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Systems and software engineering — Requirements for acquirers and suppliers of information products and services

Ingénierie du logiciel et des systèmes — Exigences pour les acquéreurs et les fournisseurs de produits et de services d'information

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Contents

Page

Foreword ..... **v**
Introduction ..... **vi**
1 Scope **1**
2 Normative references **2**
3 Terms and definitions **2**
4 Conformance **6**
4.1 General 6
4.2 Definition of conformance 6
4.3 Conformance situations 6
5 Information for users within a system or software life cycle **6**
6 Agreement processes within a system or software life cycle **7**
6.1 General 7
6.2 Acquisition process 8
6.2.1 Purpose of the acquisition process 8
6.2.2 Outcomes of the acquisition process 8
6.3 Acquisition activities 8
6.3.1 General 8
6.3.2 Acquisition preparation 9
6.3.3 Supplier selection 10
6.3.4 Negotiating the agreement 10
6.3.5 Management and monitoring of the acquisition 10
6.3.6 Acquirer acceptance 11
6.3.7 Acquisition closure 11
6.4 Supply process 11
6.4.1 Purpose of the supply process 11
6.4.2 Outcomes of the supply process 11
6.5 Supply activities 11
6.5.1 General 11
6.5.2 Opportunity identification and evaluation 12
6.5.3 Proposal preparation and submission 12
6.5.4 Negotiating the agreement 12
6.5.5 Supplier performance 12
6.5.6 Delivery 13
6.5.7 Packaging of printed material 14
7 Defining requirements and constraints for information products **14**
7.1 Aspects of requirements and constraints 14
7.2 Schedule constraints 14
7.3 Usability requirements 15
7.4 Product modification requirements 15
7.5 Localization and translation requirements 16
7.6 Legal requirements 16
7.7 Safety requirements 17
7.8 Security requirements 17
7.9 Standards and conventions 17
7.10 Quality management requirements 17
8 Specification of the information for users **17**
9 Statement of work **18**
10 Request for proposal **19**
10.1 Request for proposal topics 19
10.2 Project objectives 19
10.3 Requirements for supporting processes 19

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10.4 Supplier capabilities and experience 19
10.5 Instructions for bidders 20
10.6 List of deliverable information products or services 20
10.7 Confidentiality and intellectual property 20
10.8 Proposal evaluation criteria 21

11 Proposal contents and format 21
11.1 General 21
11.2 Understanding of requirements 21
11.3 Scope of the project 22
11.4 Processes 22
11.5 Experience, capabilities, and available resources 22
11.6 Schedule 23
11.7 Deliverables 23
11.8 Price proposal 23

Bibliography 24

IEEE notices and abstract 25

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

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 document 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).

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This document was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 7, *Software and systems engineering*, in cooperation with the Systems and Software Engineering Standards Committee of the IEEE Computer Society, under the Partner Standards Development Organization cooperation agreement between ISO and IEEE.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO/IEC/IEEE 26512:2018), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

— removal of superfluous definitions;

— updated version of the information management process from ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288;

— updates to the Bibliography.

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

This document supports the interest of users in having consistent, complete, accurate, and usable information. It addresses both available approaches to standardization:

a) process standards, which specify the way that information products are to be acquired and supplied;

b) information product standards, which specify the characteristics of the information.

As defined in ISO/IEC/IEEE 12207 and ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288, the acquisition and supply activities make up the agreement processes of the software or system life cycle. Acquisition and supply of information for users and related services are specializations of those processes. Such services can be acquired and supplied for any part of the information management process, such as the following:

— information management;

— information design and development;

— information editing and review coordination;

— information testing, particularly usability testing;

— information production and packaging of physical materials;

— information distribution and delivery;

— advice on the selection and implementation of information development tools and supporting systems; and

— information development process improvement.

This document was developed to assist users of ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288 or ISO/IEC/IEEE 12207 to acquire or supply systems and software information for users and information services as part of the life cycle processes. It defines the information development process from the acquirer's standpoint and the supplier's standpoint. This document addresses the identification, definition, and fulfilment of requirements for acquisition and supply of information for users as specializations of the acquisition and supply processes.

