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**Systems and software engineering —  
Content of life-cycle information products  
(documentation)**

*Ingénierie des systèmes et du logiciel — Contenu des systèmes et  
produits d'information du processus de cycle de vie du logiciel  
(documentation)*

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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. In the field of information technology, ISO and IEC have established a joint technical committee, ISO/IEC JTC 1.

IEEE Standards documents are developed within the IEEE Societies and the Standards Coordinating Committees of the IEEE Standards Association (IEEE-SA) Standards Board. The IEEE develops its standards through a consensus development process, approved by the American National Standards Institute, which brings together volunteers representing varied viewpoints and interests to achieve the final product. Volunteers are not necessarily members of the Institute and serve without compensation. While the IEEE administers the process and establishes rules to promote fairness in the consensus development process, the IEEE does not independently evaluate, test, or verify the accuracy of any of the information contained in its standards.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of ISO/IEC JTC 1 is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the joint technical committee are circulated to national bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the national bodies casting a vote.

Attention is called to the possibility that implementation of this standard may require the use of subject matter covered by patent rights. By publication of this standard, no position is taken with respect to the existence or validity of any patent rights in connection therewith. ISO/IEEE is not responsible for identifying essential patents or patent claims for which a license may be required, for conducting inquiries into the legal validity or scope of patents or patent claims or determining whether any licensing terms or conditions provided in connection with submission of a Letter of Assurance or a Patent Statement and Licensing Declaration Form, if any, or in any licensing agreements are reasonable or non-discriminatory. Users of this standard are expressly advised that determination of the validity of any patent rights, and the risk of infringement of such rights, is entirely their own responsibility. Further information may be obtained from ISO or the IEEE Standards Association.

ISO/IEC/IEEE 15289 was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 7, *Software and systems engineering*, in cooperation with the Software & Systems Engineering Standards Committee of the IEEE Computer Society, under the Partner Standards Development Organization cooperation agreement between ISO and IEEE.

This first edition of ISO/IEC/IEEE 15289 cancels and replaces ISO/IEC 15289:2006, which has been technically revised.

## Introduction

The purpose of this International Standard is to provide requirements for identifying and planning the specific information items (information products) to be developed and revised during systems and software life cycles and service processes. This International Standard specifies the purpose and content of all identified systems and software life-cycle information items, as well as information items for information technology service management. The information item contents are defined according to generic document types and the specific purpose of the document. Information items may be combined or subdivided as needed for project or organizational purposes.

This International Standard is based on the life-cycle processes specified in ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), *Systems and software engineering — Software life cycle processes*; ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008), *Systems and software engineering — System life cycle processes*; and the service management processes specified in ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005, *Information technology — Service management — Part 1: Specification*; and ISO/IEC 20000-2:2005, *Information technology — Service management — Part 2: Code of practice*.

IEEE contributed IEEE 12207.1-1997, *Industry Implementation of International Standard ISO/IEC 12207:1995. (ISO/IEC 12207) Standard for Information Technology — Software life cycle processes — Life cycle data*, as a source for this International Standard.

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# Systems and software engineering — Content of life-cycle information products (documentation)

## 1 Scope

This International Standard specifies the purpose and content of all identified systems and software life-cycle and service management information items (documentation). The information item contents are defined according to generic document types, as presented in Clause 7, and the specific purpose of the document (Clause 10).

This International Standard assumes an organization is implementing life-cycle processes in conformance with ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008), *Systems and software engineering — System life cycle processes*, or ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), *Systems and software engineering — Software life cycle processes*, or practising service management in conformance with ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005, *Information technology — Service management — Part 1: Specification*, and ISO/IEC 20000-2:2005, *Information technology — Service management — Part 2: Code of practice*. ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008) and ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) define a set of processes for managing and performing the stages of a systems life cycle. They define an Information Management process, but they do “not detail documentation in terms of name, format, explicit content, and recording media” [ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008), 1.4]. ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008) establishes a common framework for software life-cycle processes and in passing identifies or requires a number of documentation items. The Process Reference Model does not represent a particular process implementation approach, nor does it prescribe a system/software life-cycle model, methodology, or technique. ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005 establishes general requirements for documents and records (3.2). ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008) does not always specify when software information items are to be prepared, nor does it identify information item contents. This International Standard provides a mapping of ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) and ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008) clauses with a set of information items.

