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Long-term preservation of electronic document-based information

Conservation à long terme d'information document basée électronique



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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.

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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is entirely informative in nature and does not have to be reviewed until the data it provides are considered to be no longer valid or useful.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 18492 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 171, *Document management applications*, Subcommittee SC 3, *General issues*.

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Introduction

Ensuring the long-term preservation of authentic electronic document-based information is a well-documented and identified problem within many fields of expertise, including archival science, document management, e-commerce, e-governance and technology development. As an additional problem, individuals and organizations charged with the responsibility for ensuring long-term access to authentic electronic document-based information have employed a diversity of strategies designed to achieve this goal.

Although there is a clear need to address the problem of long-term access to authentic electronic document-based information, there is a current lack of harmonized international guidance on these issues. This has led to diverse and, sometimes, incompatible approaches that can give rise to potentially mission-critical problems, regarding the accessibility and/or authenticity of the electronic document-based information being retained.

Acknowledging the generic technological obsolescence problem of computer hardware and software as well as the limited life of digital storage media, this Technical Report provides guidance to storage repositories in providing access to and maintaining authentic electronic document-based information that has been retained for future reference.

The purpose of this Technical Report is to provide a clear framework for strategy development and best practices that can be applied to a broad range of public and private sector electronic document-based information to ensure its long-term accessibility and authenticity.