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Second edition  
2007-05-15

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## Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Code 39 bar code symbology specification

*Technologies de l'information — Techniques d'identification  
automatique et de capture des données — Spécifications des  
symbologies des codes à barres, code 39*

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Reference number  
ISO/IEC 16388:2007(E)



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Published in Switzerland

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work. In the field of information technology, ISO and IEC have established a joint technical committee, ISO/IEC JTC 1.

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

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

ISO/IEC 16388 was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 31, *Automatic identification and data capture techniques*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/IEC 16388:1999), which has been technically revised.

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## Introduction

The technology of bar coding is based on the recognition of patterns encoded in bars and spaces of defined dimensions. There are numerous methods of encoding information in bar code form, known as symbologies. Code 39 is one such symbology. The rules defining the translation of characters into bar and space patterns and other essential features are known as the symbology specification.

In the past, symbology specifications were developed and published by a number of organizations, resulting in certain instances in conflicting requirements for certain symbologies.

Manufacturers of bar code equipment and users of bar code technology require publicly available standard symbology specifications to which they can refer when developing equipment and application standards.