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## **Information and documentation — Guidelines for bibliographic references and citations to information resources**

*Information et documentation — Principes directeurs pour la  
rédaction des références bibliographiques et des citations des  
ressources d'information*



Reference number  
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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 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](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

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 Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 9, *Identification and description*.

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 690:2010), which has been technically revised.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- guidelines for citing electronic resources have been substantially extended;
- guidelines for using persistent identifiers, permalinks and Web archives are included;
- the document has been restructured to improve its readability.

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).



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## Introduction

Citations enable the identification and location of information resources. More importantly, citations are used to link new and derivative knowledge to existing knowledge sources, and therefore play an important role in transmission and retainment of knowledge — a process which forms the basis for the advancement of culture and science in human civilization.

In an age of democratized computing and network resources, it is increasingly important to have a consistent mechanism for citing information resources — a set of guidelines for citations that cover the proliferation of new information resource types, to enable the referencing of information resources of the past, of the present and of the future. This new edition of ISO 690 aims to address that while formalizing traditional practices.

This document describes a set of principles and practical guidelines for the creation of references and requirements for the citation of information resources. Information resources that can be cited are of diverse types, such as printed and electronic documents, from monographs to serials, cartographic to audiovisual resources, software to datasets, patents to reports and websites.

Specifically, this document provides a system for citing information resources that renders deterministic output. A citation generated by this system can be uniquely mapped back to the originally defined set of source elements. This system is intended to be applicable across all natural languages.

The citation system is built on a set of common metadata elements for information resources accompanied by a set of rendering rules. For information resource types that require additional details, for instance, audiovisual material, art and graphics as well as online resources, the system provides supplementary rules and data elements in order to handle those information resources in a tailored manner, according to established practices in these fields.

The citation system described in this document can be considered as a configurable framework for building citation styles. For example, the delimitations and context separator symbols and rules used in the citation rendering mechanism can be substituted with other methods or typographical features. It is possible to adopt partial guidance of this document and apply it to any citation style, such as to citation guidelines published by scientific periodicals or universities. This document uses an exemplar citation style, but does not indicate preference for one citation style over another.

While this document does not mandate a reference listing system, [Annex A](#) does provide definitions for a number of such systems. In this document, the numeric citation system (see [A.3](#)) is used for displaying references. [Annex B](#) specifies practices for referencing archived Web information resources.

This document does not discuss the importance of citation accuracy in detail. Citation guidelines published by universities<sup>1)</sup>, and a Web site dedicated to the prevention of plagiarism<sup>2)</sup> cover this topic well. Providing the reasons for importance of citations in science is not within the scope of this document. A few examples of sources which should always be cited are given in [Clause 5](#).

This document contains many URL-based links to Web resources. Persistence of such links cannot be guaranteed in the long term. If a resource has disappeared or if it seems that it might have changed significantly, readers are advised to retrieve the linked content from a Web archive.

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1) For example <https://pr.princeton.edu/pub/integrity/pages/cite/>, <https://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/citing-your-sources/avoiding-plagiarism-cite-your-source>.

2) <https://www.plagiarism.org/>.