
Simultaneous interpreting — Quality and transmission of sound and image input — Requirements

*Interprétation simultanée — Qualité et transmission des signaux
audio-vidéo — Exigences*

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ISO 20108:2017

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ISO copyright office
Ch. de Blandonnet 8 • CP 401
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva, Switzerland
Tel. +41 22 749 01 11
Fax +41 22 749 09 47
copyright@iso.org
www.iso.org

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

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 ISO documents 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).

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Introduction

In simultaneous interpreting, sound input is the interpreter's most important source of information. The image of the speaker and of all visual materials used in the conference is almost as important.

New technologies permit different forms of audio and video signals and are now being used increasingly to transmit sound and image to interpreters. Their quality determines the conditions of the interpreters' work. The transmission mode of sound and image is therefore vital and requirements should be standardized.

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Simultaneous interpreting — Quality and transmission of sound and image input — Requirements

1 Scope

This document sets out requirements for the quality and transmission of sound and image input to interpreters and specifies the characteristics of the audio and video signals. The components of typical interpreting systems are specified in ISO 20109. Together with either permanent (see ISO 2603) or mobile (see ISO 4043) booths, these interpreting systems form the interpreters' working environment. In addition to setting out the requirements for on-site interpreting, where participants (speakers and members of the audience) and interpreters are at the same location, this document specifies requirements for different varieties of distance interpreting situations in which the interpreters are not at the same location as one or more of the conference participants.

This document also addresses the work of manufacturers and providers of simultaneous interpreting equipment and technical staff.

In conjunction with either ISO 2603 or ISO 4043, this document and ISO 20109 provide the relevant requirements both for the quality and transmission of sound and image provided to interpreters and for the equipment needed in the booths, the conference room and the distant site(s).

2 Normative references (standards.iteh.ai)

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, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 2603:2016, *Simultaneous interpreting — Permanent booths — Requirements*

ISO 4043, *Simultaneous interpreting — Mobile booths — Requirements*

ISO 18841¹⁾, *Interpreting services — General requirements and recommendations*

ISO 20109:2016, *Simultaneous interpreting — Equipment — Requirements*

IEC 60268-16, *Sound system equipment — Part 16: Objective rating of speech intelligibility by speech transmission index*

ITU-R BT.1359, *Relative timing of sound and vision for broadcasting*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 2603, ISO 4043, ISO 18841 and ISO 20109 and the following apply.

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

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

1) To be published.

3.1 interpreting

rendering of spoken or signed information from a source language to a target language in oral or signed form, conveying both the register and meaning of the source language content

[SOURCE: ISO 18841:2016, 3.1.2]

3.2 simultaneous interpreting

mode of *interpreting* (3.1) performed while a speaker is still speaking or signing

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this document, the activity requires specialized equipment.

[SOURCE: ISO 2603:2016, 3.1, modified — Note 1 to entry has been modified.]

3.3 booth booth for simultaneous interpreting

self-contained unit enclosing the interpreter's work space

Note 1 to entry: One of the purposes of simultaneous interpreting booths is to provide sound insulation, both from the noise transmitted from the booth's external environment to the booth and vice versa, and from noise passing from one booth to another.

Note 2 to entry: ISO 2603 applies to permanent booths; ISO 4043 applies to mobile booths.

[SOURCE: ISO 2603:2016, 3.2, modified — Note 2 to entry has been added.]

3.4 distance interpreting remote interpreting

interpreting (3.1) of a speaker in a different location from that of the interpreter, enabled by information and communications technology (ICT)

[SOURCE: ISO 20109:2016, 3.10, modified — The term "simultaneous" has been deleted.]

3.5 video display

electronic device that represents information in a visual form

[SOURCE: ISO 20109:2016, 3.9]

4 Sound input to interpreters

4.1 General

The overall sound input to interpreters shall comply with ISO 20109:2016, Clause 4.

4.2 Microphones

4.2.1 Conference system microphones

Conference system microphones shall have the same characteristics as interpreter console microphones set out in ISO 20109:2016, 4.1 and 6.3.

