
**Information technology — User system
interfaces and symbols — Icon symbols
and functions —**

**Part 1:
Icons — General**

*Technologies de l'information — Interfaces pour système utilisateur et
symboles — Symboles et fonctions d'icônes —*

Partie 1: Icônes — Généralités

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Printed in Switzerland

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.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 3.

In the field of information technology, ISO and IEC have established a joint technical committee, ISO/IEC JTC 1. 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 drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this part of ISO/IEC 11581 may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

International Standard ISO/IEC 11581-1 was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 35, *User interfaces*.

ISO/IEC 11581 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Information technology — User system interfaces and symbols — Icon symbols and functions*:

- *Part 1: Icons — General*
- *Part 2: Object icons*
- *Part 3: Pointer icons*
- *Part 4: Control icons*
- *Part 5: Tool icons*
- *Part 6: Action icons*

Introduction

Icons are used on visual display terminals (VDTs, or screens) to facilitate interaction between computer-based applications (software products) and their users. Icon graphics can provide a language-independent means of communicating information to the user. They are part of a graphical interface that can facilitate the user's ability to learn, understand, and remember functional elements of the system, and aid in the manipulation of these elements.

Typically, a graphical user interface draws on a user's environment to provide a metaphorical representation of the user's tasks. A metaphor provides an analogy to concepts already familiar to the user, from which the user can deduce the system's use and behaviour. Icons can express the metaphor directly, as graphical representations of the metaphorical objects. They may also directly represent a physical object.

Icons are distinguished from other symbols on screens by the fact that they represent underlying system functions. Icons represent the objects, pointers, controls and tools making up the domain of an application and that users manipulate in doing their jobs. They can also represent status indicators used by the computer system to give information to the user and to mediate user interactions with software applications.

Figure 1 shows how the parts of ISO/IEC 11581 are organized. Symbols primarily intended for use on equipment other than screens are standardized in ISO 7000, ISO 7001, and IEC 60417.

Although different types of icons are distinguished for clarity, ISO/IEC 11581 does not imply that these types of symbols are disjoint. For example, a single icon may be simultaneously a pointer and a status indicator, or a status indicator may change to a pointer icon when the cursor is moved over a window that contains a different process.

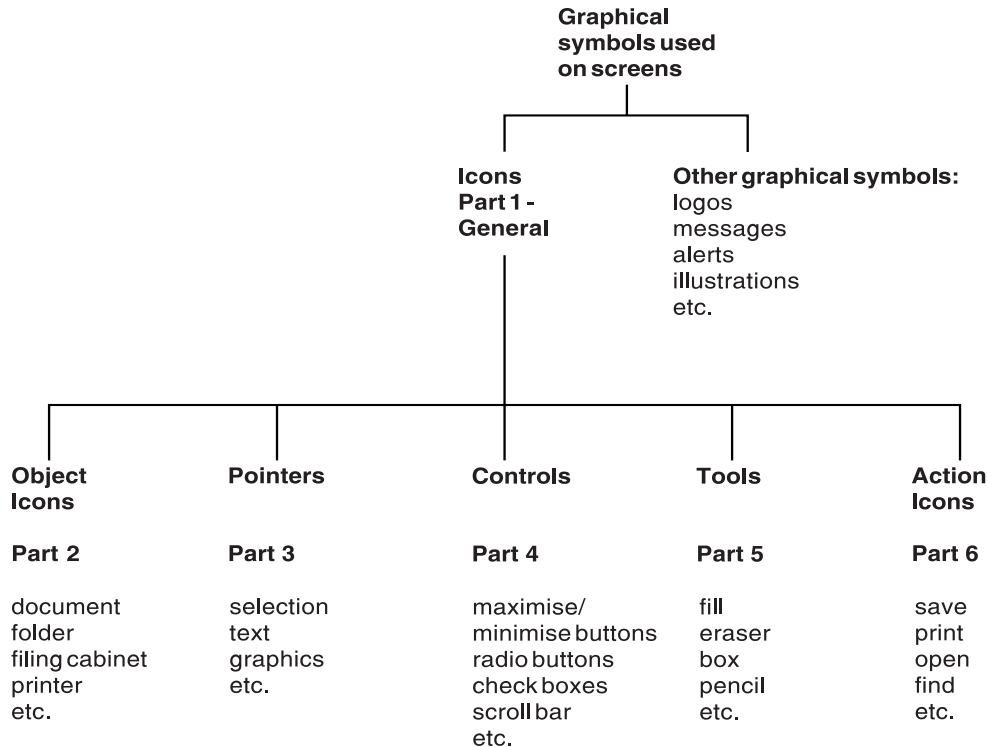


Figure 1 — Organization of ISO/IEC 11581

Information technology — User system interfaces and symbols — Icon symbols and functions —

Part 1: Icons — General

1 Scope

ISO/IEC 11581 applies to software products providing office applications such as document production, desktop publishing, finance, and planning that present their functions via a graphical user interface.

ISO/IEC 11581 applies to software products for people who are familiar with office work but who are at present not necessarily familiar with computer-based applications.

ISO/IEC 11581 is meant to be used by persons involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of icons for graphical user interfaces to computer-based office applications, and by procurers of systems that employ such interfaces.

Other parts of ISO/IEC 11581 contain:

- graphics of commonly used icons, and
- descriptions of the functionality of the icons.

This part of ISO/IEC 11581-1 provides a framework for the development and design of icons and their application on screens capable of displaying graphics as well as text. It contains:

- general requirements and recommendations for icons;
- global variations to the graphical representations of icons.

2 Conformance

A system, application, or set of one or more icon(s) conforms to this part of ISO/IEC 11581 if all icons available to the user in the computer system, application or set conform to clause 5 and subclause 6.1.

3 Normative reference

The following normative document contains provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this part of ISO/IEC 11581. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this part of ISO/IEC 11581 are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the normative document indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO and IEC maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 9241-3:1992, *Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs) — Part 3: Visual display requirements*.