This document covers the requirements for information items used in the acquisition of information for users: the acquisition plan, information product specification, statement of work, request for proposals, and the proposal.

This document is independent of the software tools that can be used to produce information for users, and applies to both printed and on-screen material, and to other media such as video or augmented reality systems. Much of its guidance is applicable to information for users for systems including hardware as well as software.

Earlier standards tended to view the results of the information development process as a single book or multivolume set: a one-time deliverable. Increasingly, information acquirers and suppliers recognize that most information for users is now produced from managed re-use of previously developed information (single-source documentation) adapted for new software or system versions, or presentation in various on-screen and printed media. While this document does not describe how to set up a content management system, it is applicable for organizations practicing single-source documentation, as well as for acquirers and suppliers of one-time deliverables.

Anyone who uses products that contain software needs accurate information about how the software helps the user accomplish a task. Information for users can be the first tangible item that the user sees, and so influences the user's first impressions of the product. If the information is supplied in a convenient form and is easy to find and understand, the user can quickly become proficient at using the product. Therefore, well-designed information for users not only assists the user and helps to reduce the cost of training and support, but also enhances the reputation of the product, its producer, and its suppliers.

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Although software developers intend to design user interfaces that behave so intuitively that very little separate information is needed, this is rarely possible. Today's software offers increasingly robust functionality, not only within applications, but also across applications which intelligently exchange information with one another. Further, most software includes underlying rules and calculations, or algorithms that affect the results a user can obtain when using the software. These underlying programming mechanics are discernible by users, but only through laborious testing. For these and other reasons, information for users remains an essential component of usable software products and systems.

Information for users is often regarded as something done after the system has been implemented. However, for high-quality information, its development must be regarded as an integral part of the software or system life cycle. In fact, quality information for users or information management services are important enough to require specific planning.

Related standards for those acquiring and supplying information for software users include ISO/IEC/IEEE 26514, ISO/IEC/IEEE 26513 and IEEE 3119-2025. Other International Standards address the information for users and information management processes from the viewpoint of managers and agile projects.

This document is consistent with ISO/IEC/IEEE 12207 and ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288 as an implementation of the acquisition and supply processes, which comprise the agreement processes, and of the information management process.

This document is intended for use in all types of organizations, whether they have a department dedicated to information for users or not. It can be used as a basis for local standards and procedures. Readers are assumed to have experience or knowledge of general agreement processes for acquisition and supply of products and services.

The order of clauses in this document does not imply that the order of the acquisition activities to be performed, nor does it imply the order of development or presentation of information for users.

In each clause, the requirements are media-independent, as far as possible.

The Bibliography contains references to source material used in the development of this document, as well as sources of additional information that can be useful to acquirers and suppliers.

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Systems and software engineering — Requirements for acquirers and suppliers of information products and services

1 Scope

This document provides an overview of the information management processes that are relevant to the acquisition and supply of information for users. It applies the agreement processes (acquisition and supply) to information for users, and addresses the preparation of requirements for this information. These requirements are central to the information for users specification and statement of work discussed in this document. This document also addresses requirements for primary information outputs of the acquisition and supply process: the request for proposal and the proposal for information products and services.

This document is intended for use in acquiring or supplying any type of information for users and is independent of information development or management tools or methodologies.

This document can be helpful for acquiring and supplying the following types of information, although it does not cover all aspects of them:

— multimedia systems using animation, video, and sound;

— computer-based training (CBT) packages and specialized course materials intended primarily for use in formal training programs;

— maintenance information describing the internal operation of systems software;

— virtual reality and augmented reality;

— collaboratively generated, often known as “wiki”, information, which is curated periodically;

— information for users incorporated into the user interface.

