

P.J. Plauger

N 084

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Dear Joe:

Enclosed is a revised draft standard for the programming language C. It is the one currently out for ballot to X3 in the U.S. I have been directed by WG14 to submit this draft for revoting as an ISO DP.

There are currently two areas of contention among the members of WG14. The Danish delegates have proposed an addition to the X3 draft to provide alternate representations for some of the operators and punctuation in C that are sometimes not very readable when programs are written using the ISO 646 character set. Their recommendation (SC22 N528) do not have the unanimous support of WG14. They have twice been debated and rejected by X3J11, mostly on grounds of technical insufficiency. Nevertheless, the Danes insist that this addition be made to the ISO C standard.

The U.K. delegates also continue to propose a series of changes to the draft. X3J11 adopted a number of changes in response to several submissions from the U.K. over the past two years. Nevertheless, the U.K. delegates have expressed a strong desire to continue editing the document after X3J11 has voted to send the draft to X3. My understanding is that the U.K. delegates believe all of their requested changes to be editorial, but I cannot assert that for a fact.

I must also report that a common concern expressed during the first DP balloting is that the ANSI and ISO standards be kept identical. Certainly noone wants the ISO standard for C to evolve away from the ANSI standard. Some of us are equally opposed to delaying the ANSI standard while WG14 debates additional changes. I have personally worked hard for years now to ensure that ISO concerns get a fair hearing before X3J11. If not all proposals from WG14 members have been adopted, the same can be said of every other constituency that has contributed to the deliberations of X3J11.

I do not know how best to resolve this contention within WG14. We will meet 10-11 Apr 89 in Seattle WA, alongside X3J11, to discuss the problem. I encourage everyone concerned with forming an ISO standard for C to participate in the WG14 deliberations and in the DP balloting process.

Sincerely,

P.J. Plauger, WG14 Convenor

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