

EXEC Document

Title: Guidelines for the production of EARN documents
Author(s): P Bryant, H Nussbacher
Date: 1989/8/8
Committee: Executive
Document: EXEC106 89 EARN-MIN LISTSERV@UKACRL
Revision: 1
Supersedes:
Status: Final
Maintainer: P Bryant
Access: Unresyricted

1 Motivation

As EARN continues to grow, we are beginning to see a deluge of documents and drafts appearing. If this deluge is to be controlled, catalogued, and made easily available we must attempt to have recommendations for their production, cataloguing, maintenance, and access.

2 Restrictions

EARN documents are normally held electronically. They are frequently transmitted across networks to be displayed and printed on a wide variety of equipment. While documents ideally should have a wide variety of fonts and sophisticated layouts this would currently prevents their display on terminals and would further restrict output to a narrow range of devices. This would defeat the object of making documents easily accessible. Thus a very simple and basic format is recommended. Ease of access is far more important than presentation.

To prepare for automatic document searches and retrieval a standard heading is proposed aimed at covering most requirements. This will also make EARN documents instantly recognisable and tend to show that EARN has a professional approach to its business.

Recommendations are provided for the body of text to allow ease of display, editing, and commenting.

3 Header

3.1 Header Format

A document must carry a banner of 10 fields introduced by an "EARN Document" header and terminated by a line of "underlines". Each field

starts on a new line but may consist of several lines where second and subsequent lines commence with "space". There follows an example which shows how the header for the document would appear.

EARN Document

Title: Proposals for guidelines for the production of EARN documents
Author(s): P Bryant, H Nussbacher
Date: 1989/7/29
Committee: Executive
Document: EXEC106 89 EARN-MIN LISTSERV@UKACRL
Revision: 0
Supersedes:
Status: Draft
Maintainer: Executive
Access: Unrestricted

A document will be terminated by a line containing "End of document." to detect if the end of a document is lost.

3.2 Description of fields

Title: - This should include keywords to allow document index searches to locate sets of documents meeting various criteria.

Author(s): - The list of authors separated by commas.

Date: - The date must be in ISO format. That is - year number, month number, and day number. This is to avoid the problem of the ambiguity between American and European forms.

Committee: - Most documents will be prepared by or for a committee such as the Executive, Board of Directors, or Network Operations Group.

Document: - Documents will normally be held in a LISTSERV and this field defines the location or potential location of the document. Each group may develop their own scheme of identification. ISO documents operate by the updated document retaining its identification and the revision number being increased. Other groups may wish to allocate a new document name for a revised document in order to retain old documents. Others might like a date in the name, such as EARNEXEC 890615. The name consists of four items each of up to 8 characters to

allow them to be uniquely located to a LISTSERV. The first two are the CMS identifier. The third is the relevant LISTSERV directory. The fourth identifies the EARN node. If alternatives to LISTSERV appear then an alternative Document: field may be defined.

Revision: The revision number of the document with the original being 0.

Supersedes: This field is used when the document supersedes one or more other documents. If there are none the field is left blank. The field will contain a list of document identifications as found in the Document: field separated by commas.

Status: This will take the values "Draft", "Final", or "Tracking". Final implies that the document is approved by a committee. Tracking refers to a document which is constantly in a state of flux, like the list of EARN DTE numbers.

Maintainer: This will often be the author but may be a committee or anyone else who assumes responsibility.

Access: This defines who may see the document. It may be a list of names, a committee, or "unrestricted". It is assumed to be confidential to the list.

4 Document body

4.1 Format control

Documents should not contain format control characters as these tend to cause problems with some terminals and printers. In particular underlining using backspace or carriage return should be avoided. Unfortunately the only safe form of emphases is capitalisation.

4.2 Line length

The maximum line length should be 72 characters. This is to allow ease of editing and avoid the "80 character/double line" problem.

4.3 Justification and indentation

Text should not be right justified or indented as this can cause problems when a document has be be re-edited.

4.3 Characters

Characters which change from country to country should be avoided. For example - curly brackets and currency symbols. For currency the bank scheme should be used, for example, USD for american dollars, UKL for British pounds, FF for French Franks, and ECU for the European Accounting Unit. Remember that EARN tends to use the ECU.

4.4 Language

Documents will normally be in English.

4.5 Paragraph numbering

Decimal headings or other paragraph numbering schemes should be used to allow for easy identification of items of text. This is particularly useful when commenting via mail.