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N 3638

WG 2 Proposal for Merging ISO/IEC 10646 Parts 1 & 2 into One Part [WG 2 N 2506, N 2408]

Abstain with comments

N3639

Working Draft for Merged ISO/IEC 10646, Informationtechnology -- Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set (UCS) -- Architecture and Basic Multilingual Plane, Supplementary Planes [WG 2 N 2499R]

Abstain with comments

Comments:

The Netherlands NB is not in favour of this proposal.

1. We are not convinced by the argument that merging the parts of 10646 would facilitate maintenance. Even if this should be so, maintenance is a very minor issue. We consider the development of 10646 as almost finished, and we would prefer that its present repertoire be frozen for at least ten years. Already now 10646 has got the reputation of being a moving target which is thwarting its worldwide acceptance.

2. It is not uncommon that a voluminous book, like an encyclopedia, is published in several parts, because it may become otherwise too unwieldy and impractical to handle. Quite a number of ISO standards is in more than one part, some even totalling less than 100 pages. Part 1 of 10646 is just now more than 1000 pages.

3. We are afraid that presenting 10646 as a single whole will create a wrong suggestion. As it stands now, 10646 shows in Part 1 those characters relevant to large groups of users, in Part 2 those for a few specialists only. This situation offers implementers a clear choice. A monolithic 10646 will form a real temptation to market a "complete" implementation, including the coding of characters that the buyer might not meet in his whole life (or in his next, unless he happens to want conversation with King Tutanchamon himself). Smart software makers know that it is more profitable to have a "light" version available, than to follow the line of "everything or nothing". Not everyone likes to be faced with living mummies.