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Standard Practice for Compiling and Writing & Terminology[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E 1964; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice describes a systematic procedure for compiling and writing a terminology.

1.2 This practice is intended to provide a systematic procedure for compiling and presenting a terminology, glossary, or system of terms for a committee or other organization.

1.3 The procedures outlined in this practice are intended to assist users in writing technical documentation for terms that are built on accurate and useful definitions.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ISO Documents:*[2]

ISO 704:1987 Principles and Methods of Terminology

ISO 10241:1992 Terminology Standards Preparation and Layout

ISO 12620 Terminology—Computer Applications—Data Categories

ISO 1087 Terminology Studies—Vocabulary

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 *definition*, *n*—statement that describes a concept and permits its differentiation from other concepts within a system of concepts. **(ISO 1087)**

3.1.2 *terminology*, *n*—a set of terms representing the concepts of a field.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 This practice provides a systematic methodology for selecting terms and compiling a terminology.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Lists of terms and their definitions are essential to the management of terminology. In a technical committee or other organization, terminology management helps ensure that terms are used and defined consistently within its publications, thereby contributing to a consistent level of quality in publications that promotes improved communication.

5.1.1 Readers of documents need to identify key terms used and to know the precise meanings intended by the authors.

5.1.2 Vocal and written communications are clearer and more effective when based on a conceptual comprehension of the significant terms.

5.1.3 Specialized terms used in documents serve as keywords for retrieving information from databases.

5.1.4 A comprehensive term list serves as the primary means of introducing the important technical concepts of a committee or organization.

5.2 This practice is intended for use by subject-matter specialists regardless of the extent of their knowledge in the field of terminology management. Use of the practice should provide a degree of assurance to an organization that attention has been paid to terminology issues.

5.3 This practice may also be used by an author of a document to provide a terminology for readers.

6. Procedure

6.1 Assemble relevant documents.

6.2 Select terms. List all significant terms whose meanings are needed for full and precise comprehension of the documents.

6.2.1 Generate the term list from the terms, abbreviations, and other short forms (such as a acronyms and initialisms) that are found in the documents. Include terms from titles, abstracts, and summaries. List abbreviated terms separately, even if they are also included as part of a term entry.

6.2.2 List terms in the title, scope, and abstract of the document that can serve as keys to the subject matter of the document.

6.2.3 Identify and list unique terms or those with unusual or novel meaning. Clearly identify those terms that are coined for the purposes of the document or given a specialized meaning that is applicable for the purposes of that document.

6.2.4 Include compound terms.

6.2.4.1 Avoid selecting a compound term with more than three words for a terminology, unless it forms part of a set of related terms that are used in the document and needs to be distinguished or clarified.

6.2.4.2 Accept compounds that are in common use in the field, even if they are longer than three words.

6.2.4.3 Do not editorially add hyphens in compound terms.

6.2.4.4 Recognize that a compound term of two or more words may result in more than one term being listed.

6.3 Identify and group the terms conceptually. Concepts may be identified by descriptions or draft definitions.

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[1] This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E-2 on Terminology and is the direct responsibility of E02.10 on Standards.

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[2] Available from American National Standards Institute, 11 W. 42nd St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10036.

6.3.1 Describe, as clearly as possible, significant concepts in the text to which terms have been assigned, and, if needed, identify related concepts that may require new terms to be assigned.

6.3.2 Group or associate terms referring to closely related concepts.

6.4 Write or choose definitions for the listed terms.

6.4.1 Before writing a definition, study possible source material for existing definitions that may be suitable.

6.4.2 If a suitable definition is found in a standardized terminology, specialized technical dictionary or general purpose dictionary, its use should be accompanied by appropriate attribution and attention to possible copyright and trademark issues.

6.5 If a definition must be newly written, consider the following point:

6.5.1 List the term followed by clear definitions.

6.5.2 Do not include details in the definition about how and why, or when a term is used. These may be provided in discussion (see Section 13). A terminology provides a specific answer to questions about what the concept is. For example, the concept following is described without details of how, why, or when.

