

Network Working Group  
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## A Format for E-mailing Bibliographic Records

### Status of this Memo

This memo provides information for the Internet community. It does not specify an Internet standard. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

### Abstract

This memo defines a format for E-mailing bibliographic records of technical reports. It is intended to accelerate the dissemination of information about new Computer Science Technical Reports (CS-TR).

### INTRODUCTION

Many Computer Science R&D organizations routinely announce new technical reports by mailing (via the postal services) the bibliographic records of these reports.

These mailings have non-trivial cost and delay. In addition, their recipients cannot conveniently file them, electronically, for later retrieval and searches.

Therefore, it is suggested that the publishing organizations would e-mail these announcements by using the following format.

Organizations may automate to any degree (or not at all) both the creation of these records (about their own publications) and the handling of the records received from other organizations.

This format is designed to be simple, for people and for machines, to be easy to read ("human readable") and create without any special programs, and to be compatible with E-mail.

This format defines how bibliographic records are to be transmitted. It does not define what to do with them when received.

This format is a "tagged" format with self-explaining alphabetic tags. It should be possible to prepare and to read bibliographic records using any text editor, without any special programs.

This format was developed with considerable help and involvement of Computer Science and Library personnel from several organizations, including CMU, CNRI, Cornell, ISI, Meridian, MIT, Stanford, and UC. Key contributions were provided by Jerry Saltzer of MIT, and Larry Lannom of Meridian. The initial draft was prepared by Danny Cohen and Larry Miller of ISI.

The use of this format is encouraged. There are no limitations on its use.

## THE INFORMATION FIELDS

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The various fields should follow the format described below.

<M> means Mandatory; a record without it is invalid.

<O> means Optional.

The tags (aka Field-IDs) are shown in upper case.

<M>	BIB-VERSION of this bibliographic records format
<M>	ID
<M>	ENTRY date
<O>	ORGANIZATION
<O>	TITLE
<O>	TYPE
<O>	REVISION
<O>	AUTHOR
<O>	CORP-AUTHOR
<O>	CONTACT for the author(s)
<O>	DATE of publication
<O>	PAGES count
<O>	COPYRIGHT, permissions and disclaimers
<O>	RETRIEVAL information
<O>	CR-CATEGORY
<O>	PERIOD
<O>	SERIES
<O>	FUNDING organization(s)
<O>	MONITORING organization(s)
<O>	CONTRACT number(s)
<O>	GRANT number(s)
<O>	LANGUAGE name
<O>	NOTES
<O>	ABSTRACT
<M>	END

## META FORMAT

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- \* Keep It Simple.
- \* One bibliographic record for each publication, where a "publication" is whatever the publishing institution defines as such.
- \* A record contains several fields.
- \* Each field starts with its tag (aka the field-ID) which is a reserved identifier (containing no separators) at the beginning of a new line with or without spaces before it), followed by two colons ("::"), followed by the field data.
- \* Continuation lines: Lines are limited to 79 characters. When needed, fields may continue over several lines, with an implied space in between. In order to simplify the use no special marking is used to indicate continuation line. Hence, fields are terminated by a line that starts (apart from white space) with a word followed by two colons. Except for the "END::" that is terminated by the end of line.) For improved human readability it is suggested to start continuation lines with some spaces.
- \* Several fields are mandatory and must appear in the record. All fields (unless specifically not permitted to) may be in any order and may be repeated as needed (e.g., the AUTHOR field). The order of the repeated fields is always preserved.
- \* Only printable ASCII characters may be used. Hence, the permissible characters are ASCII codes 040 (Space) through 176(~) and line breaks which are \012 (LF) or \012\015 (CRLF). Empty lines indicate paragraph break. \009 (tab) must be replaced by spaces before submission. This specifically forbids tabs, null characters, DEL, backspaces, etc. (i.e., if used, the record is invalid.)

Throughout this document the word "publisher" means the publishing organization of a report (e.g., a university or a department thereof), not necessarily an organization authorized to issue ISBN numbers.