The generic document types (which may be referred to as information item types) are to be used to identify the information necessary to support the ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) agreement, enterprise, project, and technical processes; the ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), primary, supporting, and organizational life-cycle processes; or the ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005 service management processes.

This International Standard identifies records and information items based on analysis of references in ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008), ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005 and ISO/IEC 20000-2:2005, which in some cases provide partial or complete outlines for the content of specific documents. However, the requirements for the life-cycle processes do not uniquely and unambiguously state the requirements for the information item contents or the information needed by a user of an information item. Moreover, the information from the life-cycle processes may overlap or may be created and revised at different times. In short, the analysed references do not result in a logically complete list of information items.

For each life-cycle process, it would be possible to prepare a plan, procedures, and reports, as well as numerous records, requests, descriptions and specifications. Such an elaboration of the documentation schema would be more rigorous than specified by ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) or ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008). As ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) points out (1.4), “This International Standard does not detail the life-cycle processes in terms of methods or procedures required to meet the requirements and outcomes of a process.” Thus, information items may be combined or subdivided as needed for project or organizational purposes, as further defined in Clause 2, Applicability, and Clause 3, Conformance.

Not included in the scope of this International Standard are the following:

- a) the format or content of recommended input data or input information items, except for the content of those input items that are also output information items;
- b) instructions on combining or subdividing information items and information item contents of a similar nature;
- c) guidance on selecting an appropriate presentation format, delivery media, and maintenance technology for system and software life-cycle data, records, information items, or documentation, such as electronic publishing systems, content management systems, or data repositories;
- d) detailed content for information items related to general business, organizational, and financial management that is not specific to systems and software engineering and information technology service management, such as business strategies, human resources and investment policies, personnel selection criteria, financial budgeting and accounting policies and procedures, cost reports, or payroll data;
- e) information items showing only approval of an ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008) subclause, such as ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), 6.1.2.3.4.5;
- f) any ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) or ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008) subclause not explicitly or implicitly identifying the recording of information about an activity or task, for example, ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), 6.4.4;
- g) work products, models, software, and other artifacts of the life-cycle products and services that are not information items or records used in information items.

NOTE 1 ISO/IEC 26514:2008, *Systems and software engineering — Requirements for designers and developers of user documentation*, provides guidance on formats for software user documentation.

NOTE 2 ISO/IEC TR 15504-5:1999, *Information technology — Software Process Assessment — Part 5: An assessment model and indicator guidance*, details the content of work products as well as information items. Its guidance includes descriptions of a set of information items (documents) that an assessor may encounter. The information items in its guidance may be produced by combinations and subdivisions of the required information items in this International Standard.

## 2 Applicability

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this International Standard is to provide requirements for users of ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) and ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005 for identifying and planning the specific information items (information products) to be developed and revised during systems and software life cycles and service processes. This International Standard is intended for use as follows.

- a) To address the technical information needed by those involved in ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) and ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008) processes.
- b) To specify information in an agreement process as described in ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) or a two-party situation as described in ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005 and ISO/IEC 20000-2:2005. The two-party situation may range from an informal agreement within an organization to a legally binding contract between organizations.
- c) To develop information items that provide evidence for process assessment performed with respect to ISO/IEC 15504, and to guide process improvement activities.
- d) To guide a single party in self-imposed tasks.

## 2.2 Intended users of this International Standard

This International Standard is applicable for use by:

- a) project managers responsible for the Information Management process of ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) (5.4.8) during a system life cycle;
- b) project managers responsible for identifying information item requirements and document contents when using ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), or any other software engineering life-cycle process, to help determine what should be documented, when the documentation should occur, and what the contents of the documents should be;
- c) acquirers responsible for determining what information items are needed to ensure the quality of the project, or delivered system, product or service;
- d) individuals who write or support the design and development of service, systems and software information items;
- e) individuals responsible for identifying information items required to claim conformance with ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008), or ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005;
- f) individuals undertaking service, system or software process improvement in their organizations.

## 2.3 Applicability to work efforts

Use of this International Standard is not limited by size, complexity or criticality of the project. It may be applied to:

- a) any type of project and life-cycle process;
- b) any of the activities and tasks of a project and system or software product or service life cycle;
- c) all forms of information items, information item content and document delivery media;
- d) documentation in Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) products when the COTS product is specified as a deliverable under a two-party situation.

NOTE See ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), 1.2.

