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Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Code 39 bar code symbology specification

Technologies de l'information — Techniques automatiques d'identification et de capture des données — Spécifications des symbologies des codes à barres, code 39

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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 procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives or www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents) or the IEC list of patent declarations received (see patents.iec.ch).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html. In the IEC, see www.iec.ch/understanding-standards.

This document was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 31, *Automatic identification and data capture techniques*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 16388:2007), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

— the grading of parameter “Inter character gap” in 4.6.2.2 has been corrected;

— a NOTE has been added below Table A.2 about possible alternate representation of a minus sign, a period or the numbers 0 to 9 by character pairs.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user’s national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html and www.iec.ch/national-committees.

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Introduction

The technology of bar coding is based on the recognition of patterns encoded in bars and spaces of defined dimensions. There are numerous methods of encoding information in bar code form, known as symbologies. Code 39 is one such symbology. The rules defining the translation of characters into bar and space patterns and other essential features are known as the symbology specification.

In the past, symbology specifications were developed and published by a number of organizations, resulting in certain instances in conflicting requirements for certain symbologies.

Manufacturers of bar code equipment and users of bar code technology require publicly available standard symbology specifications to which they can refer when developing equipment and application standards.

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Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Code 39 bar code symbology specification

1 Scope

This document specifies the requirements for the bar code symbology known as Code 39. This document specifies Code 39 symbology characteristics, data character encodation, dimensions, tolerances, decoding algorithms and parameters to be defined by applications. This document specifies the symbology identifier prefix strings for Code 39 symbols.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 646, *Information technology — ISO 7-bit coded character set for information interchange*

ISO/IEC 15416, *Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Bar code print quality test specification — Linear symbols*

ISO/IEC 15424, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Data Carrier Identifiers (including Symbology Identifiers)*

ISO/IEC 19762, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture (AIDC) techniques — Harmonized vocabulary*

3 Terms and definition

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 19762 apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

4 Requirements

4.1 Symbology characteristics

The characteristics of Code 39 are as follows.

a) Encodable character set:

   1) full alphanumeric A to Z and 0 to 9 (ASCII characters 65 to 90 and 48 to 57 inclusive, in accordance with ISO/IEC 646 IRV);

   2) special characters: space $ % + - . / (ASCII characters 32, 36, 37, 43, 45, 46 and 47, respectively, in accordance with ISO/IEC 646 IRV);

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