INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

ITU-T

E.120

TELECOMMUNICATION
STANDARDIZATION SECTOR
OF ITU

TELEPHONE NETWORK AND ISDN

OPERATION, NUMBERING, ROUTING
AND MOBILE SERVICE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USERS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE SERVICE

ITU-T Recommendation E.120

(Extract from the *Blue Book*)

NOTES

1   ITU-T Recommendation E.120 was published in Fascicle II.2 of the *Blue Book*. This file is an extract from the *Blue Book*. While the presentation and layout of the text might be slightly different from the *Blue Book* version, the contents of the file are identical to the *Blue Book* version and copyright conditions remain unchanged (see below).

2   In this Recommendation, the expression "Administration" is used for conciseness to indicate both a telecommunication administration and a recognized operating agency.

Recommendation E.120

<div align="center">

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR USERS OF
THE INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE SERVICE[1]**

</div>

Preamble

This Recommendation outlines the principles and guidelines for Administrations in the preparation of user instructions.

The growth of the worldwide telephone network emphasizes the urgency to improve customer performance when using telecommunications services. The absence of clear and up-to-date information and instructions for users of the worldwide telephone service can only result in a low degree of customer satisfaction and unnecessarily high costs to Administrations. Consequently, Administrations are urged to promote, through the use of this Recommendation, progress towards the adoption of the guidelines which follow.

1   General principles

1.1   Up-to-date comprehensive instructions should be made readily available to users of the public telephone service, by Administrations.

1.2   The objective of such instructions is to allow customers to complete calls themselves to the maximum extent possible and reduce errors in the use of the international network, thus:

–   assisting the user and providing greater satisfaction on his part,

–   effecting significant cost savings by Administrations through more efficient use of the network.

1.3   On this basis, the full availability of current instructions should be considered as equally important as the overall planning, provisioning, operating and maintaining processes, the costs of which are a normal and inherent part of the supplying of good telecommunications service.

1.4   Established instructions provided by Administrations should be evaluated a regular and continuing basis with a view to their improvement. Observations of service quality, studies of customer calling difficulties, questionnaires, customer comments, laboratory experiments, and any other means which may be available or praticable should be considered the normal tools for furnishing good instructions.

1.5.1   The introduction of new services shall include clear and easy to use instructions for use by the customer. These instructions constitute a normal part of the introduction of these services.

1.5.2   Every effort should be made to test the effectiveness of instructions before issue and then to promote and promulgate on an international basis those proven to be most effective in practice, with due regard to the needs of different countries.

1.5.3   Design of instructions should play a key role in the development of proposed new services, from the customer point of view, rather than being considered belatedly in operational and hardware decision making and manufacture.

1.5.4   Optimal instructional practices as proved in service might be made available to all interested Administrations in order to improve customer performance and effect significant cost savings.

2   Instructions

2.1   The most common means of providing a range of instructions and information to customers for the effective use of the telephone service is through the medium of printed *public telephone directories* issued on a general basis by Administrations.

---

[1]   Other Recommendations which should be considered in this respect are: E.115, E.121, E.122, E.123, E.126, E.127, E.128, E.160, E.161.

2.2   In addition, these printed instructions should normally be placed in public places for use by customers, such as public telephone booths and post offices.

2.3   Further instructions for specific purposes may be issued to users, for example:

– dialling instruction booklets,

– dialling code booklets,

– operating procedure booklets (for supplementary services),

– personal telephone directories,

– other telephone guide books (multilingual), pamphlets or cards of a specialized nature.

2.4   Access to spoken instructions can be provided through the provision of operators or recorded announcement machines dedicated to this activity; one aim should be to reduce to the greatest extent customer references to the operator assistance service.

2.5   Specialized instruction can with advantage be given through the medium of inclusion in school curriculums, radio broadcast and television transmissions, other printed media and special public presentations for the purpose of improving customer performance.

3   Public telephone directories

3.1   *Public telephone directories* are published regularly by Administrations as the most common means of informing customers of service numbers which are generally available for public use, instructions on use of the service, and easy to find current customer telephone number listings. It is recognized that the layout of directories is governed by considerations which may vary from country to country; however, it is desirable that such lists of subscribers should be capable of ready consultation by the Administrations and/or subscribers of other countries. To this end, similarity in sequence and presentation of directory information should be regarded as a desirable international objective to be achieved within the constraints of language differences.

3.2   Such information can be conveyed by words, pictograms and internationally standardized symbols, the basic need being to impart clear information to the caller (see Recommendation E.121). It would be very useful, in order to encourage the use of the international telephone service, if directories (especially those supplied to other Administrations and/or to subscribers of other countries) were composed in roman characters, particularly those relating to the names and addresses of subscribers.

3.3   Public telephone directories may cover a single numbering plan area, or several numbering plan areas on an exchange or geographical basis or portions thereof based on a community of interest and are issued free of charge to subscribers in these areas.

