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Foreword (This foreword is not part of American National Standard INCITS 580-2025.)

This document was developed by the Inclusive Terminology committee of the Accredited Standards Committee INCITS during 2022, 2023, and 2024. The standards approval process was started in 2024.

Requests for interpretation, suggestions for improvement or addenda, or defect reports are welcome. They should be sent to the InterNational Committee for Information Technology (INCITS), 700 K Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20001.

This document was processed and approved for submittal to ANSI by the InterNational Committee for Information Technology Standards (INCITS). Committee approval of the standard does not necessarily imply that all committee members voted for approval. At the time it approved this document, INCITS had the following members:

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Introduction

Information products (which include documents, media and technical communications, in any form) in the US affect a wide range of people who can participate in the development, operation and use of information technology. The choice of language in technical communications determines to what extent stakeholders can focus on the content and intended purpose of the communication.

The technical community has become aware of language, concepts and framing – some that have been in use for long periods of time – that can create or perpetuate offense, bias and stereotypes directly or indirectly and explicitly or implicitly. Words and phrases are called terms and terminology in this document, and those that express such language, concepts and framing are called non-inclusive.

Inclusive language that does not offend or distract helps improve acceptance of the message, and the associated product or service. Non-inclusive terminology has the opposite effect: it is perceived or is likely to be perceived as unwelcoming, biased, discriminatory, disrespectful or offensive. This document includes requirements and guidance for using inclusive language in technical communications, in US English, with reference to US culture, in the Information Technology sector. This document can also be applicable outside this context.

This document can be implemented in several ways, including:

- Incorporation into law, regulation, or organizational policy;
- Incorporation via profiles into other standards;
- Extending this document with additional audience-specific and community-specific guidance or policy;
- Incorporation into business and technology processes, e.g., automated content scanning and flagging;
- Reviewing content based upon the guidance of this document;
- Developing guidance for scenarios outside of US English, US culture, or outside of information technology.

This document uses formatting styles, such as *italic* and ~~strike-thru~~, when showing examples or to draw attention to specific words.

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American National Standard
for Information Technology –

Inclusive Terminology

1 Scope

Inclusive terminology is terminology perceived or likely to be perceived as neutral or welcoming by everyone, regardless of their sex, gender, race [1], colour, religion or any other characteristic. This document specifies requirements, recommendations and guidance on the use of inclusive terminology for human and machine-readable content in the information and communication technology sector. This document is intended for anyone who interacts with such content, including developers, engineers, administrators, linguists, policy makers and users.

This document consists of:

— Processes for identifying terms with negative connotations;
— Processes for replacing and mitigating terms with negative connotations;
— A list of common terms with negative connotations.

The specific terms and discussion of gendered language in this document apply to the English language.

2 Normative References

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and Definitions

3.1 General

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions 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/

3.2 Conformity-related terms

3.2.1
implementation (of a normative document)
realization, to any degree, of a normative document

[Adapted from ISO/IEC 15444-4 and ISO/IEC Guide 2, Clause 10]

Note 1 to entry: An object that fulfils none of a normative document can still be considered an implementation, albeit a non-conforming implementation.

Note 2 to entry: A normative document can be said to be "implemented" in two different ways. It can be applied in production, trade, or other circumstances, such as creating a product or service that described by that normative document; and it can be adopted, wholly or in part, in another normative document. Through the medium of this second document, it can then be applied, or it can again be adopted in yet another normative

[1] The concept of race is no longer recognized as having scientific validity, but is still prevalent in laws, regulations, and the collection of demographic data.

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document. For example, when a national standards body adopts an international standard, it is said this national standard "implements" the international standard.

3.2.2
conformity
fulfilment of a requirement

[Source: ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex SL, Appendix 2]

3.2.3
non-conformity
non-fulfilment of a requirement

[Source: ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex SL, Appendix 2]

3.2.4
conforming
property, with respect to a normative document, that indicates the satisfaction of requirements

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 20944-1:2013]

3.2.5
non-conforming
property, with respect to a normative document, that indicates the lack of satisfaction of requirements

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 20944-1:2013]

3.2.6
conformance
act of conforming

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 20944-1:2013]

Note 1 to entry: The distinction between "conformance" and "conformity" is the former refers to an action while the latter refers to a state.

Note 2 to entry: Conformance applies to the standard as a whole, whereas conformity can apply to individual provisions of a standard, e.g., object X conforms to subclause 9.10.

3.2.7
attestation
issue of a statement, based on a decision, that fulfilment of specified requirements has been demonstrated

[SOURCE: ISO 17000:2020]

Note 1 to entry: The resulting statement is intended to convey the assurance that the specified requirements have been fulfilled. Such an assurance does not, of itself, provide contractual or other legal guarantees.

