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| **TD** | | | |
| **Source:** | | Rapporteur, RG-WM | |
| **Title:** | | Document to support the discussion of TD566 on using the term "in-force" instead of a date in normative references | |
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**Abstract:** This TD provides information to aid discussion of TD566 (LS from SG2) on using the term "in-force" instead of a date in normative references.

**Action**: RG-WM is invited to discuss this document.

**Context**

In Feb 2024, Q1/2 agreed to use the term "(in force)" instead of the actual date of approval for Recommendations listed as normative references (clause 2) of several work items.

The Republic of Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan disagreed with this decision ([SG2-C159R1](https://www.itu.int/md/T22-SG02-C-0159)) and made the following comments (rewritten by the rapporteur):

1. According to the "[Author's guide for drafting ITU-T Recommendations](https://www.itu.int/oth/T0A0F000004/en)", the following boilerplate is inserted at the beginning of clause 2 in all ITU-T Recommendations:

*The following ITU-T Recommendations and other references contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this Recommendation. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All Recommendations and other references are subject to revision; users of this Recommendation are therefore encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the Recommendations and other references listed below. […]*

This approach seems to be the only correct one because it is necessary to "*investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition*" as opposed to automatically transferring the provisions of the most recent edition of the referenced document to the referring Recommendation. Using "(in force)" instead of the date of approval would imply an unconditional application of the most recent edition, which could lead to factual errors if a newer version is not compatible with an older one.

1. Reduced transparency of information about versions of documents underlying the creation of the adopted Recommendation.
2. Incompatibility with the procedure for using references to documents in top-level documents, namely in the Resolutions of the PP, WTSA, RA, WTDC.
3. Such a proposal should only be considered by WTSA or PP as it affects the working methods of all study groups in ITU-T and other sectors of the ITU.

Consequently, Study Group 2 seeks clarification from TSAG regarding whether it is possible to make a general reference to the latest version of an ITU-T Recommendation rather than to specific date, e.g.:

[ITU-T E.164] Recommendation ITU-T E.164 (in force), *The international public telecommunication numbering plan*.

**Information**

1. Clause 8.2 of the [Author's guide for drafting ITU-T Recommendations](https://www.itu.int/oth/T0A0F000004/en) makes it clear that ITU‑T and ITU-R Recommendations are always followed by their year of approval in clause 2 "References":

*ITU-T and ITU-R Recommendations will be identified by "Recommendation ITU-T" or "Recommendation ITU-R" followed by the Recommendation number and then by the year of approval between parentheses (e.g., "Recommendation ITU-T A.5 (2019)") in clause 2. They will be followed by the full title of the Recommendation.*

1. For normative references to external documents, the A.5 justification (Annex A of ITU-T A.5) stipulates that a "Clear description of the document (type of document, title, number, version, **date**, etc.)" is needed. This seems to imply that the date (or version, or both) of an external standard should also appear in clause 2 "References".
2. Approval dates are always used in references between (PP, WTSA, RA, WTDC) Resolutions.
3. According to the "[Author's guide for drafting ITU-T Recommendations](https://www.itu.int/oth/T0A0F000004/en)", the following boilerplate is inserted at the beginning of clause 2 in all ITU-T Recommendations:

*The following ITU-T Recommendations and other references contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this Recommendation. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All Recommendations and other references are subject to revision;* ***users of this Recommendation are therefore encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the Recommendations and other references listed below****[[1]](#footnote-1). […]*

* On one hand, applying this ***bold boilerplate text*** to a normative reference with an approval date has the same effect as a normative reference with "(in force)".
* On the other hand, the "(in force)" mention can be interpreted by an implementer of the referencing Recommendation as meaning that there cannot be any technical incompatibility if the referenced standard evolves (i.e. no need to "investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the Recommendations"). Otherwise said, when the approval date is mentioned in the normative reference, an implementer knows that compatibility had been checked when the referencing Recommendation containing was published.