## EXAMPLE

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BIB-VERSION:: CS-TR-v2.0  
ID:: OUKS//CS-TR-91-123  
ENTRY:: January 15, 1992  
ORGANIZATION:: Oceanview University, Kansas, Computer Science  
TITLE:: The Computerization of Oceanview with High  
Speed Fiber Optics Communication  
TYPE:: Technical Report  
REVISION:: 2, FTP retrieval information added  
AUTHOR:: Finnegan, James A.  
CONTACT:: Prof. J. A. Finnegan, CS Dept, Oceanview Univ, Oceanview,  
KS 54321 Tel: 913-456-7890 <Finnegan@cs.ouks.edu>  
AUTHOR:: Pooh, Winnie The  
CONTACT:: 100 Aker Wood  
DATE:: December 1991  
PAGES:: 48  
COPYRIGHT:: Copyright for the report (c) 1991, by J. A. Finnegan.  
All rights reserved. Permission is granted for any  
academic use of the report.  
RETRIEVAL:: For full text with color pictures send a self-addressed  
stamped envelope to Prof. J. A. Finnegan, CS Dept,  
Oceanview University, Oceanview, KS 54321.  
RETRIEVAL:: ASCII available via FTP from JUPITER.CS.OUKS.EDU with the  
pathname PUBS/computerization.txt. Login with FTP,  
username ANONYMOUS and password GUEST.  
File size: 123,456 characters  
CR-CATEGORY:: D.0  
CR-CATEGORY:: C.2.2 Computer Sys Org, Communication nets, Net Protocols  
SERIES:: Communication  
FUNDING:: FAS  
CONTRACT:: FAS-91-C-1234  
MONITORING:: FNBO  
LANGUAGE:: English  
NOTES:: This report is the full version of the paper with the  
same title in IEEE Trans ASSP Dec 1976

## ABSTRACT::

Many alchemists in the country work on important fusion problems.  
All of them cooperate and interact with each other through the  
scientific literature. This scientific communication methodology  
has many advantages. Timeliness is not one of them.

END:: OUKS//CS-TR-91-123

----- End of Example -----

For reference, the above example has about 1,750 characters (220  
words) including about 250 characters (40 words) in the abstract.

**THE ACTUAL FORMAT**

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In the following double-quotes indicate complete strings. They are included only for grouping and are not expected to be used in the actual records.

The term "Open Ended Format" in the following means arbitrary text.

The BIB-VERSION, ID, ENTRY, and END field must appear as the first, second, third, and last fields, and may not be repeated in the record. All other fields may be repeated as needed.

**BIB-VERSION (M)** -- This is the first field of any record. It is a mandatory field. It identifies the version of the format used to create this bibliographic record.

BIB-VERSIONs that start with the letter X (case independent) are considered experimental. Bib-records sent with such a BIB-VERSION should NOT be incorporated in the permanent database of the recipient.

Using this version of this format, this field is always:

Format:   BIB-VERSION:: CS-TR-v2.0

**ID (M)** -- This is the second field of any record. It is also a mandatory field. Its format is "ID:: XXX//YYY", where XXX is the publisher-ID (the controlled symbol of the publisher) and YYY is the ID (e.g., report number) of the publication as assigned by the publisher. This ID is typically printed on the cover, and may contain slashes.

The organization symbols "DUMMY" and "TEST" (case independent) and any organization symbol starting with <X> (case independent) are reserved for test records that should NOT be incorporated in the permanent database of the recipients.

Format:   ID:: <publisher-ID>//<free-text>

Example:   ID:: OUKS//CS-TR-91-123

\*\*\*\* See the note at the end regarding the \*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\* controlled symbols of the publishers \*\*\*\*

**ENTRY (M)** -- This is a mandatory field. It is the date of creating this bibliographic record.

The format for ENTRY date is "Month Day, Year". The month must be alphabetic (spelled out). The "Day" is a 1- or 2-digit number. The "Year" is a 4-digit number.

Format: ENTRY:: <date>

Example: ENTRY:: January 15, 1992

**ORGANIZATION (O)** -- It is the full name spelled out (no acronyms, please) of the publishing organization. The use of this name is controlled together with the controlled symbol of the publisher (as discussed above for the ID field).

Avoid acronyms because there are many common acronyms, such as ISI and USC. Please provide it in ascending order, such as "X University, Y Department" (not "Y Department, X University").

Format: ORGANIZATION:: <free-text>

Example: ORGANIZATION:: Stanford University, Computer Science

**TITLE (O)** -- This is the title of the work as assigned by the author. This field should include the complete title with all the subtitles, if any.

If the publication has no title (e.g., in withdrawal), a blank TITLE field should be included.

Format: TITLE:: <free-text>

Example: TITLE:: The Computerization of Oceanview with High Speed Fiber Optics Communication

**TYPE (O)** -- Indicates the type of publication (summary, final project report, etc.) as assigned by the issuing organization.

Format: TYPE:: <free-text>

Example: TYPE:: Technical Report

**REVISION (0)** -- Indicates that the current bibliographic record is a revision of a previously issued record and is intended to replace it. Revision information consists of an integer followed by a comma, and by text in an open ended format. The revised bibliographic record should contain a complete record for the publication, not just a list of changes to the old record. The default assumption is that a record is not a revision (i.e., specify only if it is), with that integer being zero.