4.2.2 Auxiliary sources

4.2.2.1 Mobile microphones

Handheld, lapel, head-worn and any other microphone used shall have a dynamic range at least equal to that set out in ISO 20109:2016, 4.1.

4.2.2.2 External sources

Sound input from external sources like laptops and videoconferencing systems shall have a dynamic range at least equal to that set out in ISO 20109:2016, 4.1.

It shall be possible to switch videoconferencing microphones ON and OFF or to mute them.

Acoustic echo cancelling shall be in place at all sites.

4.2.2.3 Ambient microphones

Ambient microphones shall provide interpreters with the ambience of the conference room.

If enabled, one or more microphones shall switch ON when all other sound sources are switched OFF.

The ambient microphone(s) shall switch OFF when any conference system microphone is switched ON or any other sound source is fed into the system. Its level shall be adjustable.

4.2.2.4 Chime

A chime may be transmitted to the interpreters' headphones. The sound level of the chime shall be at least 20 dB less than the nominal level of the interpreting system.

4.2.3 Microphone management

The number of microphones switched ON shall be configurable with preferably only one microphone switched ON.

If, in addition to the speaker's microphone, the chairperson's microphone is to be independent, it should be possible to switch it ON at any moment.

A button should be available to the chairperson, which when pressed switches OFF the other microphones.

Distant sound sources and distant microphones shall be deemed to be microphones in the microphone management system and may also be controlled by an external management system.

4.3 Conference system

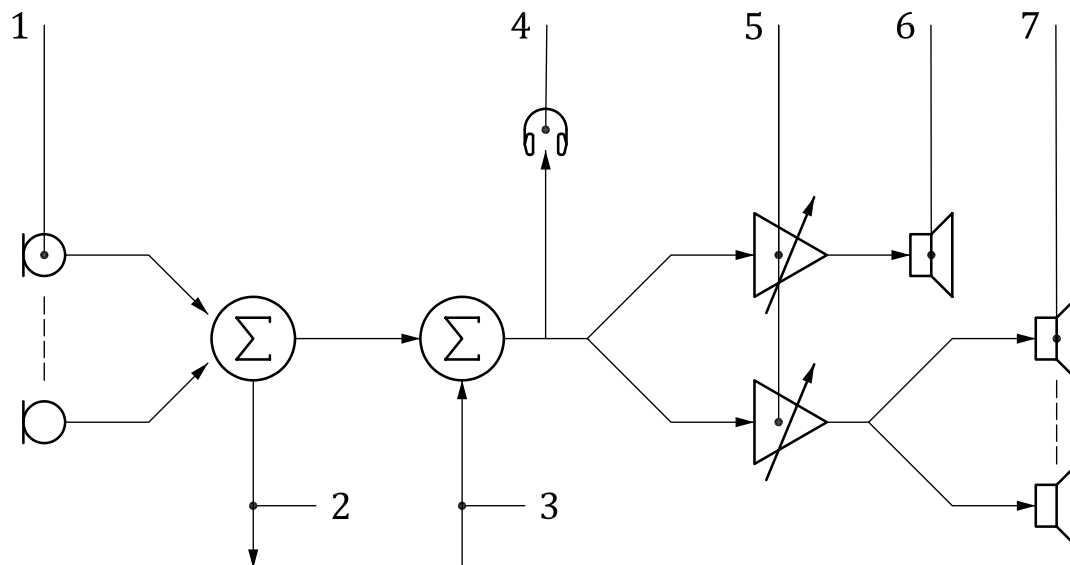
4.3.1 General

In a conference room with more than one microphone, the conference system is used to generate the original/floor sound input both for the interpreters and for the speech reinforcement system.

4.3.2 Sound input and output

4.3.2.1 Overview

The conference system shall have at least one auxiliary input and one original/floor output (see [Figure 1](#)), which allows a setup at least in the modes set out in [4.3.2.2](#) and [4.3.2.3](#).



