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SWEDISH FOLLOW-UP CONTRIBUTION ON EURO SIGN CODING

There has been an extensive discussion on implementing Euro sign in 8-bit code pages. Most proposals have been based on an existing code page replacing a less needed character with the Euro sign. Proposals have mentioned Cedilla, Currency sign and Plus-Minus sign etc.

Since a new code page could be used as an alternative to the original code page in many environments, it is important to do a good choice. Some criteria :

1. The replaced character should not be vital to the users of that code page
2. The replaced character and the Euro sign should have similar semantics (e.g. symbol, not letter).
3. The code position must survive extensive character conversions and e-mail transport.

The third criteria could be a problem for the usage of code position A4h or code positions in other schemas (e.g. EBCDIC) that is allocated to a Currency sign.

Most character codes are based on ISO/IEC 646 or related to that repertoire. Code position 24h will then be used for Currency sign OR Dollar sign. Character sets limited to 95 graphic characters handles these signs as synonyms. This means that code translations from richer character repertoires (with both Currency and Dollar signs) to poorer repertoires (only one of these) often translates both Currency sign and Dollar sign to the same code position. CCITT X.408 even translates ALL signs used for currencies (cent, dollar, pound and yen) in T.61 to the same position in IA5 (defined as Currency sign).

As a result of these conversions, a Dollar sign from an e-mail sender could be displayed as a Currency sign on the senders system (or vice versa). Assume that Currency sign is replaced with Euro sign; then Currency signs, Dollar signs and Euro signs could be substituted for each other. A price of \$12 (dollar) could be •12 (euro).

Users will not be able to trust that the Euro sign is received correctly and they will use some other method (e.g. three-letter codes). Many European users are already used to removing diacritical marks from their names when sending e-mail, since they often causes problems.