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# International Standard



# 5963

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION • МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО СТАНДАРТИЗАЦИИ • ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE NORMALISATION

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## **Documentation — Methods for examining documents, determining their subjects, and selecting indexing terms**

*Documentation — Méthodes pour l'analyse des documents, la détermination de leur contenu et la sélection des termes d'indexation*

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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.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for approval before their acceptance as International Standards by the ISO Council. They are approved in accordance with ISO procedures requiring at least 75 % approval by the member bodies voting.

International Standard ISO 5963 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Documentation*.

Users should note that all International Standards undergo revision from time to time and that any reference made herein to any other International Standard implies its latest edition, unless otherwise stated.

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## Contents

	Page
1 Scope and field of application .....	1
2 References .....	1
3 Definitions .....	1
4 Operation and purpose of indexing .....	2
5 Examining the document .....	2
6 Identification of concepts .....	2
7 Selection of indexing terms .....	3
8 Quality control .....	4
<b>Annex</b> — Flowchart of the indexing operation using a thesaurus .....	5

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# Documentation — Methods for examining documents, determining their subjects, and selecting indexing terms

## 1 Scope and field of application

**1.1** This International Standard describes recommended procedures for examining documents, determining their subjects, and selecting appropriate indexing terms. It is restricted to these preliminary stages of indexing, and does not deal with the practices of any particular kind of indexing system, whether pre-coordinated or post-coordinated. It also describes general techniques for document analysis which should apply in all indexing situations. These methods are, however, especially intended for indexing systems in which the subjects of documents are expressed in summary form, and where concepts are recorded in the terms of a controlled indexing language. In this context, a controlled language usually refers to a subset of terms selected from natural language, and regulated, for example, by a thesaurus. These methods would apply, however, to systems in which concepts are represented for retrieval purposes by symbols chosen from the schedules of a classification scheme.

**1.2** The techniques described in this International Standard can be employed by any agency in which human indexers analyse the subjects of documents and express these subjects in indexing terms. They do not apply to agencies which employ those automatic indexing techniques in which terms occurring in texts are organized into sets or classes according to criteria which can be established by a computer, for example frequency of occurrence and/or adjacency in the text, although the aims of these systems are the same.

**1.3** This International Standard is intended primarily as a guide to indexers during the stages of document analysis and concept identification. It may also be helpful for the analysis of users' enquiries and their translation, for retrieval purposes, into the controlled terms of an indexing language, and it could function as guidance to abstractors during the preparation of abstracts. It should be borne in mind, however, that although these tasks are analogous they are not identical.

**1.4** This International Standard is intended to promote standard practice

- a) within an agency or network of agencies;
- b) between different indexing agencies, especially those which exchange bibliographic records.

## 2 References

ISO 2788, *Documentation — Guidelines for the establishment and development of monolingual thesauri*.

ISO 5964, *Documentation — Guidelines for the establishment and development of multilingual thesauri*.

## 3 Definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the following definitions apply.

**3.1 document:** Any item, printed or otherwise, which is amenable to cataloguing or indexing.

NOTE — This definition refers not only to written and printed materials in paper or microform versions (for example books, journals, diagrams, maps), but also to non-print media (for example machine-readable records, films, sound recordings), and three-dimensional objects or realia used as specimens.

**3.2 concept:** A unit of thought.

The semantic content of a concept can be re-expressed by a combination of other and different concepts, which may vary from one language or culture to another.

**3.3 subject:** Any concept or combination of concepts representing a theme in a document.

**3.4 indexing term:** The representation of a concept in the form of either

- a term derived from natural language, preferably a noun or noun phrase, or
- a classification symbol.

NOTE — An indexing term can consist of more than one word. In a controlled indexing language, a term is designated either as a *preferred term* or as a *non-preferred term*.

**3.5 preferred term:** A term used consistently when indexing to represent a given concept; sometimes known as "descriptor".

**3.6 non-preferred term:** The synonym or quasi-synonym of a preferred term.

A non-preferred term is not assigned to documents but is provided as an entry point in an index, the user being directed by an instruction (for example USE or SEE) to the preferred term; sometimes known as "non-descriptor".