

AS/NZS 4258:1994

Australian/New Zealand Standard

**Software user documentation
process**

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This Joint Australian/New Zealand Standard was prepared by Joint Technical Committee IT/9, Information Systems Vocabulary and Software. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 14 September 1994 and on behalf of the Council of Standards New Zealand on 24 October 1994. It was published on 14 November 1994.

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This Standard was issued in draft form for comment as DR 93072.

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First published as Joint Standard AS/NZS 4258:1994.

PUBLISHED JOINTLY BY:

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Homebush NSW 2140 Australia

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Level 10, Radio New Zealand House,
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ISBN 0 7262 9324 5

PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Australia/New Zealand Standards Committee IT/9 on Information Systems Vocabulary And Software.

This Standard is issued as a Joint Standard under the terms of the Active Cooperation Agreement between Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand.

There are two major types of Standards as follows:

- (a) Product Standards.
- (b) Process Standards, which specify the way in which products are to be developed.

This Standard is basically a process Standard. It does not mandate any particular document layout, document content or any other aspect of the completed documentation; rather, it mandates the way in which the documentation process is to be planned and carried out.

The ever-increasing application and complexity of computer software makes necessary the availability of complete, accurate and understandable documentation to those who use the software. This Standard provides a tool for achieving these aims by specifying those activities (what is to be done, and who is to do it) that can affect the quality of software user documentation.

Documentation is often regarded as something done after the software has been implemented. However, for quality software documentation production, it should be regarded as an integral part of the software production process. If done properly, it is a big enough job to require process planning in its own right. The purpose of this Standard is to encourage software developers to give this documentation process its due place. The Standard also gives users and clients a tool to ensure that this process takes place.

This Standard's main activity is the creation of a comprehensive plan for developing the documentation. This is necessary because things are more likely to happen if they are planned. To comply with the Standard, the plan must include a style specification. The Standard does not specify the content of this style specification (i.e. it does not specify a particular layout or typeface), but it specifies what a style specification must cover. The Standard also specifies what kinds of information the customer is to make available to the documenter, and who is to review and reproduce the documentation.

Further information on this topic may be obtained by contacting relevant organizations (see Appendix G) or from other literature (see Appendix H).

This Standard may be used to comply with the relevant sections of the following Standards:

- (a) AS 3563.1, *Software quality management systems, Part 1: Requirements*.
- (b) AS 4071, *Software project management plans*.

The relevant guidance from AS 3897, *Information processing—Guidelines for the management of software documentation*, has been accepted and incorporated into the Standard.

The term 'informative' has been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendices. An 'informative' appendix is only for information and guidance.

Guidance: Appendix B describes a number of methods of estimating the time required for the overall documentation process.

Guidance: Appendix E provides further information on assessing a documentation plan.

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