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**Electronic imaging — Recommendations
for the management of electronic recording
systems for the recording of documents
that may be required as evidence, on
WORM optical disk**

*Imagerie électronique — Recommandations relatives à la gestion des
systèmes électroniques d'enregistrement, pour l'enregistrement de
documents ayant valeur de preuve, sur disque optique WORM*



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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 main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards, but in exceptional circumstances a technical committee may propose the publication of a Technical Report of one of the following types:

- type 1, when the required support cannot be obtained for the publication of an International Standard, despite repeated efforts;
- type 2, when the subject is still under technical development or where for any other reason there is the future but not immediate possibility of an agreement on an International Standard;
- type 3, when a technical committee has collected data of a different kind from that which is normally published as an International Standard ("state of the art", for example).

Technical Reports of types 1 and 2 are subject to review within three years of publication, to decide whether they can be transformed into International Standards. Technical Reports of type 3 do not necessarily have to be reviewed until the data they provide are considered to be no longer valid or useful.

ISO/TR 12654, which is a Technical Report of type 3, was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 171, *Document imaging applications*, Subcommittee SC 3, *General issues*.

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Introduction

Although this Technical Report refers only to WORM optical disk systems this does not necessarily imply that other recording systems are unlikely to be legally acceptable. As noted below this is for the courts to decide. Other documents are in preparation by ISO/TC 171/SC 3 addressing other recording systems.

Many organizations now use optical storage media for keeping records generated or received in the normal course of business. Optical storage systems provide a particularly compact form of storage that facilitates an efficient method of retrieval, provided an index is maintained.

For the purpose of legal admissibility, electronic images can replace large volumes of paper files only if the organization is confident that documents may be destroyed once their images have been recorded. Occasionally documents produced in the normal course of business have to be produced in evidence and at that stage the legal admissibility of electronic images of documents becomes important.

Unlike information written on paper, which is directly intelligible, information recorded on optical storage media requires electronic equipment, e.g. a computer terminal, to make it intelligible to the reader. The integrity of an electronic image of a document can best be demonstrated by showing that it was made, and the hard copy version destroyed, with proper safeguards, as, part of normal business practice.

This Technical Report has therefore been prepared to help organizations that use, or plan to use, optical storage for documents to ensure that properly planned and authorized procedures are introduced and followed, so that, if a document should be required in evidence, its electronic image can be shown to have been produced as part of normal business practice and its integrity established. Because the laws of evidence vary from one country to another, the advice given in this Technical Report is very general. Legal experts should be consulted about the requirements for legal admissibility that apply in any particular country.

WARNING

Readers should note that it is for their national legal system to decide what is admissible and how much weight is attached to it. No guarantee can be given that the electronic image of any document will automatically be admissible.

Any organization that decides to establish a system for storing records on optical disk should seek legal advice in the country in which the system will operate.