1. There is a risk of inaccurate specific cross-references if subsequent versions of a referenced Recommendation have changes in paragraph numbering.
2. The [Guidelines for Implementation of the Common Patent Policy for ITU-T/ITU-R/ISO/IEC](https://www.itu.int/oth/T0404000001/en) do not require that a particular version of a Recommendation be mentioned in the Patent Statement and Licensing Declaration for ITU-T or ITU-R Recommendation | ISO or IEC Deliverable:

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For example, see the [patent statements related to Rec. ITU-T H.266](https://www.itu.int/net4/ipr/search.aspx?sector=ITU&class=PS&rec=H.266&prod=H.266&opt=-1&field=anokwcvd).

1. Many ITU-T Recommendations (from SG2, SG5, SG11, SG12, SG13, SG15, SG16, SG17) already use "(in force)" in their normative references, since at least year 2007 (sometimes to ISO/IEC international standards, e.g., in ITU‑T H.266):
2. G.664 (10/2012)
3. G.671 (01/2009)  
   G.671 (02/2012)  
   G.671 (08/2019)
4. G.874 (03/2008)
5. G.984.4 (2008) Amd. 1 (06/2009)
6. G.988 (10/2012)  
   G.988 (11/2017)  
   G.988 (11/2022)
7. G.8021/Y.1341 (05/2012)
8. G.8261/Y.1361 (04/2008)
9. H.248.55 (06/2008)
10. H.264.1 (01/2012)  
    H.264.1 (10/2014)  
    H.264.1 (V6) (02/2016)
11. H.265 (09/2023)
12. H.265.1 (10/2014)  
    H.265.1 (10/2018)
13. H.266 (08/2020)  
    H.266 (04/2022)  
    H.266 (V3) (09/2023)
14. H.274 (V2) (05/2022)
15. H.622.1 (10/2008)
16. H.730 (06/2012)
17. H.810 (11/2015)
18. H.841 (07/2016)  
    H.841 (04/2017)  
    H.841 (08/2018)
19. H.842 (07/2016)  
    H.842 (04/2017)  
    H.842 (08/2018)  
    H.842 (11/2019)
20. H.843 (07/2016)  
    H.843 (04/2017)  
    H.843 (08/2018)
21. H.844 (07/2016)  
    H.844 (04/2017)  
    H.844 (08/2018)  
    H.844 (11/2019)
22. H.845.1 (07/2016)
23. H.845.11 (07/2016)
24. H.845.12 (07/2016)
25. H.845.13 (07/2016)
26. H.845.14 (07/2016)
27. H.845.2 (07/2016)
28. H.845.3 (07/2016)
29. H.845.4 (07/2016)
30. H.845.7 (07/2016)
31. H.845.8 (07/2016)
32. H.845.9 (07/2016)
33. H.846 (07/2016)  
    H.846 (04/2017)  
    H.846 (08/2018)  
    H.846 (11/2019)
34. H.847 (07/2016)  
    H.847 (04/2017)
35. H.848 (07/2016)  
    H.848 (04/2017)
36. H.849 (07/2016)  
    H.849 (04/2017)  
    H.849 (08/2018)
37. H.850 (07/2016)  
    H.850 (04/2017)  
    H.850 (11/2019)
38. H.850.1 (04/2017)
39. H.850.2 (04/2017)
40. H.850.3 (04/2017)
41. H.850.4 (04/2017)
42. H.850.5 (04/2017)
43. H.850.6 (04/2017)  
    H.850.6 (11/2019)
44. H.850.7 (04/2017)  
    H.850.7 (11/2019)
45. L.19 (05/2010)
46. L.107/L.78 (05/2008)
47. L.400/L.12 (03/2008)
48. L.1201 (03/2014)
49. L.1205 (12/2016)
50. M.3020 (09/2010)
51. P.1100 (03/2011)  
    P.1100 (01/2015)   
    P.1100 (03/2017)  
    P.1100 (01/2019)
52. P.1130 (06/2015)
53. P.1140 (06/2015)  
    P.1140 (03/2017)  
    P.1140 (07/2022)
54. Q.1707/Y.2804 (02/2008)
55. Q.3303.3 (05/2008)
56. Q.3904 (06/2010)
57. T.801 (V2) (06/2021)
58. T.835 (08/2016)
59. X.604 (03/2010)
60. X.1055 (11/2008)
61. X.1124 (11/2007)
62. Y.1910 (09/2008)
63. Y.2006 (02/2008)
64. Y.2014 (03/2010)
65. Y.2233 (01/2008)  
    Y.2233 (06/2010)
66. Y.2702 (09/2008)
67. Y.2902 (11/2008)
68. Y.4405/H.621 (08/2008)
69. Y.4407/Y.2281 (01/2011)
70. **Study Group 2** would only use this approach for Recommendations under their responsibility. The rationale is that they have a number of (revisions of) E-series Recommendations that are being developed together, but their approval date is not known and could be dragged out over several years (see [Q1/2 work programme](https://www.itu.int/md/T22-SG02-240619-TD-PLEN-0426/en)). The E-series is very stable and slow to be updated (e.g., [ITU‑T .164](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-E.164) dates back to 2010). The intention is to refer to the latest version of those Recommendations whenever they are finally approved. The referenced Recommendations do not have IPR implications.
71. **Study Groups 5, 11** **and** **20** prefer to always indicate the date of approval when referencing other standards.  
    NOTE – As shown in item 7 above, SG2, SG5, SG11, SG12, SG13, SG15, SG16 and SG17 have developed Recommendations that use "(in force)" in their normative references.
72. **Study Group 16** usually indicate the date of approval when referencing other standards. Most of the 38 texts using the "in force" approach were developed collaboratively with ISO/IEC (video and image compression standards) or with the Continua consortium, and reflect practice in the originating SDOs (see item 11 below).  
    In many cases, the generic reference is justified to minimize the need for text maintenance when details of its application do not impact the ITU-T Recommendation. For example, Unicode (ISO/IEC 10646) should be used, irrespective of possible future extensions of the existing version.  
    In order to facilitate identification of clause renumbering or suppression in future editions of a standard when the "in force" approach is used, SG16 suggest that the date of the relevant reference at the time the Recommendation is issued be included, with an indication that future editions would be applicable, e.g.:

