



BSI Standards Publication

# Information technology — Specification of DRM technology for digital publications

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Part 1: Overview of copyright protection technologies  
in use in the publishing industry

## National foreword

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**Information technology —  
Specification of DRM technology for  
digital publications —**

**Part 1:  
Overview of copyright protection  
technologies in use in the publishing  
industry**



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)) or the IEC list of patent declarations received (see <http://patents.iec.ch>).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 34, *Document description and processing languages*.

A list of all parts in the ISO/IEC TS 23078 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

Ever since digital publications have grown in popularity, copyright protection has been an important issue for authors and publishers.

While the distribution of digital publications around the world is mostly based on the open EPUB standard, most retailers are using proprietary technologies to enforce usage constraints on digital publications in order to impede oversharing of copyrighted content. The high level of interoperability and accessibility gained by the use of a standard publishing format is therefore cancelled by the use of proprietary and closed technologies: digital publications are only readable on specific devices or reading applications (a retailer "locked-in" syndrome); digital publications may not be accessed anymore if the distributor which protected the publication goes out of business or if the DRM technology evolves drastically. As a result, users are deprived of any control over their digital publications.

In reaction to these hindrances, watermarking and fingerprinting technologies have also been developed for digital publications. These are sometimes called "social DRM" which is a good way to describe the effect of the visible marks embedded into the content. Thanks to their presence and the personal information they contain, the "licensee" cares about the use of the content he/she has acquired: one would not like to see content associated with one's personal information freely shared on the web. But the term "social DRM" is misleading also, as watermarking and fingerprinting techniques do not enforce technical control on the use of digital media.

Requirements related to security levels differ depending on which part of the digital publishing market is addressed. Many trade publishers, in different countries, are satisfied with a protection based on watermarking; but in many other situations, publishers require a solution which technically enforces the digital rights they provide to their users. This is where DRM technologies come into play.

In most use cases, publishers are happy to adopt a DRM solution which guarantees an easy transfer of publications between devices and a certain level of fair-use, and provides permanent access to the publications acquired by their customers. However, in certain use cases, publishers require a stronger protection measure, which limits the capability for users to transfer publications from one device to another.

# Information technology — Specification of DRM technology for digital publications —

## Part 1:

# Overview of copyright protection technologies in use in the publishing industry

## 1 Scope

This document describes three types of copyright protection technologies in use in the publishing industry:

- DRM free protection, i.e. technologies which does not rely on content encryption but rather use content fingerprinting or watermarking, adequate for use cases where user convenience is the top priority;
- user key-based DRM protection, adequate where user constraints are limited;
- device key-based DRM protection, adequate where the transfer of publications from one device to another is severely constrained.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### **digital publication**

set of constituent resources and associated metadata, organized together in a uniquely identifiable grouping

### 3.2

#### **Digital rights management**

##### **DRM**

systematic approach to copyright protection to prevent unauthorized redistribution of digital media and restrict the ways consumers can use the content they've acquired

### 3.3

#### **distributor**

*digital publication* (3.1) retailer, public library, academic library or specialized distributor of electronic content acting as an intermediary between publishers and retailers