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INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

File format for professional transfer and exchange of digital audio data

INTERNATIONAL
ELECTROTECHNICAL
COMMISSION

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7
1 Scope.....	8
2 Normative references	8
3 Terms and definitions	8
4 BWF file	10
4.1 Existing chunks defined as part of the RIFF Format	10
4.2 Additional chunks.....	10
4.3 Contents of a BWFF.....	10
4.4 Broadcast audio extension chunk.....	11
4.5 Filename.....	13
4.6 Channel usage.....	13
4.7 File size	13
Annex A (normative) RIFF WAVE file format.....	14
A.1 General.....	14
A.2 Resource Interchange File Format (RIFF)	14
A.2.1 General	14
A.2.2 Chunks	14
A.2.3 RIFF forms	15
A.3 Waveform audio file format (WAVE).....	15
A.3.1 General	15
A.3.2 WAVE format chunk.....	16
A.3.3 WAVE format categories.....	16
A.4 Storage of WAVE data	19
Annex B (normative) Chunk order	20
Annex C (normative) Filename conventions	21
C.1 General.....	21
C.2 File-name length	21
C.3 File-name extension.....	21
C.4 File-name character set	21
Annex D (informative) Multi-channel usage.....	23
D.1 General.....	23
D.2 Multi-channel audio data packing.....	23
D.3 Channel assignments in multi-channel files.....	24
D.3.1 General	24
D.3.2 Distribution and archive	24
D.3.3 Production recordings.....	24
Annex E (informative) Other audio codings	25
E.1 General.....	25
E.2 MPEG files.....	25
Annex F (normative) Extended file format (BWF-E).....	26
F.1 General.....	26
F.2 Exceeding the 4-GB limit.....	26
F.2.1 General	26
F.2.2 64-bit resource interchange file format (RF64).....	27

F.3	Compatibility between BWF and BWF-E.....	28
F.3.1	General	28
F.3.2	Initialisation as BWF	28
F.3.3	Transition to BWF-E	28
F.4	RIFF/WAVE and RF64/WAVE structures	29
F.4.1	Chunks and structs specific to the RIFF/WAVE format.....	29
F.4.2	Chunks and structs specific to the RF64/WAVE (BWF-E) format.....	29
Annex G (normative)	bext chunk versions	31
G.1	Version 0	31
G.2	Version 1	31
G.3	Version 2	31
Annex H (normative)	Loudness parameters.....	32
H.1	Treatment of loudness parameters.....	32
H.2	Loudness parameter references.....	33
Annex I (informative)	Definition of the format for "Unique" Source Identifier (USID) for use in the <OriginatorReference> field.....	34
I.1	USID.....	34
I.2	Examples of USIDs	34
Annex J (informative)	Specification of the format for <CodingHistory> field.....	35
J.1	General.....	35
J.2	Syntax	35
J.3	Examples of coding history fields	35
Annex K (normative)	Universal broadcast audio extension chunk.....	37
K.1	General.....	37
K.2	Contents of a BWFF with 'ubxt' chunk	37
K.3	Universal broadcast audio extension chunk.....	37
Bibliography	40
Figure D.1	– Data packing for 24-bit mono PCM audio data	23
Figure D.2	– Data packing for 16-bit stereo (2-channel) PCM audio data	23
Figure D.3	– Data packing for 24-bit, 4-channel PCM audio data	23
Figure D.4	– 24-bit sample packing.....	24
Figure F.1	– Conventional RIFF/WAVE format	26
Figure F.2	– Extended RF64/WAVE format	27
Figure F.3	– Compatible RIFF/WAVE structure	28
Table 1	– bext field content definitions	12
Table A.1	– Chunk description	14
Table A.2	– Format chunk – Common fields.....	16
Table A.3	– WAVE format categories	17
Table A.4	– Data packing for 16-bit mono PCM.....	17
Table A.5	– Data packing for 16-bit stereo PCM.....	18
Table A.6	– PCM data format.....	18
Table A.7	– PCM data format – 16-bit	18
Table A.8	– PCM WAVE format chunk examples.....	18
Table C.1	– Permitted file-name characters	21

