Why do some people ask for an S1000D IETM and others for S1000D IETP?

PENNANT'S THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ARTICLES

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Why do some people ask for an S1000D IETM and others for S1000D IETP? Is there a difference?

To define an IETM and IETP:

An **Interactive Electronic Technical Manual (IETM)** is a technical manual (e.g. maintenance, user, training, operations, etc) prepared or "authored" in digital form on a suitable medium, by means of an automated authoring system, designed for electronic screen display to an end-user.

An IETM possesses the following characteristics:

- The format and style of the presented information are optimized for screen presentation to ensure maximum comprehension; that is, the presentation format is frame-oriented and not page-oriented.

- The elements of technical information constituting the technical manual are so interrelated that a user's access to the required information is facilitated to the greatest possible extent and is achievable through a variety of paths.

- Display devices, including computers and laptops, can function interactively (as a result of user requests and information input) in providing procedural guidance, navigation directions and supplemental information.

- Screen presentations can include material derived from data stored in textual, graphical, audio, or video form in a relational data base which is composed of logically connected, but randomly accessible IETM data elements.

S1000D defines an **Interactive Electronic Technical Publication (IETP)** as a set of information needed for the description, operation and maintenance of the Product, optimally arranged and formatted for interactive screen presentation to the end user on an electronic display system.

IETP includes conditional branching mechanisms, which can be based on user feedback. Parameters are evaluated at run-time and their values can depend on context and specific user input.

I have been asked to deliver a Level 3 IETM, but I notice that Vendors don't normally quote what level IETM/IETP they support. Why is that?

The **functionality** of IETM systems is broken down into **five classes**. But these classes are more like points in a spectrum of features with most real-world IETM products falling somewhere in between two classes.

- Class I This Interactive Electronic Technical Manual class follows the structure and format of a printed book, with indexes and table of contents that are hyperlinked into the content of the document. This might be a scanned book with some links added.

- Class II This format includes more hyperlinks than Class I, such as figures, tables and section references. A hyperlinked PDF document is the typical example. The document would be authored in XML/SGML.

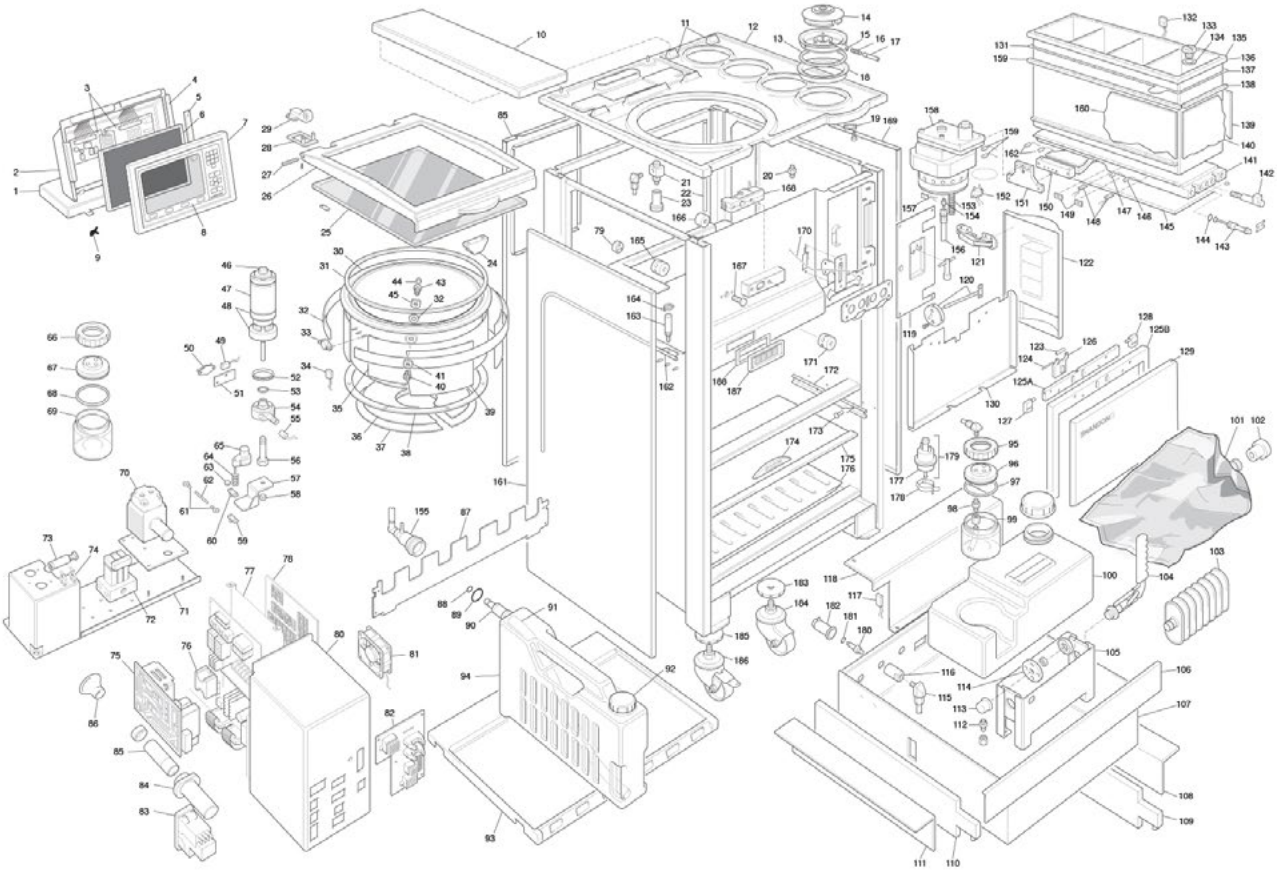
- Class III The difference between IETM Class II and Class III is analogous to the difference between PDF book and a web site. The book structure is discarded; instead the document is structured more freely following the logic of the content. The document can still be printed but it won't necessarily match the presentation on the screen. Hyper linking throughout the document is expected. The document would be authored in a markup language, typically SGML.

- Class IV This class now expects the data to be stored in a relational database, obtaining benefits of data integrity and removal of data redundancy. Relationships in the content that are presented as hyperlinks are mapped directly to relations in the database schema. Redundancy in the data that exists in earlier classes should be removed. The sequence of presentation is also different that earlier classes. There is no longer the concept of a static page. Content can change dynamically based on user's navigation and input through the content; the content may now be user specific. It is no longer possible to print a linear format of the document.

- Class V In this class the documentation is now integrated with expert systems that may influence the display of content. For example, the IETM system may aggregate data from a large number of users input; feed that to the expert system that analyzes it and then the result gets fed back to the user through the IETM system. An analogy might be Google search, where search results are improved based on analysis of large data sets of previous queries entered by users.

An **S1000D IETP** is built on the outlined functionality that is described in S1000D Matrix. This matrix displays levels of complexity and advises users that the higher the level of complexity that is involved in the S1000D IETP Viewing tool, the costs of purchasing may be higher.

The Matrix can be found in Chapter 6.4 of v2.3 of the Specification and for all later versions of the Specification, v3 to v4.1, you can find the Matrix in Chapter 6.3.1.



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