCR), are more accurate if the contrast is enhanced during imaging.

In practice, imaging systems' quality is analysed by digitizing a physical reference target (test chart) with known (measured) values and comparing these reference values to the corresponding captured values represented in the digital image file (see Figure 1).

The use of a test chart ensures that the imaging systems' quality characteristics can be determined objectively. However, to be usable the quality of the target needs to exceed the performance of the imaging system. For example, to determine the resolution of an imaging system, the target needs to have a technical pattern with more details than the system is capable of resolving. Imaging systems' quality analysis reports how accurately the imaging system reproduces the reference target. Therefore, if the original record differs significantly from the target, e.g. with respect to tone, tonal range, colours, details, and light reflectance/absorbance, this may, in spite of a well performing system, compromise the accuracy of the reproduced image. See also References [29] and [32] Ideally, the targets should resemble the nature of the original material. However, given the many different types of original records this is often not practical or technically impossible. Even though systems may perform differently on the different types of originals this document provides tools to verify if a system is accurately calibrated and in general performs well on a selected type of original. This is sufficient in most cases because systems are usually designed to handle various types of originals (being close to the Luther condition[42]) Performance on specific types of originals however can only be verified if the tools are made of that material. It is also important to note that an accurate reproduction usually requires subsequent processing to render a visually pleasing image.

There are ISO standards for objectively measuring different performance characteristics of imaging systems, e.g. resolution, noise, dynamic range, tone and colour reproduction (see Clause 2). This document combines all of the standards that relate to the imaging systems quality analysis for cultural heritage and defines a tool set to apply them to these devices and workflows. These tools are based on the use of a test chart with multiple technical patterns coupled with software that allows the user to analyse several imaging systems' quality characteristics simultaneously and receive comprehensive results. However, these tools are not based on a standardized image quality analysis method, which has caused confusion among users. With the publication of this specification imaging systems' quality analysis tools can refer to an ISO document.

To support this document a standard with a glossary including all relevant terms and definitions has been developed (ISO 19262). Further this document is accompanied by a Technical Report (ISO/TR 19263-1) that provides practical guidance on how to use this document.