

A request to WG14

The Netherlands C Committee

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Introduction

In the opinion of the Netherlands C Committee the proposed ANSI C standard should be confirmed as an ISO standard as soon as possible. We have looked at the British comments and Danish proposal, but do not see sufficient grounds there to delay the standardization process.

The Danish proposal

We agree with the position taken by X3J11 in their reaction. The two major concerns we have are:

1. The Danish proposal does not solve the problems of all countries using national variants of ISO 646. An example: the British national variant of the # is a £.
2. The use of the bang ! as infix operator for subscripting causes problems in places where empty brackets are allowed.

The British Comments

The goal of the British comments is to remove ambiguities from the C standard. This is in itself a laudable goal. We have the opinion that standards for computer languages written in a natural language, will always contain omissions, errors and ambiguities. One can not maintain 'perfectness' as a criterium for such a standard. This would result in a very good draft standard that will never be confirmed as a formal standard. The difficult issue here is: at which point do we decide to stop improving the standard and fixate it. In our opinion that point in time has now arrived for the C standard. None of the issues raised seem to impede the use of Standard C for the production of quality standard compilers and applications.

Differing ISO and ANSI C standards

It has been suggested that if ANSI does not want to honor the requests of WG14, WG14 might consider to propose an ISO C standard that differs from the ANSI C standard. We will not accept such a development. The ISO and ANSI C standards must be identical.

A request

We ask WG14 to take the latest version of the X3J11 C standard and have that confirmed as ISO standard as soon as the ISO procedures allow.