

Australian Standard™

**Electronic messages for exchange of  
claim and related information**

This Australian Standard was prepared by Committee IT-014, Health Informatics. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 19 November 2001 and published on 2 May 2002.

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The following interests are represented on Committee IT-014:

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Australian Association of Pathology Practices  
Australian Health Insurance Association  
Australian Healthcare Association  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
Australian Medical Association  
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First published as AS 4937—2002.

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Published by Standards Australia International Ltd  
GPO Box 5420, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia

ISBN 0 7337 4247 5

## PREFACE

This is the first Australian Standard drafted by the newly formed Working Group of IT-014, Health Informatics, IT-014-10-02, *Financial Messages* (formerly IT-014-06-07) to cover a preferred future for electronic messages for exchange of claim and related information.

It describes a high level business model that identifies claims related information for the health sector and the applicable electronic messages that should be sent in particular business contexts. It also provides references to detailed message specifications for some of the interactions in the business model. However, this standard is not in itself a message specification.

The Terms of Reference under which this Standard has been prepared are as follows:

- (a) To design a generic model of financial and commercial interchanges within the Australian health sector.
- (b) To develop specific implementation guidelines for the interchanges identified within the model and advocate the use of existing guidelines developed outside the health sector but with applicability to the health sector.
- (c) To progress and promote the adoption of the above implementation guidelines.
- (d) To maintain the Standards and modify as necessary to meet user requirements.

In response to requests from the health informatics community, much of the content of this Standard was originally drafted by the former National Consultative Group for Private Healthcare e-Commerce (NCG) in its role as the Finance and Billing working group of the Standards Australia Committee IT-014 on Health Informatics.

NOTE: The NCG referred to here and elsewhere in the document is in the process of being reformed and may in the future be redesignated as the Joint Committee of Private Health Insurers (JCPHI).

The term 'informative' has been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which it applies. An informative appendix is only for information and guidance.

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## FOREWORD

The IT-014 Health Informatics Committee established a workshop agreement with the NCG to represent Australian requirements to the UN/EDIFACT D11 Healthcare Group and to draft Australian Standards for finance and billing.

The first phase of the work was to define the business case, without reference to a particular syntax. An object-oriented data model was developed that identified the players that needed to communicate with each other in a preferred electronic future. Pieces of information transferred between the objects in the data model are referred to as 'interchanges'.

Note that for the sake of completeness, a wide range of interchanges have been included in the model that would not foreseeably involve an electronic transaction or are not in the scope of this Standard. These are the interchanges in Table 6.2 denoted with an 'N/A' (not applicable) in the Functional Message column. *In particular, these interchanges were included to demonstrate the role of the clinical provider and the patient in the overall e-Commerce model.* Other interchanges considered to be outside the scope of this subcommittee, but which have also been included for the sake of completeness, have been denoted with a reference to the appropriate IT-014 subcommittee.

Note also that several interchanges have been identified as being likely to involve an electronic transaction but for which no electronic transaction has been defined. These are denoted in Table 6.2 as 'T.B.D.' (to be determined). Updates of the Standard will identify these individual transactions and the priority given to determining these transactions will depend on feedback from the user community.

The conclusion reached following the first phase of the subcommittee work was that the UN/EDIFACT messaging syntax is suitable for most claims related transactions in the health sector, however a number of non UN/EDIFACT standard messages are currently in use and these could be converted to UN/EDIFACT when and if there is a commercial imperative to do so.

A phased approach must be considered to allow organizations that are currently using the NCG 2.2 format to move forward with a plan of phasing out existing Standards and setting a target date for implementation of the new (UN/EDIFACT) structure. Thus, the object-oriented data model forming part of this Standard refers, for each interchange, to the relevant UN/EDIFACT or existing NCG specification.

## Standards Australia

### Australian Standard

## Electronic messages for exchange of claim and related information

### 1 INTRODUCTION TO ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

Electronic commerce (e-Commerce) promises to be a major factor in enabling the health industry to reduce its operating costs, obtain accurate and timely information for decision making, improve overall effectiveness of business processes and offer a better administrative service to healthcare consumers.

E-Commerce is the electronic transfer of commercial or financial information for the purposes of trade and administration and can be roughly categorized into two groups: business-to-business e-Commerce or business-to-consumer e-Commerce transactions. The focus of this Standard is upon business-to-business e-Commerce.

Business-to-business e-Commerce transactions can take several forms, the most common being:

- (a) Electronic data interchange (EDI)—structured messages designed to be exchanged between two computer applications using syntax agreed by the trading parties.
- (b) Web-based transactions—structured web pages designed to provide a medium for the exchange of information between a user and a computer application (such as an Internet-based hospital booking system or an online catalogue).

The requirement for detailed standards is clearly more important in the case of EDI. However, wherever possible, it is recommended that developers of web-based systems should achieve consistency wherever possible (from a data content point of view) with the corresponding EDI transaction. Where many organizations in a sector are developing web-forms or XML-based (eXtensible Markup Language) systems for the same business purpose for use by many parties, further standardization (such as in web-page layout and XML syntax) is necessary. Examples include the work of the Project Electronic Commerce & Communication (PECC) project in standardizing a web-based purchase order and the work of the National Consultative Group (NCG) in standardizing screen layouts for online eligibility checking.

Business-to-business e-Commerce/EDI is essentially no different to the large-scale systems integration projects being undertaken by many individual organizations in the health sector today. Much of the software designed to facilitate systems integration in a large organization can be used to build EDI messages (and vice versa; i.e. the more sophisticated e-Commerce gateways can be used as systems integration tools). However, there are a couple of essential differences between EDI beyond the organization and systems integration within: first, in an e-Commerce project, there is a reliance on external trading partners (and their vendors) to comply with the same standards and develop them at more or less the same time and second, that EDI messages are designed on the basis that they will be transmitted over an external network. Thus, EDI messages contain stringent control totals and comprehensive message enveloping to allow for this type of transmission.