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Date: 03 June 2025

Origin: International

Latest date for receipt of comments: 27 July 2025

Project No. 2023/01300

Responsible committee: IDT/2/18 Identifiers and metadata

Interested committees:

Title: Draft BS ISO 999 Information and documentation — Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes.

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Introduction

This draft standard is based on national and international discussions. Your comments on this draft are invited and will assist in the preparation of the consequent standard.

For international standards, comments will be reviewed by the relevant UK national committee before sending the consensus UK vote and comments to the international committee, which will then decide appropriate action. If the international standard is approved, it is usual for the text to be published as a British Standard.

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Template for comments and secretariat observations

Date: xx/xx/20xx	Document: ISO/DIS xxxx
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1	2	(3)	4	5	(6)	7
MB	Clause No./ Subclause No./Annex (e.g. 3.1)	Paragraph/ Figure/Table/Note	Type of comment	Comment (justification for change) by the MB	Proposed change by the MB	Secretariat observations on each comment submitted
	3.1	Definition 1	ed	Definition is ambiguous and needs clarifying.	Amend to read '...so that the mains connector to which no connection...'	
	6.4	Paragraph 2	te	The use of the UV photometer as an alternative cannot be supported as serious problems have been encountered in its use in the UK.	Delete reference to UV photometer.	



DRAFT International Standard

ISO/DIS 999

Information and documentation — Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes

*Information et documentation — Principes directeurs pour
l'élaboration, la structure et la présentation des index*

ICS: 01.140.40

ISO/TC 46/SC 9

Secretariat: **ANSI**

Voting begins on:
2025-06-03

Voting terminates on:
2025-08-26

This document is circulated as received from the committee secretariat.

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Published in Switzerland

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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).

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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.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, Information and documentation, Subcommittee SC 9, Identification and description.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 999:1996), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

- Combines ISO 999 and ISO 5963 and updates

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.

Information and documentation — Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes

1 Scope

This document offers guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes.

This document applies to indexes to books (including works of fiction), periodicals, reports, patent documents, and other written or printed documents, and to non-print materials, such as electronic documents, internet content, electronic books (e-books), films, sound recordings, video recordings, graphic materials, maps, and three-dimensional objects.

This document is concerned with basic indexing principles and practice rather than with the detailed procedures of indexing that vary according to the type of matter indexed and the users for whom the index is intended. Therefore, the examples given, including punctuation, are illustrative and not prescriptive.

This document covers the examination of material and selection of subjects for indexing, as well as the choice, form and arrangement of headings and subheadings used in index entries. (For the compilation of a monolingual thesaurus that may assist in the selection of index terms, see ISO 25964-1:2011: Information and documentation — Thesauri and interoperability with other vocabularies — Part 1: Thesauri for information retrieval.)

Although this document does not give any guidance on computerized index generation as such, it is relevant to the preparation of all types of index, regardless of whether they are produced manually or by computer-assisted methods, and whether compiled by one indexer or by a team of indexers. It does not cover the mechanized extraction of text words to generate indexes, e.g., chain indexing, citation indexing or the techniques of post-coordinate indexing, although its recommendations may be relevant to any of these systems.

It does not make recommendations for the compilation of catalogues for libraries or museums.

Note 1 This document is based primarily on English Language indexes. For other languages, it is recommended that users consult indexing authorities in those specific languages.

Note 2 Users of indexed material represent a variety of academic, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds, as well as diverse genders, physical abilities, races, and sexual orientations. Therefore, indexes should use inclusive language and avoid terms that introduce bias. Whenever possible, accommodation should be provided, e.g. use of prepositions and linking terms should be minimized for people with visual impairments.

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 646:1991, *Information technology — ISO 7-bit coded character set for information interchange*

ISO 24495-1:2023, *Plain language — Part 1: Governing principles and guidelines*

ISO 25964-1:2011, *Information and documentation — Thesauri and interoperability with other vocabularies — Part 1: Thesauri for information retrieval*

ISO 25964-2:2013, *Information and documentation — Thesauri and interoperability with other vocabularies — Part 2: Interoperability with other vocabularies*

3 Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 5127 and the following 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/>

3.1

access point

see *Index heading* (3.16)

3.2

algorithmic indexing

method of automatic indexing that uses text analysis and machine learning

Note 1 to entry: There are two main principles: text extraction, which scans documents to extract relevant keywords; and text classification, which automatically assigns predefined tags to text based on its content.

3.3

authority file

list or file of headings to be used in an *index* (3.14), e.g. forms of proper names, subject headings

Note 1 to entry: Such pre-established lists are used in particular to coordinate the indexing of collections.

3.4

closed index

index (3.14) for one or more documents to which additional entries will not be made

Note 1 to entry: Contrast with *open index* (3.25).

3.5

collection

group of documents to the contents of which reference is made or expected to be made in an *index* (3.14)

Note 1 to entry: For example, those documents scanned by an indexing service; a database of abstracts. Both collection and index (3.13) may be intended to expand indefinitely.

