

Accredited Standards Committee
X3, Information Processing Systems

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Project:
Ref Doc.:
Reply to: John Scheible

To: X3T10.1 Membership
From: John Scheible
Subject: ANSI style guidelines

BACKGROUND

To make the task of incorporating proposals into the SSA documents, I have documented some of the restrictions placed on the editors by ANSI and proper technical writing. This information can be used to document the restrictions, and by proposal writers to use as a guide.

INFORMATION Rules for ANSI documents

Use

- a) May (permissive)
- b) should (recommendation)
- c) shall (conformance requirement)

Always avoid

- a) may not (revoked permission?)
- b) must (use shall)
- c) will
- d) could (use may)
- e) would
- f) can
- g) might
- h) Refer to clauses, not sections. Use (see 10.4) omitting clause.
- i) Resets (use "set" and "clear", reset means set to 1b again)

Maybe avoid

- a) Compliance should normally be conformance
- b) can ("can lead" change to "leads", "can be" change to "is" or "are")
- c) Which should be that in most cases
- d) specification should be standard
- e) disk should be device
- f) disk drive should be devices
- g) purge should be abort
- h) shut down should be suspend

Other rules

- a) Heading levels cannot contain only one entry (i.e. 1.1 can only exist if there is a 1.2).
- b) Sentences should be passive (i.e. has been done)
- c) d.c. not DC for direct current
- d) V for Volts (capital V), N for Newtons.
- e) measurement shall be with number in tables (not separate column) (i.e. 2.4 V)
- f) Double space between sentences
- g) Watch for (see 0). You cannot search on it, it is caused by a broken reference.
- h) All words follow common English (read American) meanings unless defined.
- i) See conventions section for additional style rules.
- j) For ISO, numbers should be 1234,5 rather than 1,234.5 (5 digits use space i.e. 2345,67 but 12345,67)
- k) Annex tables and figures should start with the Annex letter followed by .1, .2, etc.
- l) Annex headings should be A.1, A.1.1, A.2, etc. Warning, Word cannot handle this and I do it by manually numbering headings without explicit numbers
- m) Artwork should fit on a page and be 7" wide with a minimum font size of 9 pitch. Dimensions should have a designator with a table in the artwork itself to specify the actual numbers.

Sincerely,

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