[ITU-T T.35] Recommendation ITU-T T.35 (2000 or in force), *Procedure for the allocation of ITU-T defined codes for non-standard facilities*.

[ITU-T T.35] Recommendation ITU-T T.35 (2000 or later edition), *Procedure for the allocation of ITU-T defined codes for non-standard facilities*.

[ITU-T T.35] Recommendation ITU-T T.35 (2000\*), *Procedure for the allocation of ITU-T defined codes for non-standard facilities*.

\* The indicated edition or a more recent edition in force.

1. In ISO and IEC standards, the list of normative references shall be introduced by the following wording (see [ISO/IEC Directives, part 2, clause 15.5.2](https://www.iso.org/sites/directives/current/part2/index.xhtml#_idTextAnchor193)):

*The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document.* ***For dated references[[2]](#footnote-2)****, only the edition cited applies.* ***For undated references****2, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.*

**Proposal**

**P1** Considering that:

* most study groups prefer to stay with the current (date) approach;
* the current approach already covers the "(YYYY or later edition)" approach because the [Author's guide for drafting ITU-T Recommendations](https://www.itu.int/oth/T0A0F000004/en) encourages users of the Recommendation "*to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the Recommendations and other references listed*";
* the "(in force)" approach could break cross-references or create technical incompatibility if a referenced standard evolves whereas the date approach informs implementers that the Recommendation was compatible with the referenced standards at the time of publication;

it is recommended to use the current (date) approach without updating the [Author's guide for drafting ITU-T Recommendations](https://www.itu.int/oth/T0A0F000004/en).

**P2** In the specific cases of a common text with ISO/IEC JTC 1 (see Recommendation ITU-T A.23) or an incorporation of text from another standards development organization (see Recommendation ITU-T A.25), and if there is a strong and justified need to reflect current practice in the originating SDO, the "(in force)" approach can be tolerated and the need is explained in the meeting report of the Question.

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1. Emphasis added by the RG-WM rapporteur. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Emphasis added by the RG-WM rapporteur. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)