

STANDARD

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Information and documentation — Commands for interactive text searching

*Information et documentation — Commandes pour les systèmes
interactifs de recherche d'information*



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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.

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.

International Standard ISO 8777 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Sub-Committee SC 4, *Computer applications in information and documentation*.

Annexes A, B, C and D of this International Standard are for information only.

Introduction

A consequence of the many information retrieval systems that exist today is the great number of different commands, types of command language and even search philosophies in existence. A way to facilitate the use of such systems, particularly for the more infrequent user, is to create a standard user interface consisting of a basic set of commands and rules for their use. This International Standard is intended for that purpose.

Many types of user-system interface are used with interactive search systems, and this International Standard, recognizing this variety, is addressed to one particular type of interface, namely, command-driven systems.

The mode of operation of search systems complying with this International Standard is often known as user-driven dialogue, where most actions are initiated by the user issuing commands to this system; however, this does not preclude the system requiring answers to specific questions on occasion.

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Information and documentation — Commands for interactive text searching

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies a basic set of commands for the interactive search of retrieval systems data and the types of response expected from the processing system. It is intended for use by designers and users of information retrieval systems, including computer-based library catalogues and computer-based database access and search facilities.

This International Standard does not restrict or prohibit the use of other types of user-system interaction, such as menus or natural language interfaces, or the use of a "native" (non-standard) command language.

NOTE 1 If the meaning of a standard command name conflicts with the meaning of a command name in the "native" language, the function of the standard command name is preferred.

Some systems incorporate fewer functions than specified in this International Standard; others use additional functions. These additional functions may include added command names, operators or qualification and limitation techniques. It is important that additional functions and the type of response they generate conform to the general features and syntax set out in this International Standard.

2 Normative reference

The following standard contains provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. At the time of publication, the edition indicated was valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the standard indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO/IEC 646:1991, *Information technology — ISO 7-bit coded character set for information interchange.*

3 Definitions

The definitions in this International Standard are intended to reflect the point of view of the user. They are not intended to reflect the technical or engineering aspects of computers. For the purposes of this International Standard, the following definitions apply.

3.1 basic index: Index associated with *fields* that are searched when no *field* designations are stated.

3.2 command expression: Complete request for the performance of a function.

3.3 command name: Specially defined *reserved word* or abbreviation used to initiate a *command expression*.

3.4 command specification: String of characters following a *command name*, specifying how and on what the *command expression* is to operate.

3.5 connector: Symbol used to link *search terms* and *qualifiers*.

3.6 default: Value automatically assumed by the system, unless the user specifies a different value or values.

3.7 field: As a subset of a *record*, structured data treated as a unit and used to store a particular type of data.

3.8 field label: String of characters used to uniquely identify a particular *field* defined in a *record*.

3.9 masking: Symbolizing unknown or unspecified character(s) in a *search term* by special characters that are defined to represent any character or characters, no characters, or blank spaces.