3.6

compound term

term consisting of more than one word or phrase that represents a single concept

Note 1 to entry: For example, “compass rose,” “first aid,” “trade winds”; also a multi word term representing multiple concepts that are so often considered together that representing them with separate terms would be unwieldy and could result in false drops, for example, “science information” and “information science.” Also called “bound term.”

3.7

concept

unit of knowledge created by a unique combination of characteristics

Note 1 to entry: Concepts are not necessarily bound to particular languages. They are, however, influenced by the social or cultural background, which often leads to different categorizations.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, definition 3.1.1.02]

Note 2 to entry: The semantic content of a concept can be re-expressed by a combination of other and different concepts, which may vary from one language or culture to another.

3.8

cross-reference

direction from one *heading* ([3.16](#)) or *subheading* ([3.17](#)) to another.

3.9

displayed index

index ([3.14](#)) presented as a complete, readable unit

Note 1 to entry: Contrast with *non-displayed index* ([3.23](#)).

3.10

document

item that presents information

Note 1 to entry: A document includes machine-readable records, microforms, print and non-print media, also by extension, to natural (such as trees or rocks) or humanly made objects.

3.11

factographic indexing

indexing which provides for the reflection in the search image of a document of specific information (messages) that are the meaning of this document

3.12

heading

seeindex heading ([3.16](#))

3.13

homographs

one of two or more words that are written in the same way, but have different meanings

[SOURCE: ISO 1087]

Note 1 to entry: For example, “races (ethnology)” and “races (sports).” Homographs should be distinguished by qualifiers.

Note 2 to entry: Per designation (3.4.1.1.1) having the same written form as another designation representing a different concept (3.2.1)

The homographic term “die” as a noun represents different concepts in the domains of manufacturing, integrated circuits and table-top games.

The homographic graphical symbol (e.g. in an airport or train station) may mean “up” (e.g. an escalator) or “straight ahead” depending on the location's surroundings.

3.14

index

alphabetically or otherwise ordered arrangement of entries, different from the order of the document or collection indexed

Note 1 to entry: An index is designed to enable users to locate information in a document or specific documents in a collection.

3.15

index entry

single record in an *index* ([3.14](#))

Note 1 to entry: An index entry consists of an *index heading* ([3.16](#)); a *qualifier* ([3.27](#)) or *scope note* ([3.29](#)) if required; *index subheading(s)* ([3.17](#)) if required; and either *locator(s)* ([3.20](#)) or *cross-reference(s)* ([3.8](#)) or both.

3.16

index heading

term chosen to represent in the *index* ([3.14](#)) an item or concept in a document

Note 1 to entry: The index heading is used alone, or related or modifying terms may be subsumed under it.

3.17

index subheading

heading (3.12) that is subsumed under an *index heading* (3.16) to indicate a subordinate or modifying relationship

Note 1 to entry: A subheading may have one or more sub-subheadings.

3.18

indexing

process of analysis describing or identifying a document in terms of its content

3.19

indexing term

representation of a concept in the form of either a term derived from natural language, preferably a noun or noun phrase, or a classification symbol

Note 1 to entry: An indexing term can consist of more than one word. In a controlled vocabulary, a term is designated either as a *preferred term* (3.26) or as a *non-preferred term* (3.24).

3.20

locator

indication, following an *index heading* (3.16) or *index subheading* (3.17), of that part of a document, or that item in a collection, to which they refer

Note 1 to entry: The locator is entered after the index heading or subheading. It may be a page number, a range of pages, a clause or subclause indication etc.

3.21

metadata

data that provides information about other data

Note 1 to entry: For *indexing* (3.18), relevant metadata includes unique identifiers (numbers or alphanumeric strings), date and time the document or object was indexed or indexing information was modified, title, and author(s) of the document.

3.22

modifier

one or more components of an *index heading* (3.16), usually an adjective, that narrow its focus

3.23

non-displayed index

index (3.14) that is searched by electronic comparison and matching with computer algorithms

Note 1 to entry: The complete *index* (3.14) is not displayed for visual search. Contrast with *displayed index* (3.9).

3.24

non-preferred term

synonym or quasi-synonym of a *preferred term* (3.26)

Note 1 to entry: A non-preferred term is not assigned to documents but is provided as an entry point in an *index* (3.14), the user being directed by an instruction (for example USE or SEE) to the *preferred term* (3.26); sometimes known as "non-descriptor".

3.25

open index

ongoing *index* (3.14) compiled at set intervals or continuously updated

Note 1 to entry: Contrast with *closed index* (3.4).

3.26

preferred term

term used consistently when *indexing* (3.18) to represent a given *concept* (3.7)

Note 1 to entry: sometimes known as "descriptor"

3.27

qualifier

term added to a *heading* (3.16), but separated from it by punctuation (preferably parentheses)

Note 1 to entry: The qualifier forms part of the *heading* (3.16) and is often used to distinguish homographic headings (3.13) in the same *index* (3.14).

3.28

index record

description or representation of a documentary unit in an *index* (3.14)

3.29

scope note

note that defines or clarifies the semantic boundaries of an *index heading* (3.16) or its usage within an *index* (3.14).

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, definition 3.8.3.22, modified]

Note 1 to entry: The scope note does not form part of the heading.

