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Information technology — User interface component accessibility —

Part 11: Guidance for alternative text for images

Technologies de l'information — Accessibilité du composant interface utilisateur —

Partie 11: Lignes directrices pour le texte alternatif pour images

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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.

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

The main task of the joint technical committee 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.

In other circumstances, particularly when there is an urgent market requirement for such documents, the joint technical committee may decide to publish an ISO/IEC Technical Specification (ISO/IEC TS), which represents an agreement between the members of the joint technical committee and is accepted for publication if it is approved by 2/3 of the members of the committee casting a vote.

An ISO/IEC TS is reviewed after three years in order to decide whether it will be confirmed for a further three years, revised to become an International Standard, or withdrawn. If the ISO/IEC TS is confirmed, it is reviewed again after a further three years, at which time it must either be transformed into an International Standard or be withdrawn.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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Introduction

The saying that "A picture is worth a thousand words" recognizes that images can present a wealth of information. It is important that alternative textual descriptions or representations be used to present the user with a comprehensive account of the purpose and content of images to people unable to see or interpret them.

Text alternatives help people who cannot see the images to understand what the image is of or the purpose it serves by providing the same information in textual form. Text alternatives can be useful to those with visual impairments, those who turned images off in order to improve webpage loading speeds, and those who cannot understand the image being displayed. This document provides guidance for web and document developers to help them create informative descriptions for various types of illustrations.

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Information technology — User interface component accessibility —

Part 11: Guidance for alternative text for images

1 Scope

This part of ISO/IEC 20071 applies to all static images that are used in any type of electronic document. It also applies to individual images within a slide show of electronic images.

NOTE While text alternatives can be implemented via various mechanisms in various types of electronic documents, the contents of this technical report are not dependent on the choice of implementation mechanism or of electronic document type.

This part of ISO/IEC 20071 does not apply to moving images (e.g. movies).

The guidance contained in this part of ISO/IEC 20071 is intended to be used by the person who creates content to be placed in an electronic document. There is no expectation that this person will have any additional expertise beyond understanding the contents of the document and why an image was chosen to be placed within the document.

While the main intent of the guidance within this part of ISO/IEC 20071 is the creation of text alternatives, the information identified in this guidance could be placed in the main document text, reducing the length of the resulting text alternatives. However, placing information in the main document text does not fully replace the function of having some text alternatives for each image.

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