The first token in this field is an integer revision number. Higher numbers indicate later revisions. Use the text to describe the revision. Reasons to send out a revised record include an error in the original, change in the retrieval information, or withdrawal (see below).

Format: REVISION:: N, <free-text>

Example: REVISION:: 2, FTP retrieval information added

**WITHDRAWING:** A withdrawal of a record is a special case of revising it. Hence, the standard way to withdraw records is by sending a revision record with (at least) all the mandatory fields, and an optional explanation in the NOTES field.

It is OK on withdrawal to eliminate the title, by not providing the TITLE field it or by providing it with no text (blank).

Example for withdrawing a bibliographic record::

```
BIB-VERSION:: CS-TR-v2.0
ID::          OUKS//CS-TR-91-123
ENTRY::       January 25, 1992
ORGANIZATION:: Oceanview University, Kansas, Computer Science
TITLE::
REVISION::    4, withdrawn
NOTES::       Withdrawn, found to be irrelevant
END::         OUKS//CS-TR-91-123
```

This new record will replace all the fields of the previous record for that publication. In this example it will eliminate the title, the retrieval information provided earlier, and not mention the authors.

**AUTHOR (0)** -- Personal names only. Normal last name first inversion. Editors should be listed here as well, identified with the usual "(ed.)" as shown below in the last example.

If the report was not authored by a person (e.g., it was authored by a committee or a panel) use CORP-AUTHOR (see below) instead of AUTHOR.

Multiple authors are entered by using multiple lines, each in the form of "AUTHOR:: <free-text>".

The system preserves the order of the authors.

Format: AUTHOR:: <free-text>

Example: AUTHOR:: Finnegan, James A.  
AUTHOR:: Pooh, Winnie The  
AUTHOR:: Lastname, Firstname (ed.)

**CORP-AUTHOR (0)** -- The corporate author (e.g., a committee or a panel) that authored the report, which may be different from the ORGANIZATION issuing the report.

In entering the corporate name please omit initial "the" or "a". If it is really part of the name, please invert it.

Format: CORP-AUTHOR:: <free-text>

Example: CORP-AUTHOR:: Committee on long-range computing

**CONTACT (0)** -- The contact for the author(s).  
Open-ended, most likely E-mail and postal addresses.

You may provide a CONTACT field for each author separately, or for all the AUTHOR fields.

E-mail addresses should always be in "pointy brackets" (as in the example below).

Format: CONTACT:: <free-text>

Example: CONTACT:: Prof. J. A. Finnegan, CS Dept, Oceanview  
Univ., Oceanview, Kansas, 54321  
Tel: 913-456-7890 <Finnegan@cs.ouks.edu>



**DATE (0)** -- The publication date. The formats are "Month Year" and "Month Day, Year". The month must be alphabetic (spelled out). The "Day" is a 1- or 2-digit number. The "Year" is a 4-digit number.

Format: DATE:: <date>

Example: DATE:: January 1992

Example: DATE:: January 15, 1992

**PAGES (0)** -- Total number of pages, without being too picky about it. Final numbered page is actually preferred, if it is a reasonable approximation to the total number of pages.

Format: PAGES:: <number>

Example: PAGES:: 48

**COPYRIGHT (0)** -- Copyright, permissions and disclaimers. Open ended format. The COPYRIGHT field applies to the cited report, rather than to the current bibliographic record. On advice of counsel it is suggested that you seek the advice of yours.

Format: COPYRIGHT:: <free-text>

Example: COPYRIGHT:: Copyright for the report (c) 1991,  
by J. A. Finnegan. All rights reserved.  
Permission is granted for any academic  
use of the report.

**RETRIEVAL INFORMATION (0)** -- Open-ended format describing how to get a copy of the full text. It may include anything from FTP instructions to a variety of files (e.g., ASCII, TeX, and PostScript) to "Send \$4.50 to ..." or "Send E-mail to <X@Y>".

It is suggested to repeat this field for each retrieval option (e.g., one line for the FTP instructions to the ASCII version, and another for the PostScript version). When offering files like TeX all the related files (e.g., "\input mystyle") should be included. Please provide file sizes (in characters).

Means are not defined yet for providing the information needed for automatic retrieval of files (such as via FTP). They are expected to be defined in the near future.

No limitations are placed on the dissemination of the bibliographic records. If there are limitations on the dissemination of the publication, it should be protected by some means such as passwords. This format does not address this protection.

