

Specification Format

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1. Conventions

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in RFC2119 when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

2. Character Encoding

Plain-text files for specifications MUST use the CP437 standard with the exclusion of character code 0x0A which represents a line feed as specified in RFC20.

3. Line definition

A line of text is a sequence of 0 or more characters followed by a line feed character. For the sake of and clarity, the ending line feed character is part of the line.

Lines MUST NOT exceed 72 characters in length, including the ending line feed character. A line is called a blank line if it consists of only a line feed character.

3.1. Line numbering

To ensure the following page dimension section is clear, we need to define how lines are numbered.

Assuming a document is in digital format[1] and has a length of greater than 0 bytes, the first character in the document is part of line 0. Numbering lines from 0 instead of 1 gives us an advantage of clarity in the next section.

4. Pages

A page is a sequence of 60 lines. That means for every line number n , the line is the start of a new page when $n \bmod 60 = 0$.

4.1 Page header

The first line of a page SHOULD consist of a left-aligned spec number indicator, a centered (short) document title and a right-aligned publishing date (see 6.3). The second line of a page MUST always be blank, excluding the first page of the document.

4.2 Page footer

The last line of a page MUST consist of a left-align last name of the author and a right-aligned page number between square brackets. The second-to-last line of a page must be blank, just like the second line of a page.

5. Paragraphs

A paragraph is a sequence of consecutive lines containing characters other than only a line feed. Paragraphs are separated by either a blank line or a page break. Paragraphs MUST NOT span multiple pages, limiting their size to 56 lines.

6. Document header

The first lines of the first page of a specification document SHALL always contain left-aligned description headers (see 6.1) and right-aligned author identification and a right-aligned publishing date.

After the initial lines (see 6.1 to 6.3), the document title is REQUIRED to be written on the first page of the document. For it's specification, see section 9.

Further information on the first page should give a quick description of the contents of the document.

6.1. Descriptive header

Each descriptive header is made up of a key and a value. Whitespace is not allowed in both the key and the value. Whitespace can only be included in the value by wrapping the value in quote characters.

The key of the header consists of all characters of the line up to the first semicolon, excluding the semicolon itself and omitting all white-space characters.

The value of the header starts at the first non-whitespace character after the first semicolon of the line. If the first character is a quote, the value ends at the next quote in the line. If the first character is not a quote, the value ends at the next whitespace character.

6.2. Short author identification

In order to allow authors to take some credit and to track who has written what, the author's name MUST be added right-aligned on the first line of the first page of the document. To prevent mixing notations between documents, the names SHOULD be written as only the first letters of all given names in capitals, separated by dots, a space and the Family name starting with a capital. When written by a group with a name, the short author identification string SHOULD state the group's name.

6.3. Publish date

Because a document is unlikely to have been written within a day, a publish date is simply the month's name starting with a capital followed by the year, both following the Gregorian calendar.

7. Document footer

The document SHOULD close, starting on a new page, with all informative resources which were used to write the document, noting their keyword and document title. When possible, a URL to the resource SHOULD be included.

After the informative resources, the document SHOULD end with one or several pages dedicated to the information of the author(s) and if possible their contact information.

8. Section titles

Section titles SHOULD be a short text about the subject the section describes. Whether it is simply the keyword of what it explains, a problem statement or other type of text is up to the author as long as it's relevant to the section's body.

A section title MUST start with a capital character & MUST NOT contain any other capital letters, excluding where they are required in names or abbreviations.

9. Document title

The title of the document should clearly state the main subject of the document and it's contents. Each word of the document title must start with a capital character when noted as the title of the document.

On the first page of the document, the title should be centered horizontally and have at least 2 blank lines both above and below it. The document title SHOULD be as close to the document's descriptive headers.

10. Informative resources

- [CP437] IBM Code page 437
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_page_437
- [RFC20] ASCII format for Network Interchange
Vint Cerf
<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc20>
- [RFC822] Standard for ARPA Internet Text Messages
David H. Crocker
<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc822>
- [RFC1111] RFC Instructions
J. Postel
<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc1111>
- [RFC2119] RFC Key Words
S. Bradner
<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2119>
- [RFC7322] RFC Style Guid
H. Flanagan
S. Ginoza
<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc7322>

11. Author information

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