Table C.2 – Non-permitted file-name characters	22
Table C.3 – Non-permitted file-name terminators	22
Table H.1 – Rounding negative values	32
Table H.2 – Rounding positive values	32
Table J.1 – CodingHistory parameters	35
Table K.1 – <code>ubxt</code> field content definitions	38

INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

FILE FORMAT FOR PROFESSIONAL TRANSFER AND EXCHANGE OF DIGITAL AUDIO DATA

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International Standard IEC 62942 has been prepared by technical area 6: Storage media, storage data structures, storage systems and equipment, of IEC technical committee 100: Audio, video and multimedia systems and equipment.

The text of this standard is based on the following documents:

CDV	Report on voting
100/3143/CDV	100/3226/RVC

Full information on the voting for the approval of this standard can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

This publication has been drafted in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The committee has decided that the contents of this publication will remain unchanged until the stability date indicated on the IEC web site under "<http://webstore.iec.ch>" in the data related to the specific publication. At this date, the publication will be

- reconfirmed,
- withdrawn,
- replaced by a revised edition, or
- amended.

A bilingual version of this publication may be issued at a later date.

INTRODUCTION

The Broadcast Wave format file (BWFF) is based on the Microsoft WAVE¹ audio file format, which is a type of file specified in the Microsoft resource interchange file format (RIFF) [1]² WAVE files specifically contain audio data. The basic building block of a RIFF file is a chunk which contains specific information, an identification field, and a size field. A RIFF file contains a number of chunks.

The BWFF specifically includes a <Broadcast Audio Extension> chunk to carry certain metadata important for broadcast and professional use. For reliable interchange, some restrictions apply to the format of the audio data.

The Broadcast Wave Format was first developed using ASCII text for all fields. Later, as the format was further developed, it was proposed to use multi-byte characters to internationalize the format. It was understood that to use multi-byte character sets within the existing format would cause compatibility issues when multi-byte metadata was parsed by applications expecting ASCII text. The separate nature of human-readable and machine-readable metadata was established, and a new "universal" chunk was established to carry internationalized human-readable metadata using multi-byte character sets without interoperability issues. This is described in Annex K.

¹ Microsoft® is a registered trademark, and Windows™ is a trademark of Microsoft Corp.. This information is given for the convenience of users of this document and does not constitute an endorsement by IEC of the product named. Equivalent products may be used if they can be shown to lead to the same results.

² Numbers in square brackets refer to the Bibliography.

FILE FORMAT FOR PROFESSIONAL TRANSFER AND EXCHANGE OF DIGITAL AUDIO DATA

1 Scope

This document specifies a file format for interchanging audio data between compliant equipment. It is primarily intended for audio applications in professional recording, production, post-production, and archiving.

It is derived from the AES31-2 [2] but is also compatible with variant specifications including EBU Tech 3285 [3] to [10], ITU-R BR.1352-3-2007 [11] to [14], and the Japan Post Production Association's BWF-J [15].

This document contains the specification of the broadcast audio extension chunk and its use with PCM-coded audio data. Basic information on the RIFF format and how it can be extended to other types of audio data is given in Annex E. Details of the PCM WAVE format are also given in Annex A.

An optional extended format, BWF-E, supports 64-bit addressing to permit file sizes greater than 4 GB.

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 10646:2017, *Information technology – Universal Coded Character Set (UCS)*

ISO 8601, *Data elements and interchange formats – Information interchange – Representation of dates and times*

SMPTE ST 330-2011; *SMPTE standard for television – Unique Material Identifier (UMID)*

INTERNET ENGINEERING TASK FORCE (IETF). RFC 3629: *UTF-8, a transformation format of ISO 10646* [online]. Edited by F. Yergeau. November 2003 [viewed 2019-11-26]. Available at <https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc3629.txt>