This document is applicable to acquirers and suppliers of information for users, including a variety of specialists:

— analysts (e.g. business analysts, human factors engineers) who identify the tasks that the intended users perform with the system;

— managers of the software or system development process or the information management process;

— managers of the acquisition process, and those who authorize and approve acquisitions;

— managers and authors involved in proposal preparation.

It can also be consulted by those with other roles and interests in the information development process:

— information designers and architects who plan the structure, format, and content requirements of information products;

— experienced authors and editors who develop the written content for information for users;

— graphic designers with expertise in electronic media;

— user interface designers and ergonomics experts working together to design the presentation of the information on the screen;

— usability testers, information development reviewers, subject-matter experts;

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— developers of tools for creating on-screen information.

2 Normative references

The following document is referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of its 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/IEEE 12207:2017, *Systems and software engineering — Software life cycle processes*

ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288:2023, *Systems and software engineering — System life cycle processes*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO, IEC and IEEE 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 http://www.electropedia.org

— IEEE Standards Dictionary Online: available at http://dictionary.ieee.org

NOTE For additional terms and definitions in the field of systems and software engineering, see ISO/IEC/IEEE 24765, which is published periodically as a "snapshot" of the SEVOCAB (Systems and Software Engineering Vocabulary) database and is publicly accessible at www.computer.org/sevocab.

3.1
accessibility
extent to which *products* (3.17), systems, services, environments, and facilities can be used by people from a population with the widest range of characteristics and capabilities to achieve a specified goal in a specified context of use

Note 1 to entry: Although "accessibility" typically addresses *users* (3.27) who have disabilities, the concept is not limited to disability issues.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 25064:2013, 4.1, modified — The original note 1 to entry has been replaced by a new one.]

3.2
agreement
mutual acknowledgment of terms and conditions under which a working relationship is conducted

Note 1 to entry: In many countries, agreements do not have to be written but the terms of the agreements referred to in this document are defined in writing.

Note 2 to entry: The relationship can have other names, such as "contract". The acquirer determines which term is to be used in the application of this document.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEEE 15288:2023, 3.4, modified — EXAMPLE has been removed; notes 1 and 2 to entry have been added.]

3.3
audience
category of *users* (3.27) sharing the same or similar characteristics and needs

Note 1 to entry: There can be different audiences for information for users (e.g. management, data entry, maintenance) that determine the content, structure, and use of the information.

Note 2 to entry: An example of user needs is the reason for using the information, tasks, education level, abilities, training and experience.

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3.4
change control procedure
actions taken to identify, describe, review, and authorize changes to a *software* (3.21) or information *product* (3.17)

Note 1 to entry: The procedures help to ensure that the validity of changes is confirmed, that the effects on other items are examined, and that those people concerned with the *development* (3.8) are notified of the changes.

3.5
configuration management
discipline applying technical and administrative direction and surveillance to identify and describe the functional and physical characteristics of a configuration item, control changes to those characteristics, record and report change processing and implementation status, and verify compliance with specified requirements

3.6
customization
adaptation of a *software* (3.21) or information *product* (3.17) to the needs of a particular *audience* (3.3)

3.7
design
process (3.16) of determining the content, structure, and format of an information *product* (3.17) or set of information products

3.8
development
activity of preparing information for *users* (3.27) after it has been designed

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 26514:2022, 3.1.18]

3.9
document
uniquely identified unit of information for human use

EXAMPLE A report, specification, manual, or book in printed or electronic form.

Note 1 to entry: A document can be a single information item or part of a larger information item.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 15289:2019, 3.1.10]

3.10
documentation
collection of *documents* (3.9) related to a given subject

EXAMPLE Printed manuals, *on-screen information* (3.14), standalone online help, videos, pop-up help.

Note 1 to entry: The information can be provided as documentation that can be used independently of the system or embedded within the *product* (3.17) and accessible as an integral part of it, or both. In this document, the term "information for users" is synonymous with the terms "documentation" and "software user documentation." Other forms of documentation (e.g. "system documentation") are clearly identified as such.

