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First edition  
2012-11-01

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## Information and documentation - Trusted third party repository for digital records

*Information et documentation — Référentiel tiers de confiance pour  
les enregistrements électroniques*



Reference number  
ISO/TR 17068:2012(E)

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Published in Switzerland

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## Foreword

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The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. 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.

In exceptional circumstances, 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), it may decide by a simple majority vote of its participating members to publish a Technical Report. A Technical Report is entirely informative in nature and does not have to be reviewed until the data it provides are considered to be no longer valid or useful.

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ISO/TR 17068 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 11, *Archives/records management*.

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## Introduction

As digital records are the inevitable by-products of various business activities in electronic and/or digital systems, there is an increasing need to secure the legal admissibility of digital records during their period of retention. It is internationally agreed that “digital records shall not be denied validity or enforceability of legal recognition by reason of their format alone”<sup>1)</sup>. Despite this, it may be very difficult for an organization to assert that its digital records are authentic and able to act as effective evidence of business action over a long period. In many cases legal admissibility of digital records managed by organizations’ records systems may not be ensured. As a result, there is a growing need for certification services for digital records by neutral third parties.

In order to protect digital records from business disputes during the period they are required for sustaining legal obligation and ongoing retention, it is essential to ensure that the authenticity, reliability and integrity of digital records endures.

Digital signatures are a well-known means of maintaining the integrity of digital records. However, as a digital signature can only ensure integrity within its validity time (generally one to two years or less), most digitally signed records cannot ensure their integrity for longer than this validity time. As a result, it may be very difficult for an individual record system to prove the integrity of their digital records for the period of retention obligation, where this is longer than the validity period of the digital signature.

A possible solution can be provided by a Trusted Third Party Repository (TTPR) service.

A TTPR is defined as a set of services, systems and personnel that ensure that digital records, entrusted to it by a client, remain and can be asserted to be reliable and authentic, with the aim of providing reliable access to managed digital records to its clients for the period of obligation for retention. A TTPR for digital records should provide trustworthy services for clients, which can be examined by interested parties (i.e. inspector, auditor, evaluator). These TTPR services are helpful to identify the evidence admissibility of clients’ digital records as a source of evidence.

This Technical Report describes the specific requirements for the trustworthy services provided by a TTPR. Its main purpose is to ensure that digital records can retain the relevant evidence and information in an ensured and trusted manner during the required period of retention.

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1) UNCITRAL 200t, United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communication in International Contracts.