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Part 3: Unified speech and audio coding

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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.

ISO/IEC 23003-3 was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 29, *Coding of audio, picture, multimedia and hypermedia information*.

ISO/IEC 23003 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Information technology — MPEG audio technologies*:

- *Part 1: MPEG Surround*
- *Part 2: Spatial Audio Object Coding (SAOC)*
- *Part 3: Unified speech and audio coding*

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Introduction

As mobile appliances become multi-functional, multiple devices converge into a single device. Typically, a wide variety of multimedia content is required to be played on or streamed to these mobile devices, including audio data that consists of a mix of speech and music.

This part of ISO/IEC 23003 Unified Speech and Audio Coding (USAC) is a new audio coding standard that allows for coding of speech, audio or any mixture of speech and audio with a consistent audio quality for all sound material over a wide range of bitrates. It supports single and multi-channel coding at high bitrates and provides perceptually transparent quality. At the same time, it enables very efficient coding at very low bitrates while retaining the full audio bandwidth.

Where previous audio codecs had specific strengths in coding either speech or audio content, USAC is able to encode all content equally well, regardless of the content type.

In order to achieve equally good quality for coding audio and speech, the developers of USAC employed the proven MDCT-based transform coding techniques known from MPEG-4 audio and combined them with specialized speech coder elements like ACELP. Parametric coding tools such as MPEG-4 spectral band replication (SBR) and MPEG-D MPEG surround were enhanced and tightly integrated into the codec. The result delivers highly efficient coding and operates down to the lowest bit rates.

The main focus of this codec are applications in the field of typical broadcast scenarios, multi-media download to mobile devices, user-generated content such as podcasts, digital radio, mobile TV, audio books, etc.

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