[SOURCE: IEC/IEEE 82079-1:2019, 3.11, modified — EXAMPLE and note 1 to entry have been added.]

3.11
illustration
visually perceptible figure, artificially created to transmit specific information, excluding safety signs and graphical symbols

Note 1 to entry: In this document, the term "illustration" is used as the generic term for tables, figures, exhibits, screen captures, flow charts, diagrams, drawings, icons, and other types of graphics.

[SOURCE: IEC/IEEE 82079-1:2019, 3.16, modified — EXAMPLE has been removed; note 1 to entry has been added.]

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3.12
internationalization
process (3.16) of developing information so that it is suitable for an international *audience* (3.3)

Note 1 to entry: See also *localization* (3.13).

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 26514:2022, 3.1.31]

3.13
localization
creation of a national or specific regional version of a *product* (3.17) and its information for *users* (3.27)

Note 1 to entry: Localization may be carried out separately from the translation *process* (3.16).

Note 2 to entry: See also *internationalization* (3.12).

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 26514:2022, 3.1.32]

3.14
on-screen information
information that is intended to be read on the screen by the *user* (3.27) while using the *software* (3.21)

EXAMPLE Pop-up help and help text on a screen.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 26514:2022, 3.1.36, modified — In the term and the definition, "information for users" has been replaced by "information"; note 1 to entry has been removed.]

3.15
printed information
information that is either provided in printed form, or provided in electronic form for the customer or *user* (3.27) to print

3.16
process
set of interrelated or interacting activities that use inputs to deliver an intended result

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.4.1, modified — Notes to entry have been removed.]

3.17
product
result of a *process* (3.16)

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 12207:2017, 3.1.36, modified — Note 1 to entry has been removed.]

3.18
product owner
stakeholder responsible for the capabilities, acceptance, and use of a *product* (3.17)

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC TR 24587:2021, 3.12, modified — Note 1 to entry has been removed.]

3.19
project
endeavour with defined start and finish criteria undertaken to create a *product* (3.17) or service in accordance with specified resources and requirements

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 12207:2017, 3.1.37, modified — Note 1 to entry has been removed.]

3.20
quality management
coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to quality

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 12207:2017, 3.1.42]

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3.21
software
all or part of the programs, procedures, rules, and associated *documentation* (3.10) of an information processing system

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this document, the term “software” does not include *on-screen information* (3.14).

[SOURCE: IEEE Std 828-2012]

3.22
style
set of language-specific editorial conventions covering grammar, terminology, punctuation, capitalization, and word choice

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 26514:2022, 3.1.49]

3.23
subject-matter expert
person responsible for providing technical information or for checking the technical accuracy of drafts of information for *users* (3.27)

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 26514:2022, 3.1.50, modified — The abbreviated term "SME" has been removed.]

3.24
topic
coherent part of an information *product* (3.17) with a heading that deals with a single subject

EXAMPLE Instructions on how to print the current document.

Note 1 to entry: In *printed information* (3.15), a topic is equivalent to a section (heading, subheading) and its content. In *on-screen information* (3.14), a topic consists of a title (heading) and information about a subject (typically, a task or a concept or reference information).

Note 2 to entry: For on-screen information, the system sometimes presents a topic without *user* (3.27) intervention.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 26514:2022, 3.1.51, modified — "printed information for users" and "onscreen information for users" have been replaced by "printed information" and "onscreen information" respectively.]

3.25
tutorial
instructional procedure in which the *user* (3.27) exercises *software* (3.21) functions, often using sample data that is supplied with the system or information for users

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 26514:2022, 3.1.52, modified — "instructional information" has been replaced by "instructional procedure"; "often" has been added.]

3.26
usability
extent to which a system or information *product* (3.17) can be used by specified *users* (3.27) to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 25064:2013, 4.16, modified — "product or service" has been replaced by "or information product"; note 1 to entry has been removed.]

3.27
user
individual or group that interacts with a system or benefits from a system during its utilization

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 12207:2017, 3.1.70, modified — Note 1 to entry has been removed.]

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