

Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs) —

Part 13: User guidance

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ICS 13.180; 35.180

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National foreword

This British Standard is the English language version of EN ISO 9241-13:1998. It is identical with ISO 9241-13:1998.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted by Technical Committee PH/9, Applied ergonomics, to Subcommittee PH/9/6, User system interfaces, which has the responsibility to:

- aid enquirers to understand the text;
- present to the responsible international/European committee any enquiries on the interpretation, or proposals for change, and keep the UK interests informed;
- monitor related international and European developments and promulgate them in the UK.

A list of organizations represented on this subcommittee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Cross-references

Attention is drawn to the fact that CEN and CENELEC standards normally include an annex which lists normative references to international publications with their corresponding or European publications. The British Standards which implement international or European publications referred to in this document may be found in the BSI Standards Catalogue under the section entitled “International Standards Correspondence Index”, or by using the “Find” facility of the BSI Standards Electronic Catalogue.

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Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i and ii, the EN ISO title page, page 2, the ISO title page, pages ii to iv, pages 1 to 28 and a back cover.

This standard has been updated (see copyright date) and may have had amendments incorporated. This will be indicated in the amendment table on the inside front cover.

This British Standard, having been prepared under the direction of the Health and Environment Sector Committee, was published under the authority of the Standards Committee and comes into effect on 15 August 1999

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English version

Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs) — Part 13: User guidance

(ISO 9241-13:1998)

Exigences ergonomiques pour travail de bureau
avec terminaux à écrans de visualisation
(TEV) —
Partie 13: Guide général pour l'utilisateur
(ISO 9241-13:1998)

Ergonomische Anforderungen für
Bürotätigkeiten mit Bildschirmgeräten —
Teil 13: Benutzerführung
(ISO 9241-13:1998)

This European Standard was approved by CEN on 30 May 1998.

CEN members are bound to comply with the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations which stipulate the conditions for giving this European Standard the status of a national standard without any alteration. Up-to-date lists and bibliographical references concerning such national standards may be obtained on application to the Central Secretariat or to any CEN member.

This European Standard exists in three official versions (English, French, German). A version in any other language made by translation under the responsibility of a CEN member into its own language and notified to the Central Secretariat has the same status as the official versions.

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CEN

European Committee for Standardization
Comité Européen de Normalisation
Europäisches Komitee für Normung

Central Secretariat: rue de Stassart 36, B-1050 Brussels

Foreword

The text of the International Standard ISO 9241-13:1998 has been prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 159 “Ergonomics” in collaboration with CEN/CS.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by January 1999, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by January 1999.

According to the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organizations of the following countries are bound to implement this European Standard: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Endorsement notice

The text of the International Standard ISO 9241-13:1998 was approved by CEN as a European Standard without any modification.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO
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Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs) —

Part 13: User guidance

*Exigences ergonomiques pour travail de bureau avec terminaux à écrans
de visualisation (TEV) —*

Partie 13: Guidage de l'utilisateur



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Descriptors: Ergonomics, office machines, computer peripheral equipment, text processing, data terminal equipment, display devices, specifications, rules (instructions), instructions for use.

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.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 9241-13 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 159, *Ergonomics*, Subcommittee SC 4, *Ergonomics of human-system interaction*.

ISO 9241 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs)*:

- *Part 1: General introduction;*
- *Part 2: Guidance on task requirements;*
- *Part 3: Visual display requirements;*
- *Part 4: Keyboard requirements;*
- *Part 5: Workstation layout and postural requirements;*
- *Part 6: Guidance on the work environment;*
- *Part 7: Requirements for display with reflections;*
- *Part 8: Requirements for displayed colours;*
- *Part 9: Requirements for nonkeyboard input devices;*
- *Part 10: Dialogue principles;*
- *Part 11: Guidance on usability;*
- *Part 12: Presentation of information;*
- *Part 13: User guidance;*
- *Part 14: Menu dialogues;*
- *Part 15: Command dialogues;*
- *Part 16: Direct manipulation dialogues;*
- *Part 17: Form filling dialogues.*

Annex A and Annex B of this part of ISO 9241 are information only.

Introduction

This part of ISO 9241 deals with user guidance aspects of software user interfaces.

The main purpose of user guidance is to aid the user's interaction with the system by

- promoting efficient system use;
- avoiding unnecessary mental workload;
- providing support to users to manage error situations; and
- providing support for users of different skill levels.

This part of ISO 9241 serves the following types of users:

- the designer of the user guidance, who will apply this part of ISO 9241 during the development process;
- designers of user guidance development tools to be used by dialogue designers;
- the buyer, who will reference this part of ISO 9241 during the product procurement process, and whose end-users will gain from the potential benefits provided by this part; and
- those responsible for ensuring that products meet the recommendations in this part of ISO 9241.

