

New on the shelf

Supporting privacy protection in health informatics

by Janet Maillard, Assistant Editor, ISO Focus

A new ISO technical specification will help to reconcile the increasing use in healthcare of electronic processing of patient data with increasing patient expectations for privacy protection.

ISO/TS 25237:2008, *Health informatics – Pseudonymization*, contains principles and requirements for privacy protection using pseudonymization services for the protection of personal health information in databases.

Pseudonymization (from pseudonym) allows for the removal of an association with a data subject. It differs from anonymization (anonymous) in that it allows for data to be linked to the same person across multiple data records or information systems without revealing the identity of the person.

ISO/TS 25237:2008 is applicable to organizations that

make a claim of trustworthiness for operations engaged in pseudonymization services. Application areas include, but are not limited to:

- Research, or other secondary use of clinical data
- Clinical trials and post-marketing surveillance
- Public health monitoring and assessment
- Confidential patient-safety reporting (e.g. adverse drug effects)
- Comparative quality indicator reporting
- Peer review
- Consumer groups.

ISO/TS 25237:2008 was developed by ISO technical committee ISO/TC 215, *Health informatics*. It provides a conceptual model of the problem areas, requirements for trustworthy practices, and specifications to support the planning and implementation of pseudonymization services. More precisely, it :

- Defines a basic concept for pseudonymization
- Gives an overview of different use cases for pseudonymization that can be both reversible and irreversible
- Defines a basic methodology for pseudonymization services including organizational as well as technical aspects
- Gives a guide to risk assessment for re-identification
- Specifies a policy framework and minimal requirements for trustworthy practice for the operations of a pseudonymization service
- Specifies a policy framework and minimal requirements for controlled re-identification
- Specifies interfaces for the interoperability of services interfaces.

ISO/TC 25237:2008, *Health informatics – Pseudonymization*, is available from ISO national member institutes. It may also be obtained directly from the ISO Central Secretariat by contacting the Marketing & Communication department (sales@iso.org). ■

Facilitating implementation of ISO 14000 family in 12 languages

by Maria Lazarte, Acting Editor, ISO Focus

A newly revised ISO standard will facilitate even further the application of the ISO 14000 series on environmental management. By establishing a common vocabulary, the standard will ensure the effectiveness of communication, key for the implementation and operation of environmental management systems (EMS).

This third edition of ISO 14050:2009, *Environmental management – Vocabulary*, has been fully updated to include the latest developments in the field. The standard now provides clear and concise definitions of all concepts and terms used throughout the ISO 14000 series in the three official ISO languages, English, French and Russian, as well as in Arabic and Spanish. The standard also provides equivalent terms in Dutch, Finnish, German, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese and Swedish.

An ISO survey published last year showed that up to the end of 2007 at least 154 572 certificates of compliance with ISO 14001:2004 (requirements for environmental management systems) had been issued in 148 countries. Commenting on these results, Håvard Hjulstad, Convenor of the ISO/TC 207 Terminology Coordination Group which developed the standard, said “Given the global context, and the extent of the application of the ISO 14000 standards, it is clear now more than ever that ISO 14050 is crucial for ensuring that all the users of these standards are on the same page, no matter where in the world they are.”

Mr. Hjulstad added, “ISO 14050 will clarify any doubts that users of the ISO 14000 series may have concerning terminology and concepts, which is particularly important given the key role communication plays in the standards. By helping to maintain consistency, the ISO 14050 will also be very helpful to developers of standards, in particular those working on translations.”

ISO 14050:2008, *Environmental management – Vocabulary*, was developed by ISO technical committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*. It is available from ISO national member institutes. It may also be obtained directly from the ISO Central Secretariat by contacting the Marketing & Communication department (sales@iso.org). ■