3.4   They may be published as a single volume or as groups of volumes, keeping in mind the need for brevity and simplicity, regular editing and up-to-date publication, consistency between volumes, for maximum readability and ease of use by the customer. Each volume of the lists of subscribers could usefully contain a recapitulatory list of the subdivisions mentioned in the volume, or an equivalent chart.

3.5   Language difference on the part of residents and foreign visitors is an important factor to be considered in the publication of public telephone directories. Multilingual information, when included, should be well presented so that those who have partial knowledge of, or no language of the country are not deterred from using the service.

3.6   To avoid difficulties in the interpretation of instructions due to language differences, the harmonization of the General Information pages in the telephone directory must be continued. In these pages, instructions are clearly and concisely given by means of recommended symbols and pictograms and by graphical representation of the operational procedures of the telephone service (see Recommendation E.126).

3.7   Moreover, with a view to reducing the difficulties experienced by foreign visitors in consulting the first pages of the telephone directory, some of these pages should contain a summary of the essential information in different foreign languages with references to the full text of the instructions given in the "General Information pages" in the national language (see Recommendation E.127).

3.8   Public telephone directories should be subdivided into at least two basic parts easily recognizable, for example by means of different coloured pages (for example, pink for instructional pages and white for customer telephone number listings). Page edge-marking or intercover publicity are other alternatives.

3.8.1   Call guide instructions for users should consist, for example, of the following, in order of priority:

– index;

- emergency call numbers (police, fire, ambulance, language service, etc.);

- service department codes and operator assistance numbers;

- how to dial;

- local dialling instructions with lists of exchange or geographic place names, codes, maps of area coverage and applicable charges if any;

- national long-distance dialling instructions, with lists of place names, long-distance prefixes, area codes, maps and details of call charges;

- international long-distance dialling instructions, with international prefixes, country codes, area codes and details of call charges, etc.;

- how to use the directory;

- general information which the Administration may feel useful or important to the user;

- examples drawn from Recommendation E.123 to illustrate the standard national and international notation for telephone numbers, to facilitate understanding of the composition of international numbers;

- numbers of the administrative services of Administrations, their addresses and enquiry points;

- list of codes and telephone numbers of the telephone services which are available, together with recommended symbols to assist foreign visitors.

3.8.2 *Customers listings*

- Alphabetical lists in black print on white pages of subscribers (surname, given names or initials and postal address) either by numbering plan, exchange or geographical area (or combinations thereof) with an appropriate identification in heavier type at the beginning of the list and at the top of each page and/or column.

- Listings belonging to another directory area including those of other countries should be easily distinguishable, and show the appropriate information in order that a call can be completed.

- Alphabetical lists may be split where desired, into residence and business listings.

3.8.3 The instructional pages should precede the customer listings.

3.8.4 Where there is a need for more than one language in a country, colours or other means of differentiation may be used as appropriate in the instructional pages.

3.9 The same directory may contain sections other than the alphabetical list of subscribers, but these sections may equally be published as a separate volume or volumes, for example:

3.9.1 *Classified listings* (Yellow pages)

- a classified business trade and professional section in alphabetical order, followed by names in alphabetical order under the respective headings, together with address and telephone number.

3.9.2 *Services promotion* (Green pages)

- a section or filler pages to allow the Administration to illustrate services it wishes to sell, or makes available free of charge, and provide instructions for specialized instruments which may be connected to the network, in addition to other information (e.g. postal or telegraph information, PBXs, telex or data services). Photographs, recommended pictograms and symbols could be used, particularly to help foreign visitors to take advantage of the services.

3.9.3 Optional classified listings and service promotion sections should follow the instructional pages and customer listings so as not to negate the basic nature of the latter, from the users' point of view.

3.10   It is desirable that the effectiveness of the existing public telephone directories should be tested periodically in order to improve customer performance in the use of the network.

3.11   The front cover or the first pages of each book of a directory, or each section of a directory, should preferably be used to emphasize important information such as emergency numbers although these may be also listed elsewhere.

3.12   Other information deemed important by Administrations, for example national laws or regulations, billing information, etc. might be placed on the back pages or spare pages due to the binding process. These pages might also be used for personal notation of telephone numbers to increase the value of the directory from the users' point of view.

3.13   Administrations may wish to consider the use of staff dedicated to the improvement of directory listings, resolution of particular listing problems and which can ensure a source of additional revenue (e.g. additional listings).

3.14   Recommendation E.114 outlines the conditions for supplying lists of subscribes (by directories and other means) to other Administrations.

4   **Public telephone booths**

4.1   Public telephone booths should preferably be identified externally with the applicable internationally approved symbols, particularly at locations frequented by tourists.

4.2   In addition, they should be equipped with public telephone directories relative to the areas in which they are located and associated calling instruction booklets as appropriate.

4.3   Public telephone booths should, as necessary, prominently display notices listing exchanges which can be reached without dialling the full national number. Lists of dialling codes, particularly those most frequently used should also be dispayed to reduce enquiries to operators to the minimum.

