
Information and documentation — Work process analysis for records

Information et documentation — Analyse du processus des «records»



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

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The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

In exceptional circumstances, when a technical committee has collected data of a different kind from that which is normally published as an International Standard ("state of the art", for example), it may decide by a simple majority vote of its participating members to publish a Technical Report. A Technical Report is entirely informative in nature and does not have to be reviewed until the data it provides are considered to be no longer valid or useful.

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

All organizations, regardless of their size or the nature of their business, exist and act to achieve certain goals and objectives. To realize its own specific goals and objectives, each organization will determine and apply appropriate work processes which constitute the organization's business.

Every organization generates records from its work processes. These records constitute evidence of the organization's goals and objectives, of its decisions and of its transactions. To fully understand these "business records", it is necessary to understand the work processes that generated them. This understanding can also be used to identify the records that should be generated from work processes and to manage them through time as assets of the organization.

Work process analysis for records is undertaken to determine the requirements for records creation, capture and control. It describes and analyses what happens in a function in a specific business context. It cannot take place in the abstract but is dependent on accurate information gathering and a well-grounded understanding of the organization's context and mission.

This Technical Report is intended for:

- records professionals (or persons assigned within an organization for managing records) responsible for creating and managing records in either a business system or dedicated records application software;
- system/business analysts responsible for designing business processes and/or systems that will create or manage records.

For the purposes of this Technical Report, *work process analysis* involves identifying:

- a) the relationship between work processes and their business context;
- b) the relationship between work processes and the rules governing their application (as derived from the relevant regulatory environment);
- c) the hierarchical decomposition of work processes into their component or constituent parts; and
- d) the sequential interdependence between discrete work processes or single transactions

Analysis of work processes for the purposes of creation and control of records serves to:

- provide a clear identification of records creation requirements, facilitating automatic capture and management of records as the work is performed; and
- define business contextual links between records, and thereby lead to their logical arrangement and grouping, thus ensuring clear documentation of work processes and facilitating retrieval, retention and disposition of the records based on knowledge of the business.

Work process analysis supports the integration of the capture of records as the work is undertaken. Processing orders and accounts, payment of wages, managing assets, stock control or quality assurance systems and contract management are examples of work processes in which the creation of records is normally integrated with processing the transactions. Integrating records processes into automation protocols applied to work processes will ensure that organizations' records are created, captured and controlled systematically in their business systems.

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Information and documentation — Work process analysis for records

1 Scope

This Technical Report provides guidance on work process analysis from the perspective of the creation, capture and control of records.

It identifies two types of analyses, namely

- a) functional analysis (decomposition of functions into processes), and
- b) sequential analysis (investigation of the flow of transactions).

Each analysis entails a preliminary review of context (i.e. mandate and regulatory environment) appropriate for the analysis. The components of the analysis can be undertaken in various combinations and in a different order from that described here, depending on the nature of the task, the scale of the project, and the purpose of the analysis. Guidance provided in the form of lists of questions/matters to be considered under each element of the analysis is also included.

This Technical Report describes a practical application of the theory outlined in ISO 15489. As such, it is independent of technology (i.e. can be applied regardless of the technological environment), although it can be used to assess the adequacy of technical tools that support an organization's work processes.

This Technical Report focuses on existing work processes rather than on facilitating "workflow" (i.e. the automation of a business process in whole or part, during which documents, information or tasks are passed from one participant to another for action, according to a set of procedural rules as outlined in Reference [1] of the Bibliography).

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application 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 15489-1:2001, *Information and documentation — Records management — Part 1: General*

ISO/TR 15489-2:2001, *Information and documentation — Records management — Part 2: Guidelines*

ISO 23081-1:2006, *Information and documentation — Records management processes — Metadata for records — Part 1: Principles*

ISO/TS 23081-2:2007, *Information and documentation — Records management processes — Metadata for records — Part 2: Conceptual and implementation issues*