PD ISO/TS 7538:2024

BSI Standards Publication

Functional requirements for disposition of records

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Full document details: PD ISO/TS 7538:2024

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The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee IDT/2/17, Archives/records management.

A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its committee manager.

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Published by BSI Standards Limited 2024

ISBN 978 0 539 21362 1

ICS 01.140.20

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This Published Document was published under the authority of the Standards Policy and Strategy Committee on 31 August 2024.

Amendments/corrigenda issued since publication

Date	Text affected

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Technical Specification

ISO/TS 7538

First edition
2024-08

Functional requirements for disposition of records

Exigences fonctionnelles pour le sort final des documents d'activité

Reference number
ISO/TS 7538:2024(en)

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Foreword

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Introduction

Disposition is an integral part of records management and allows organizations to reduce storage costs and save unnecessary time and expense managing records that are no longer required. Proper disposition also helps to ensure compliance, reduce risks, and preserve corporate and societal memory.

Disposition is the "range of records processes associated with implementing records retention, destruction or transfer decisions which are documented in disposition authorities or other instruments". Disposition can be implemented:

a) on the receipt or creation of a record;

b) when the status of a record changes;

c) when records no longer have any administrative, legislative, historical, or cultural value; or

d) for long term preservation and archival purposes.

As set out in ISO 15489-1, taking a managed and documented approach to the disposition of records is an important aspect of the efficient and accountable management of records, and is part of a structured approach to records management.

Such an approach is normally considered during appraisal, subsequent retention schedule development, and records systems design. In best practice, disposition is part of business activities, rather than an ad hoc activity, and is done regularly according to records requirements.

Planning for, and having efficient and authorized systems and processes in place to guide disposition supports accountability, efficiency, and good governance, while ensuring that records are controlled in an appropriate manner for a range of purposes.

This document assumes that requirements related to the disposition of records are identified during appraisal, as described in ISO/TR 21946.

Appraisal is the process of analysing and evaluating business functions and processes, business context, and risk to determine records requirements. Results of the appraisal can be used in disposition decisions. Appraisal decisions should be implemented through processes documented in disposition authorities or other instruments.

This document is not intended to give guidance on how the appraisal process is designed, implemented, or undertaken. Guidance on appraisal can be found in ISO/TR 21946.

Implementing a disposition authority involves carrying out the disposition actions identified through the appraisal process. It is a process that includes:

— reviewing whether it is permitted for records to be disposed of;

— undertaking the disposition action;

— documenting that the disposition has taken place.

Disposition actions are usually undertaken on a regular and routine basis. However, some disposition actions can require a one-off or ad hoc process. For example, when a record is sold to a third party for commercial purposes or when an organizational function is transferred to another agency. In these circumstances, the implementation of disposition is appropriate to the disposition action and risk management considerations.

This document also supports organizations in implementing disposition by design, which involves analysing disposition requirements and implementing measures at early stages of the design and development of products, processes, systems or services that involve handling records.

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