The ultimate beneficiary of this part of ISO 9241 will be the end-user at the visual display terminal (VDT). It was the needs of this user that provided the ergonomic recommendations in this part of ISO 9241. Although it is unlikely that the end-user will read this part or even know of its existence, its application should provide user interfaces that are more usable, consistent and that enable greater productivity.

Application of this part of ISO 9241 involves an understanding of the intended user, the user environment and tasks. User tasks should be listed and key tasks, defined as the most frequent and important tasks, should be explicitly identified.

Recommendations on how to use this part of ISO 9241 can be found in Informative Annex A.

For practical reasons, the following structure has been chosen for presenting the user guidance recommendations:

- common guidance recommendations (see clause 5),
- prompts (see clause 6),
- feedback (see clause 7),
- status information (see clause 8),
- error management (see clause 9),

- on-line help (see clause 10).

1 Scope

This part of ISO 9241 provides recommendations for user guidance attributes of software user interfaces and their evaluation. User guidance as defined in this part of ISO 9241 is information additional to the regular user-computer-dialogue that is provided to the user on request or is automatically provided by the system. In addition to the general guidance provided in this part of ISO 9241, recommendations concerning dialogue-specific user guidance are provided in ISO 9241-12, ISO 9241-14, ISO 9241-15, ISO 9241-16 and ISO 9241-17.

This part of ISO 9241 is applicable to interaction components that aid users in recovering from error conditions. User guidance as covered by this part of ISO 9241 includes recommendations specific to prompts, feedback and status, error management and on-line help as well as general recommendations common to all these types of user guidance.

While user support can be provided via other means (e.g., on-line tutorials, on-line documentation, intelligent system performance aids) these types of support are not addressed by this part of ISO 9241-13.

The recommendations in this part of ISO 9241 are formulated to be independent of applications, environment, or implementation technology. They correspond to typical situations involving special needs for information and actions.

As with other parts of ISO 9241, this part of ISO 9241 can apply in all or in part. For example, applications that do not have browsable help would not need to follow recommendations concerning this class of user guidance.

2 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this part of ISO 9241. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this part of ISO 9241 are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 9241-12:—, *Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs) — Part 12: Presentation of information*¹⁾.

¹⁾ To be published.

ISO 9241-14:1997, *Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs) — Part 14: Menu dialogues*.

ISO 9241-15:1997, *Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs) — Part 15: Command Dialogues*.

ISO 9241-16:—, *Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs) — Part 16: Direct manipulation dialogues²⁾*.

ISO 9241-17:—, *Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs) — Part 17: Form filling dialogues²⁾*.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this part of ISO 9241, the following definitions apply.

3.1

browsable help

help in which access to help is independent of the current task context. Help topics can be accessed in the order and sequence desired by the user

3.2

context-sensitive help

help in which the help text or range of help topics is derived from the contextual information associated with the user's task, user's last input, selected object, current location or the current mode within the system or application

3.3

error

mismatch between the user's goal and the response of the system. Errors can include navigation errors, syntax errors, conceptual errors, etc

3.4

error management

means to support the user in error detection, error explanation, or error recovery

3.5

error prevention

means to minimize the probability of the occurrence of errors

3.6

feedback

output presented to the user by the system in reaction to the user's input or a system event

3.7

guidance

dialogue elements that aid the users in achieving their intended results. Guidance can aid users in discovering the capabilities of a system, enable the users to generate a plan for accomplishing their goals, assist the users in accomplishing a goal, or help the users to manage error situations

3.8

on-line help

additional user guidance information beyond prompting, feedback, status, and error messages that can be obtained at the user's initiative or at the initiative of the system. Information about features of the system and dialogue and how they can be used to aid the user in completion of his/her task(s) is typically provided

3.9

prompt

system output requesting input from the user

3.10

status information

information indicating the current state of the system

3.11

system-initiated guidance

guidance that is presented to the user by the system when the user has not taken an explicit action to request the guidance

NOTE System-initiated guidance includes, for example, prompts, feedback, status information, etc.

3.12

user guidance

additional information beyond the regular user-computer dialogue that is provided to the user on request or is automatically provided by the system

3.13

user-initiated guidance

guidance that is presented to the user only when the user has taken an explicit action to request the guidance

4 Application of this part of ISO 9241

4.1 Appropriateness of user guidance

User guidance is appropriate to all styles of interaction, types of dialogues and contexts, to help users in accomplishing their tasks.

²⁾ To be published.