GUIDE 71

Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities

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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.

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ISO/IEC Guide 71 was prepared by an ad hoc TAG (Technical Advisory Group) based on the preliminary work undertaken by a COPOLCO (Committee on Consumer Policy) Working Group, at the request of the ISO/TMB Secretariat.

0   Introduction

0.1   It is an important goal for the whole of society that all people have access to products, services, workplaces and environments. The issue of accessibility to and usability of products and services has become more critical with the increasing percentage of older persons in the world's population. While not all older persons have disabilities, the prevalence of disability or limitations is highest among this demographic group.

0.2   The needs and abilities of people change as they advance from childhood to old age and the abilities of individuals in any particular age group vary substantially. It is important to recognize that functional and cognitive limitations vary from comparatively minor, such as mild hearing loss or use of spectacles only to read, to blindness, deafness or the inability to move part or all of one's body. It should be noted that although some limitations may be minor in nature, in combination, as is the case in ageing, these can pose a significant problem.

0.3   For many years, standards bodies at the national and international level have addressed the needs of persons with disabilities in the development of specific standards in the area of assistive technology and accessible building design. However, the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities are not being adequately addressed when other relevant standards for everyday products and services are written or revised. Standards bodies are starting to address ageing and disability issues and will, increasingly, develop and implement policies and programmes in their products and services to include the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities. It is important to ensure the representation of interests of older persons and persons with disabilities in the development of these solutions.

0.4   This Guide is intended to be part of the overall framework that standards bodies can use in their efforts to support the need for more accessible products and services. The ISO/IEC Policy Statement 2000 — *Addressing the Needs of Older Persons and People with Disabilities in Standardization Work* sets out the principles for ensuring that the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities[1] are incorporated in the standards-making process, providing justification on humanitarian and economic grounds. This Guide supplements the ISO/IEC Policy Statement by identifying problem areas which need to be considered when drafting standards, recognizing the constraint that standards should normally not be design-restrictive. It is intended for those involved in the preparation and revision of International Standards but also contains information which may be useful for others such as manufacturers, designers, service providers and educators.

0.5   Of necessity, guidance provided in this Guide is general. Usability issues for people with impairments are identified without specific solutions. It is recognized that additional sector-related guides need to be developed for specific product or service sectors.

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1)   Developments in the field of accessibility have resulted in the creation and use of a wide variety of terms and definitions, related to older persons and disability, which differ throughout the world. For example, some people prefer to use the term "people with disabilities" and others prefer "disabled people". Overall, terms have evolved to become more precise and descriptive, rather than negative or stigmatizing. As no universal practice exists, the terms used in this Guide reflect the language generally used by international agencies such as the United Nations Organization and the World Health Organization.