Note 2 to entry: First-party attestation and third-party attestation are distinguished by the term's declaration, certification and accreditation, but there is no corresponding term applicable to second-party attestation.

3.2.8
declaration of conformity
first-party attestation

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 29109-1:2009]

3.2.9
implementation conformance statement
ICS
statement made by the supplier of an implementation claimed to conform to one or more specifications, stating which capabilities have been implemented, specifically including the relevant optional capabilities and limits

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 20944-1:2013]

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3.2.10
interoperability
capability to communicate, execute programs or transfer data among various functional units in a manner that requires the user to have little or no knowledge of the unique characteristics of those units

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 2382:2015]

3.3 Inclusivity

3.3.1
identity
set of attributes, including qualities, beliefs, traits and abilities, that characterize a person or a group

3.3.2
inclusion
inclusiveness
practice of including all stakeholders in organizational contexts

[SOURCE: ISO 30415:2021]

Note 1 to entry: Inclusion can involve stakeholders from different groups being accepted, welcomed, and enabled to have a voice and develop a sense of belonging.

Note 2 to entry: Inclusion can involve offering opportunities to people based on their knowledge, skills and abilities that are relevant to their performance.

Note 3 to entry: Inclusion can involve providing access to resources that enable participation from individuals or groups whose participation would otherwise be impractical or impossible.

3.3.3
inclusive culture
values, beliefs and practices that influence the conduct and behaviour of people and organizations by including and valuing the perspectives and contributions of the broadest range of stakeholders

[SOURCE: ISO 30415:2021]

3.3.4
inclusive behaviour
conduct that promotes inclusion

[SOURCE: ISO 30415:2021]

Note 1 to entry: Organizations can enable conditions that encourage inclusive behaviour.

Note 2 to entry: Individuals within an organization demonstrate inclusive behaviour when they enable everyone to have a voice and accept and value the perspectives and contributions of every stakeholder.

3.4 Term-related concepts

3.4.1
term
designation that represents a general concept by linguistic means

Note 1 to entry: Terms can be partly or wholly verbal.

Note 2 to entry: A term can also have one or more connotative meanings.

EXAMPLE:
“laser printer”, “planet”, “pacemaker”, “chemical compound”, “¾ time”, “Influenza A virus”, “oil painting”.

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3.4.2
term of art, n.
word or phrase that denotes a concept

3.4.3
denotation, n.
denotative, adj.
intended or primary meaning of a term

3.4.4
connotation, n.
connotative, adj.
meanings, ideas, feelings, emotions, images or imagery a term infers or invokes, in addition to its primary meaning

3.4.5
negative connotation, n.
defamatory, derogatory or exclusionary meanings a term infers or invokes

Note 1 to entry: A term with negative connotations infers or invokes negative feelings, negative imagery, negative emotions, negative image, lack of belonging or falsity.

3.4.6
inclusive term, n.
term that avoids negative connotations and is perceived or likely to be perceived as neutral or welcoming by everyone

3.4.7
non-inclusive term, n.
term that excludes, alienates, offends, or promotes bias or stereotypes regarding gender and gender identity, age, ability, nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics

3.5 Types of language

3.5.1
language
system of sounds, characters, symbols used for communication

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019]

3.5.2
natural language
language that is or was in active use in a community of people, and the rules of which are mainly deduced from usage

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019]

3.5.3
domain
subject field
field of special knowledge

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019]

3.5.4
general language
natural language characterized by the use of linguistic means of expression independent of any specific domain

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019]

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3.5.5
special language
natural language used in communication between experts in a domain and characterized by the use of specific linguistic means of expression

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019]

Note 1 to entry: The specific linguistic means of expression always includes domain-specific terminology and phraseology, and can also cover stylistic or syntactic features.

3.5.6
identity-first language, n.
linguistic style that identifies people in terms of their attributes or conditions, typically by putting the reference to their attribute or condition before the reference to the person or people

3.5.7
people-first language, n.
linguistic style that identifies people by putting the reference to the person or people before the reference to their attribute or condition

3.5.8
figurative language, n.
language in which the meaning of a word or phrase differs from its literal meaning, such as with a metaphor or idiom

3.5.9
anthropomorphic language, n.
language that attributes human characteristics or behaviors to anything other than a human

3.5.10
gendered language, n.
language that is unnecessarily associated with a particular gender identity

3.6 Content and audience

3.6.1
content, n.
interactive or non-interactive object containing information represented by text, image, video, sound or other media

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 23026:2023]

3.6.2
audience, n.
organizations and people who produce, consume or have an interest in particular content

3.6.3
community, n.
group of people with a common characteristic, identity or interest

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