## 2.4 Applicability to information item audiences

Users should map this International Standard to the requirements and needs of their agreements, or project and organizational procedures. The type of decision to be made, or work to be performed, by users of the information should be considered before an information item is prepared. Reviewing and understanding the requirements, needs, and background of users and stakeholders are essential to applying this International Standard accurately and economically, since some information items are designed for various purposes and user groups:

- To provide information to specialized types of users who may not be a part of a particular project.
- To address the same type of user but in environments not normally coexisting in the same effort.
- To aid both users who are expected to be computer-literate and understand technical terminology, and users who may not have this background.

### 3 Conformance

#### 3.1 Definition of conformance

This International Standard may be used as a conformance or a guidance document for projects and organizations claiming conformance to ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008), ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), or ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005.

NOTE 1 Service providers should refer to ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005 and ISO/IEC TR 20000-5:2010 regarding claims of conformance for a defined certification scope, for example, organizational units, services, location.

To claim conformance to this International Standard, having tailored the selected system or software life-cycle processes, the users of this International Standard shall prepare the information items identified in this International Standard applicable to the selected and tailored ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008), ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), or ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005 processes.

The generic and specific record and information item contents in Clauses 7, 9, and 10 of this International Standard may be tailored to satisfy requirements of an organization, its projects, or agreements based on the tailored conformance to ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) or ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008). In tailoring, information item titles and contents provided in this International Standard may be modified (added to, combined or retitled). The contents of the information items shall correspond to the selected and tailored processes.

NOTE 2 Annex A of ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008) and ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008) provide requirements for the Tailoring Process.

In this International Standard, for simplicity of reference, each information item is described as if it were published as a separate document. However, information items shall be considered as conforming if they are unpublished but available in a repository for reference, divided into separate documents or volumes, or combined with other information items into one document. Use of the nomenclature of the specific records in Clause 9 or the information item titles in Clause 10 is not required to claim conformance with this International Standard.

Throughout this International Standard, "shall" is used to express a provision that is normative, "should" to express a recommendation among other possibilities, and "may" to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of this International Standard.

The verb "include" used in this International Standard indicates that either (1) the information is present or (2) a reference to the information is listed.

#### 3.2 Conformance situations

Conformance may be claimed for organizations, projects, multi-supplier projects, services, and information items, as identified in the claim of conformance:

- a) When conformance is claimed for an organization or a service provider, the organization or service provider shall make public a document declaring its tailoring of the records and information items, and its interpretation of any clauses of the standard that reference "the contract".
- b) When conformance is claimed for a project (or program), the project plans or the contract shall document the tailoring of the records and information items, and the interpretation of any clauses of the standard that reference "the contract".
- c) When conformance is claimed for multi-supplier projects, it may be the case that no individual project can claim conformance because no single contract calls for all the required records and information items. Nevertheless, the projects, as a whole, may claim conformance if each of the required records and information items is produced by an identified party. The program plans shall document the tailoring of the records and information items, and their assignment to the various parties, as well as the interpretation of any clauses of the standard that reference "the contract".

- d) When conformance is claimed for an information item, the item shall contain the generic contents required in Clause 7 of this International Standard and the specific content required in Clause 10.

NOTE 1 One possible way for an organization to deal with clauses that cite “the contract” is to specify that they shall be interpreted in the project plans for any particular project. A project’s claim of conformance is typically specified with respect to the organization’s claim of conformance.

NOTE 2 In accordance with ISO/IEC 17000:2004, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*, an organization or a project or a multi-supplier program may be said to comply with this document when its products (the information items) fulfil the requirements, but the organization, project or program has not met the specific requirements for conformance stated in items (a), (b) or (c) above.

### 3.3 Type of conformance

One of the following types of conformance shall be asserted. The selected type shall be identified in the claim of conformance:

- a) Tailored: The minimum set of required information items is determined by tailoring of processes and activities in accordance with Annex A of ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008) or Annex A of ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008).
- b) Absolute: The minimum set of required information items is all of those specified as normative (that is, clauses containing “shall”) in the text of the normative reference standards.

NOTE Absolute conformance may be claimed for selected processes or information items even if absolute conformance with the entire standard is not claimed.

## 4 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies.

ISO/IEC 12207:2008 (IEEE Std 12207-2008), *Systems and software engineering — Software life cycle processes*

ISO/IEC 15288:2008 (IEEE Std 15288-2008), *Systems and software engineering — System life cycle processes*

ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005, *Information technology — Service management — Part 1: Specification*

ISO/IEC/IEEE 24765:2010, *Systems and software engineering — Vocabulary*