Key

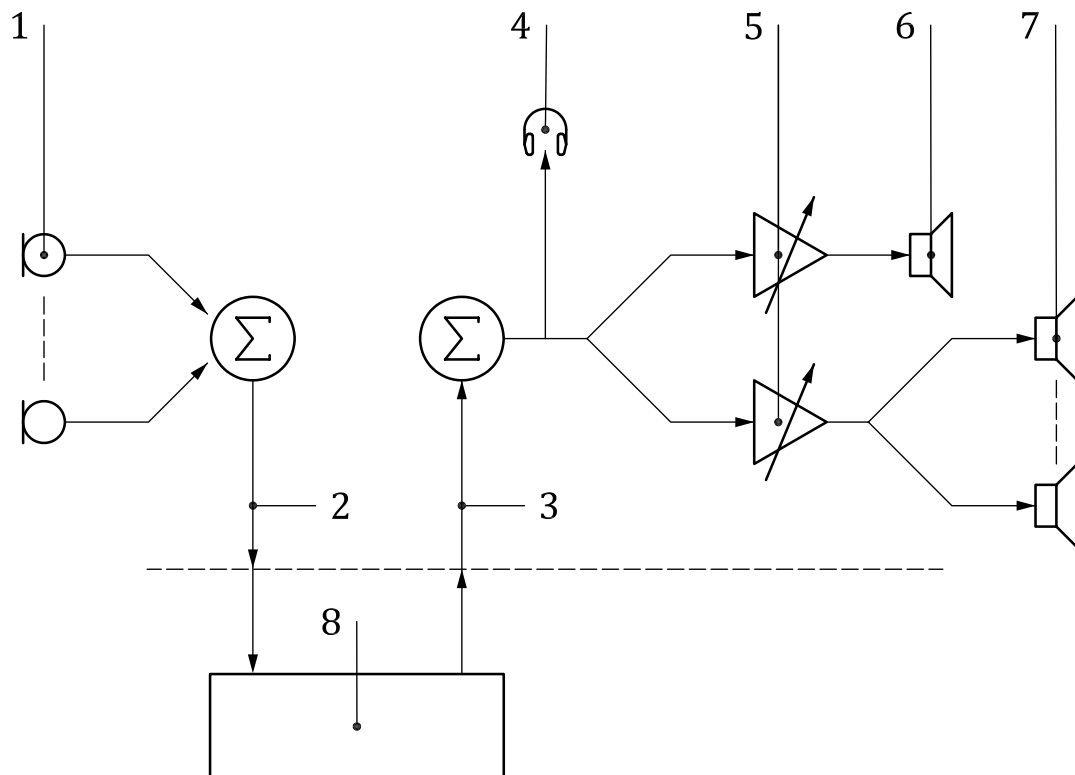
- 1 conference system microphones
- 2 dry floor output
- 3 auxiliary input
- 4 processed floor output
- 5 volume controls
- 6 speech reinforcement system
- 7 discussion unit speakers

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Figure 1 — Standard mode
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4.3.2.2 Insertion mode

In insertion mode, the normal audio path of the summed output of the conference system is interrupted to allow an audio processing device to be connected. The external audio device is connected between the original/floor output and the auxiliary input (see [Figure 2](#)).

**Key**

- 1 conference system microphones
- 2 dry floor output
- 3 auxiliary input
- 4 processed floor output
- 5 volume controls
- 6 speech reinforcement system
- 7 discussion unit speakers
- 8 audio processor

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Figure 2 — Insertion mode

4.3.2.3 Mix-minus mode

The main feature of this mode is the fact that sound sources connected to the auxiliary input of the conference system are not routed to the original/floor output of the conference system.

This is desired to avoid echo and feedback in applications where a distant audio connection is made with another conference system in order to connect distant delegates. The result is a considerable improvement in the sound performance of the connection. See [Figure 3](#) for an example of what the audio routing looks like if the two systems (local and distant) are connected.