3.30

"see also" cross-reference

direction from a *heading* (3.16) or *subheading* (3.17) that is followed by one or more *locators* (3.20), to one or more other *headings* (3.16) or *subheadings* under which related additional information will be found

3.31

"see" cross-reference

direction from a *heading* (3.16) or *subheading* (3.17) not followed by *locators* (3.20), to one or more other *headings* (3.16) or *subheadings* (3.17) under which information will be found

3.32

subheading

see *index subheading* (3.17)

3.33

turnover lines

second (and subsequent) lines of a paragraph or *index entry* (3.15)

4 Basic Principles of Indexing

4.1 Function of an index

The function of an index is to provide the user with an efficient means of tracing information. The index should therefore:

- identify and locate relevant information within the material being indexed;
- discriminate between information on a subject and passing mention of a subject;
- exclude passing mention of subjects that offer nothing significant to the potential user;
- analyse concepts in the document in a series of headings;
- consist of terms appropriate to the users of the index, so that they will:
 - quickly establish the presence or absence of information on a specific subject in an unfamiliar work;

- quickly retrieve information on a remembered item in a known or partially known work;
- quickly identify appropriate documents in a collection.
- indicate relationships between concepts;
- group together information on subjects scattered by the arrangement of the document or collection;
- synthesize headings and subheadings into entries; this synthesis may already be established in an authority file;
- direct users seeking information under terms not chosen for index headings to terms that have been chosen as index headings, by means of "see" cross-references;
- arrange entries into a systematic and helpful order.
- include an array of specific information metadata for factual information search engines.

4.2 Operation and purpose of indexing

4.2.1 Indexing is not concerned with the description of a document as a physical entity although these factors may be included in an index if this information would enable a user to determine more accurately whether or not a given document is likely to be relevant to their enquiry.

4.2.2 During indexing, concepts are extracted from documents by a process of intellectual analysis or by algorithm (see algorithmic indexing (see [3.2](#))), then transcribed into indexing terms. Both analysis and transcription may be performed with the aid of indexing tools such as thesauri and classification schemes.

4.2.3 Essentially, indexing consists of the following three stages, although these tend to overlap in practice:

- a) examining the document and establishing its subject content;
- b) identifying the principal concepts present in the subject;
- c) expressing these concepts in the terms of the indexing language.

5 Types of indexes

5.1 Criteria for indexes

- Indexes may be a one-time production (closed index), or continuing, and updated periodically (open index)
- Indexes may be searchable by visual inspection (displayed index) or human scanning, while others are not so available in a complete form and are searchable by electronic comparison and matching with computer algorithms (non-displayed index).
- Indexes may be generated through human intellectual analysis to identify topics and concepts, or by computer algorithms to identify useful terms, phrases, or features. Indexes may also be generated through a combination of both human and algorithmic analysis.
- Indexable material can include the full text of documents, abstracts, titles only, or the first line of the material, such as the first line of a poem.
- Indexes may include entries for a variety of categories including names (personal, corporate, geographic), technical terms, subjects, titles of works, first lines of poems, quotations, abbreviations, acronyms, numbers, dates, etc.
- General indexes combine entries in all or any of the above categories in a single sequence.

When appropriate for the document or collection to be indexed, separate sequences may be used for entries of different types. The most common of these are differentiated in [5.2](#) to [5.7](#) (see also [7.1.5](#)).

5.2 Subject indexes

Subject indexes provide access to the contents of documents by subject matter. The subject headings are arranged in alphabetical or other systematic order.

5.3 Author indexes

Author indexes may include personal or corporate authors. Author indexes may also:

- provide access to information on documents cited by the author's name in the indexed document; or
- list documents distinguished by author's name in the indexed collection.

5.4 Name indexes

Name indexes provide access to names contained in documents, whether of persons, organizations or other animate or inanimate objects which are identified by a proper name, e.g., Red Rum (racehorse), Macrex (computer program). Such names may be combined in a single index.

5.5 Geographic Indexes

Geographic indexes provide access to information or documents through the names of geographic locations. These locations may be very broad, such as continents or countries, or very specific, such as cities and towns, or specific buildings within a town.

5.6 Title indexes

Title indexes provide access to documents or document citations by displaying in one sequence the titles of the documents.

5.7 Number and code indexes

Number and code indexes provide access to information or documents by numerical designation, e.g. by patent number, ISBN, date of creation or publication (or both).

5.8 Factographic indexes

Factographic indexes provide specific information available in the document, and metadata for the objects presented in the document.

6 Quality control

6.1 Quality of indexes

An effective index, whether for a physical document or electronic content, meets the needs of those seeking information contained in the documents indexed (see [7.1](#)).

Entries should allow for the different approaches likely to be made by users (e.g. a novel or a play discussed in the document should be entered under both author and title).

The indexer should be impartial and objective both in selecting subject matter and in choosing terminology (see ISO 25964-1:2011 | ISO 25964-2:2013).

The indexer's knowledge of the principles of indexing, gained through study and experience, determines the quality of the index. Other important factors include the indexer's knowledge of the language and subject