6.5.2.1 *elbow, n—in anatomy* the joint that articulates between the upper arm and the lower arm.

6.5.3 Avoid using the terms to define itself. For example, an unacceptable definition of **body fluid simulant** would be:

6.5.3.1 *body fluid simulant, n*—a fluid used to simulate a body fluid (deprecated style of definition).

6.5.3.2 Rather, express the idea in other words that are clear and do not use the term to define itself. For example, an acceptable definition of **body fluid simulant** would be:

6.5.3.3 *body fluid simulant, n*—a substance used as a model to replicate a liquid that is produced, secreted, or excreted by the human body (recommended style of definition).

6.5.4 Use language that is understandable to non-experts. For example, an unacceptable definition of **evaporative resistance** would be:

6.5.4.1 *evaporative resistance, n*—the reciprocal of evaporative heat transmittance expressed in kilopascals per square metre of test specimen per watt.

6.5.4.2 This definition referring to a mathematical equation and probably unfamiliar units does not enlighten the reader with any more general phrase. An acceptable definition, understandable to a non-expert, might be:

6.5.4.3 *evaporative resistance, n*—an evaporative heat flux barrier, which may consist of either diffusive or convective barriers, or a combination of both, that impedes heat transfer.

6.5.4.4 This definition should be clear to an average reader even without a knowledge of diffusion and convection, the final phrase describing a comprehensible purpose.

6.6 Revise the term list following an examination of the draft definitions and relevant sources of definitions, including any referenced documents or other material that may be appropriate.

6.7 Examine the drafted definitions of compound terms for contained terms that themselves require definition.

6.8 If necessary, revise definitions so that related concepts are defined in a consistent manner. (This will assist writers and readers in distinguishing among related concepts.) Choose new terms and write new definitions to make needed distinctions between closely related concepts.

6.9 Recognize that the process is generally cyclical; terms are selected, concepts identified, and definitions written for the terms. New terms are added, concept relationships and their groupings are re-examined and, definitions are appropriately revised.

7. Delimiting Phrase

7.1 Consider the need for a delimiting phrase. A delimitation is not technically a part of a definition, but specifies the applicability of the definition that is being composed.

7.2 If a term can have different meanings in other technical fields or contexts, the term entry shall contain an italicized phrase that delimits the definition to its field of application. For example:

7.2.1 *beam, n—in a balance,* the horizontal pan support.

7.2.2 *beam, n—in a building,* a horizontal load-carrying structural member of the building frame.

7.2.3 *beam, n—in optics,* a concentrated unidirectional flow of radiant energy.

7.2.4 *beam, n—in textile dyeing,* a perforated cylinder on which fabric or yarn can be wound such that dye solution forced through the perforations will saturate the textile with colorant.

7.2.5 *beam, n—for textile yarns,* a spool-like device upon which may be wound long lengths of many parallel ends.

7.3 Do not delimit a definition to a specific field when, without the delimitation, the definition would have broader application. Avoid, for example,

7.3.1 *density, n—in aviation fuel,* mass per unit volume.

7.4 Do not use a delimiting phrase to justify another definition of a term for which there is an existing definition.

7.5 When a delimiting phrase would be repeated in a terminology standard to the point of triteness, choose a generic delimiting statement that is to be published in the scope or the terminology section of the standard with an explanation such as the following: “When any of the definitions in this standard are quoted or published out of context, editorially insert the delimiting statement (insert here the chosen statement) after the dash following the term, to properly limit the field of application of the term and definition to that defined by this committee.”

7.6 A significant term, when considered in the context of the standard, may sometimes require a delimiting phrase in the definition. Such a delimiting phrase should be used in addition to the generic delimiting statement for the class, whenever its use gives a clearer meaning to the definition. Frequently the generic delimiting statement for the class is sufficient.

8. Definitions—General

8.1 State the definition of the term in one sentence only. If two or more phrases are needed to fully state the meaning, connect them with semicolons. This helps prevent conflicts of meaning.

8.2 Generally, the definition should be of the type known as intensional definition. This type of definition first identifies the