American Nuclear Society

**accommodating user needs
in scientific and engineering
computer software development**

an American National Standard

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and Engineering Computer Software Development

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Comments on this standard are encouraged and should be sent to Society Headquarters.

Foreword

This standard is a revision of American National Standard Guidelines for Considering User Needs in Computer Program Development, ANSI/ANS-10.5-1994 (withdrawn 2004). It was prepared under the supervision of the ANS-10 Subcommittee of the American Nuclear Society's Standards Committee. This subcommittee is sponsored by the Mathematics and Computation Division of the Society. The Mathematics and Computation Division has encouraged the development and interchange of computer software. These recommendations are based on experience in the development and use of computer software for scientific and engineering calculations in the nuclear industry.

A high degree of reliance is placed on results produced by computer calculations. Often, the users of computer programs have limited program expertise and can be unaware of the consequences of misapplication. Similarly, program developers may have limited appreciation of user needs, particularly in the area of adequate documentation, input preparation, and output interpretation. Cooperative interaction between developers and prospective users throughout the development and trial use periods is important to generate a product that can be used with a high degree of reliability. In many projects, the prospective user is not available or not accessible, and the developer must anticipate the needs of users.

This standard provides requirements and recommendations for programming and documentation practices that are important for accommodating user needs. Proper application of this standard will improve the design and utility of computer software by encouraging the developer to consider aspects related to user requirements, which are often overlooked or assigned a low priority. This standard is intended to support the process of software development but is not intended to support a specific order of software life cycle phases. It is recognized that a substantial effort may be required to fully implement these requirements and recommendations. The cost of this effort must be weighed against the potential benefits resulting from ease of use and increased reliability.

This standard is one of three standards directed toward individuals who develop computer programs. The other two are American National Standard Portability of Scientific and Engineering Software ANSI/ANS-10.2-2000 and American National Standard Criteria for the Verification and Validation of Scientific and Engineering Computer Programs for the Nuclear Industry, ANSI/ANS-10.4-1987 (R1998). These standards are under continual maintenance by Subcommittee ANS-10. Historical standard American National Standard Documentation of Computer Software, ANSI/ANS-10.3-1995 (withdrawn 2005) also contains useful information. The user is advised to review the most recent version of these standards for possible changes.

As used here, the definition of criteria is "The bases for judging a particular process or product." The term "should" denotes a guideline; the term "shall" denotes a mandatory requirement.

This standard was drafted by Working Group ANS-10.5. The members at the time this standard was prepared were as follows:

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