# STANDARD ST. 91

RECOMMENDATIONS ON DIGITAL THREE-DIMENSIONAL (3D) MODELS AND 3D IMAGES

*Proposal presented for approval by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)   
at its twelfth session*

## INTRODUCTION

This Standard provides recommendations for Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) and other interested parties that manage, store, process, exchange or disseminate IP data using digital three-dimensional (3D) models and 3D images.

This Standard has the following objectives:

1. determination of formats that are available, compatible or interoperable with different software used by applicants in order to facilitate their efforts to prepare application materials before filing;
2. reducing the time of IP application processing by IPOs;
3. facilitating IP application filing to different IPOs due to adoption of recommended formats among IPOs;
4. harmonization of requirements for data exchange on subjects for IP rights protection with digital 3D visual representations among IPOs and other organizations; and
5. set of requirements for the publication of information on subjects for IP rights protection with digital 3D visual representations.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Standard, unless otherwise specified:

1. 3D model – An electronic file that is created by specialized software, for mathematically representing the surface of an object’s visual representation in three dimensions;
2. 3D Images – Digital images that represent objects displayed in three dimensions such as 3D photos and stereoscopy;
3. CAD – Computer Aided Design;
4. 3D PDF – A PDF document that contains 3D models;
5. IGES – Initial Graphics Exchange Specification;
6. OBJ – An open geometry vertex file format used for CAD and 3D printing;
7. MOL/CDX – A text-based chemical file format that describes molecules and chemical reactions;
8. PDF – The Portable Document Format is a file format developed by Adobe;
9. Raster image – An image that is composed of a map of points (pixels), referred to as a bitmap. Typical file formats for raster images include JPEG, TIFF, PNG and BMP;
10. STL – Standard Tessellation Language – a file format native to the stereolithography CAD software created by 3D Systems;
11. STEP – Standard for the Exchange of Product model data – an open ISO Standard which can represent 3D objects in Computer-aided design (CAD) and related information;
12. U3D – Universal 3D (U3D) is a compressed file format standard for 3D computer graphics data;
13. Vector graphics – An image file that is composed of shapes formed of mathematical formulas and coordinates on a 2D plane. As opposed to raster images, vector graphics have the property of scaling infinitely without any degradation of quality; and
14. ~~X3D – Successor of Virtual Reality Modeling Language (VRML), an Open ISO Standard XML format.~~

REFERENCES

The following WIPO Standards and other documents are relevant to the present Standard:

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| WIPO Standard [ST.9](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/03-09-01.pdf) | Bibliographic data on and relating to patents and SPCs |
| WIPO Standard [ST.10](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/03-10-00.pdf) | Published patent documents |
| WIPO Standard [ST.60](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/03-60-01.pdf) | Bibliographic data relating to marks |
| WIPO Standard [ST.63](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/03-63-01.pdf) | Content and layout of trademark gazettes |
| WIPO Standard [ST.67](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/03-67-01.pdf) | Electronic management of the figurative elements of trademarks |
| WIPO Standard [ST.80](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/03-80-01.pdf) | Bibliographic data relating to industrial designs |
| WIPO Standard [ST.81](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/03-81-01.pdf) | Content and layout of industrial designs gazettes |
| WIPO Standard [ST.88](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/03-88-01.pdf) | Electronic representation of industrial designs |
| WIPO Standard [ST.96](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/03-96-01.pdf) | Processing of Industrial Property information using XML |
| ISO Standard [10303](https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:10303:-1:ed-3:v1:en) | Product data representation and exchange standard |

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

An application for IP protection may contain a 3D visual representation of an object in the form of a digital 3D model or 3D image in accordance with the requirements of the IPO receiving the application. Applicants can be encouraged to provide a 3D visual representation of the object as supplementary material to the application or as the main visual representation of the object, if specified by the requirements of the receiving IPO.

Formats and other characteristics of the received image files (e.g., file size) accepted by each IPO should be according to the recommendations of this Standard. These formats were selected in accordance with the criteria set out in the Annex.

If an IPO has previously established its preferred image formats and other characteristics, it is recommended that the IPO announce in its official publications at regular intervals and/or on its websites, the image formats, sizes and other specific characteristics that are acceptable in application filings.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 3D MODELS AND 3D IMAGES FORMATS AND FILE SIZE

The following recommendations apply to providing application materials for the indicated type of IP rights.

### Patent for invention or utility model

3D visual representation of an invention or utility model should preferably be formatted as at least one of the formats: STEP, IGES, U3D, OBJ or STL. Maximum file size should not exceed 50 MB. If required, at an applicant’s request the receiving IPO can accept files larger than the said maximum.

For chemical structures that are included in patent applications, 3D visual representation should preferably be formatted as CDX or MOL. Maximum file size should not exceed 50 MB.

### Industrial design

3D visual representation of an industrial design should preferably be formatted as at least one of the formats: STEP, IGES, U3D, OBJ or STL. Maximum file size should not exceed 50 MB. If required, at an applicant’s request the receiving IPO can accept files larger than the said maximum.

### Trademark

3D visual representation of a trademark should preferably be formatted as at least one of the formats: STEP, IGES, U3D, OBJ or STL. Maximum file size should not exceed 50 MB. If required, at an applicant’s request the receiving IPO can accept files larger than the said maximum.

[…]

[Annex to ST.91 follows]

## **ANNEX**

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING 3D FORMATS

*Revision presented for approval by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) at its twelfth session*

The file formats described in this Standard were selected after assessing potential formats that may be recommended according to the five basic criteria set out below, where all criteria were considered equal.

**1. Wide-spread adoption**

Objective: This criterion ensures a selection of formats that are widely used by applicants.

Solution: In order to determine widely adopted 3D formats a survey[[1]](#footnote-2) was conducted among IPOs and Industry, where the respondents indicated the formats currently used for processing visual representations of objects for IP right protection.

**2. Openness/accessibility/standardization**

Objective: This criterion ensures the format is reproducable in the long-term. For example, some unstandardized formats require the support of certain software and are not intended for long-term use.

Solution: The preference for open formats over proprietary formats was based on this objective for long term use with additionally making sure these formats are accessible to a wide range of users. The standardization is an advantage, and correlates with the long-term storage capabilities of formats, although in some cases standardized formats may be protected by patents.

**3. Specific requirements/stored information**

Objective: This criterion ensures the ability to store the mandatory elements of an IP right.

Solution: Various 3D formats have been analyzed to assess their comprehensiveness in storing information about an IP right, including the surface of the 3D object, textures, the possibility of containing several separate parts that can be considered separately during the examination process, etc. Some information relevant to IP right protection, such as chemical formulas and genetic sequences, was considered separately, since 3D visualisation of such objects can be useful both for examination purposes and for the publication of such data, but such objects may differ from the 3D models created using CAD systems or graphic editors.

**4. Cross-platform /software accessibility**

Objective: This criterion ensures that the applicant will be able to submit a visual representation in one of the recommended formats and that such published data will be viewable by the general public.

Solution: The possibility of opening and saving such formats in widely-available software that is used to create a visual representation of the objects for IP right protection (CAD, graphic editors), as well as the availability of various software for processing and displaying such formats, was also analyzed.

**5. File size**

Objective: This criterion ensures the performance of data processing, storage and publishing information systems.

Solution: The restrictions on file-size for storing, processing, and publishing of such objects were taken into account. For some of the purposes mentioned, formats that stored the necessary information in smaller files were preferred.

[End of Annex to ST.91 and of Standard]

[End of Annex and of document]

1. See https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/standards/en/pdf/surveys/3dmodels/analysis.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)