Format: RETRIEVAL:: <free-text>

Example: RETRIEVAL:: For full text with color pictures send  
a self-addressed stamped envelope to  
Prof. J. A. Finnegan, CS Dept,  
Oceanview University, Oceanview, KS 54321.  
RETRIEVAL:: ASCII available via FTP from  
JUPITER.CS.OUKS.EDU with the pathname  
PUBS/computerization.txt.  
Login with FTP, username ANONYMOUS and  
password GUEST.  
File size: 123,456 characters

CR-CATEGORY (0) -- Specify the CR-category. The CR-category (the Computer Reviews Category) index (e.g., "B.3") should always be included, optionally followed by the name of that category. If the name is specified it should be fully specified with parent levels as needed to clarify it, as in the second example below. Use multiple lines for multiple categories.

The January 1992 issue of CR has the full list of these categories, with a detailed discussion of the CR Classification System, and a full index. Typically the full index appears in every January issue, and the top two levels in every issue.

Format: CR-CATEGORY:: <free-text>

Example: CR-CATEGORY:: D.1

Example: CR-CATEGORY:: B.3 Hardware, Memory Structures

PERIOD (0) -- Time period covered (date range). Applicable primarily to progress reports, etc. Any format is acceptable, as long as the two dates are separated with " to " (the word "to" surrounded by spaces) and each date is in the format allowed for dates, as described above for the date field.

Format: PERIOD:: <date> to <date>

Example: PERIOD:: January 1990 to March 1990

**SERIES (0) -- Series title, including volume number within series.  
Open-ended format, with producing institution strongly  
encouraged to be internally consistent.**

**Format:    SERIES:: <free-text>**

**Example:   SERIES:: Communication**

**FUNDING (0) -- The name(s) of the funding organization(s).**

**Format:    FUNDING:: <free-text>**

**Example:   FUNDING:: DARPA**

**MONITORING (0) -- The name(s) of the monitoring organization(s).**

**Format:    MONITORING:: <free-text>**

**Example:   MONITORING:: ONR**

**CONTRACT (0) -- The contract number(s).**

**Format:    CONTRACT:: <free-text>**

**Example:   CONTRACT:: MMA-90-23-456**

**GRANT (0) -- The grant number(s).**

**Format:    CONTRACT:: <free-text>**

**Example:   GRANT:: NASA-91-2345**

**LANGUAGE (0) -- The language in which the report is written.  
Please use the full English name of that language.**

**Please include the Abstract in English, if possible.**

**If the language is not specified, English is assumed.**

**Format:    LANGUAGE:: <free-text>**

**Example:   LANGUAGE:: English**

NOTES (0) -- Miscellaneous free text.

Format: NOTES:: <free-text>

Example: NOTES:: This report is the full version of the paper  
with the same title in IEEE Trans ASSP Dec  
1976

ABSTRACT (0) -- Highly recommended, but not mandatory. Even though no limit is defined for its length, it is suggested not to expect applications to be able to handle more than 10,000 characters.

The ABSTRACT is expected to be used for subject searching since titles are not enough. Even if the report is not in English, an English ABSTRACT is preferable. If no formal abstract appears on document, the producers of the bibliographic records are encouraged to use pieces of the introduction, first paragraph, etc.

Format: ABSTRACT:: XXXX ..... XXXXXXXX  
XXXX ..... XXXXXXXX  
  
XXXX ..... XXXXXXXX  
XXXX ..... XXXXXXXX

END (M) -- This is a mandatory field. It must be the last entry of a record, identifying the record that it ends, by stating the same ID that was used at the beginning of the records, in its "ID::".

Format: END:: XXX

Example: END:: OUKS//CS-TR-91-123

>>>>>> [END OF FORMAT DEFINITION] <<<<<<

## A Note Regarding the Controlled Symbols of the Publishers

In order to avoid conflicts among the symbols of the publishing organizations (the XXX part of the "ID:: XXX//YYY") it is suggested that the various organizations that publish reports (such as universities, departments, and laboratories) register their <publisher-ID> symbols and names, in a way similar to the registration of other key parameters and names in the Internet.

Danny Cohen <Cohen@ISI.EDU> of ISI, has agreed to coordinate this registration for the publishers of Computer Science technical reports. It is suggested that before using this format the publishing organizations would coordinate with him (by e-mail) their symbols and the names of their organizations. [Discussions are in progress to have these publisher-IDs registered with the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) and listed in future editions of the Assigned Numbers document.]

In order to help automated handling of the received bibliographic records, it is expected that the producers of bibliographic records will always use the same name, exactly, in the ORGANIZATION field.

## Security Considerations

Security issues are not discussed in this memo.

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