4.4   Public telephone booths should display relevant pictograms and symbols to instruct customers on how to place national and international calls, to obtain assistance from operators, or to place calls to emergency numbers (fire, police, etc.). (See Recommendation E.121.)

4.5   Administrations should preferably display instructional information in more than one language and give careful consideration to the use of several languages for maximum assistance, particularly in call offices and transport terminals where foreign visitors can be expected and so help reduce costly operating assistance services.

Harmonization of the human factor aspects of payphones may be an efficient means not only of ensuring the correct use of payphones in the international telephone service but also of obviating the need for different instructions to foreign visitors, which may become virtually superfluous in the future.

4.6   Similarly, instructional information regarding other services provided by the Administration may be posted.

5   **Instructional information for specific purposes**

5.1   Considering the scope, size and normal availability of public telephone directories, the ease and need of travel by users, the increasing use and reliability of telecommunications and the lack of knowledge on the part of foreign visitors, then personalized instructional information should be made available.

5.2   This generally takes the form of personal *pocket information* issued to new customers, either residence or business, heavy users, or generally available upon request. Such information includes:

–   dialling instruction booklets,

–   dialling code booklets,

–   operating procedure booklets,

–   personal telephone directories,

–   other telephone guide books, pamphlets or cards.

5.3   Administrations should consider making appropriate information available to foreign visitors and to their customers who plan to visit other countries or who otherwise have a need. This might be arranged and exchanged on a bilateral basis for mutual benefit.

5.4   Careful attention should be directed to publishing instructions in more than one language to ensure as wide a use as possible. The use of appropriate pictograms and symbols of the recommended design would assist the customer in unfamiliar situations (see Recommendation E.121).

5.5   Dialling instruction booklets are published to facilitate the placing of national calls and international calls. Ideally, instructions for both should be in the same booklet and should be essentially the same as provided in public telephone directories.

Since the characteristics of payphones at present differ from one country to another, detailed instructions should be provided for identifying payphones, for making national and international calls correctly from them and for correctly paying for the calls.

5.6   Dialling code booklets should similarly list the appropriate codes for national and international calls, in separate sections of the same booklet.

5.7   Operating procedure booklets may be essentially the same as dialling code booklets but include appropriate control procedures for special services which the customer may want to use, preferably of an internationally standardized nature.

5.8   Special cards or specialized leaflets may also be made available to illustrate, for example:
–   dialling codes or instructions for foreign visitors on how to make national and internationl calls;
–   tones which may be encountered in dialling national or international calls, illustrated by pictograms or internationally standardized symbols;
–   use of particular services that are available or whose proper use should be encouraged;
–   practical or helpful hints to foreign visitors regarding any aspect of the service;
–   guidance to travellers telephoning home from abroad (see Supplement No. 6 at the end of this fascicle).

5.9   The above-mentioned leaflets and Supplement No. 6 should so far as possible be combined, provided that this arrangement is convenient for users (see Recommendation E.128).

5.10   Personal telephone directories can be particularly useful to users for their notation of particular or frequently called numbers. Administrations could consider the inclusion of a mminimal amount of key instructional information.

5.11   Administrations are encouraged to establish and maintain close liaison with other countries' tourist boards to ensure that current information about its services is available to prospective visitors in suitably translated form.

6   Instructions by operators or recorded announcements

6.1   Correct dialling instructions can be given to customers as required in the process of placing a call, by special intercept operators or recorded announcements dedicated to that type of instruction.

6.2   This may be given in more than one language, or the customer directed to an appropriate language operator for assistance. Inferred is special training on the part of the operators.

6.3   Recorded announcement machines may be employed on a public basis, where feasible, to which users could be encouraged to call for instructional information (e.g. demonstration of foreign tones or announcements, etc.).

6.4   To aid in a clearer understanding of the world's telephone system, a verbal announcement used within the various networks should preferably be interleaved with the special information tone (SIT).

Note – This tone is internationally standardized and designed to invite a calling subscriber to get in touch with an operator in his country when he cannot understand a message aurally received.

6.5   It is paramount that if recorded announcements are used, the words should be chosen with extreme care to avoid customer confusion.

7   Specialized instructions

7.1   Administrations may choose to employ specialized instructions in a formal manner through other media for example:

– educational programmes in elementary or more advanced school curriculums,

– educational programmes and aids for teachers,

– radio broadcasts or television transmissions of instructional information, exclusive of advertising,

– presentation of instructions through newspapers or magazines,

– film presentations to private groups, or to larger public groups in cinemas,

– presentations at local, national or international exhibitions,

– special inserts with customer accounts,

– special leaflets for restricted or wide distribution,

– special classes on customers', or Administration, premises (e.g. PBX or Centrex users, etc.),

– change of number postcards and letterhead stickers for individual subscriber use, etc.

For the training of future users, who may become an increasingly important part of worldwide telecommunications customers, some of the above items may be applicable.

7.2   Some such programmes may be more effective than others and while efficacy may be difficult to determine, evaluation is an important aspect towards optimum instruction at least cost.