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Deprecating Unicode Language Tag Characters: RFC 2482 is Historic

Abstract

RFC 2482, "Language Tagging in Unicode Plain Text", describes a mechanism for using special Unicode language tag characters to identify languages when needed without more general markup such as that provided by XML. The Unicode Consortium has deprecated that facility and strongly recommends against its use. RFC 2482 has been moved to Historic status to reduce the possibility that Internet implementers would consider that system an appropriate mechanism for identifying languages.

Status of This Memo

This document is not an Internet Standards Track specification; it is published for informational purposes.

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Information about the current status of this document, any errata, and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at <http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc6082>.

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1. Introduction

RFC 2482, "Language Tagging in Unicode Plain Text" [RFC2482], describes a mechanism for using special Unicode language tag characters to identify languages when needed. It is an idea whose time never quite came. It has been superseded by whole-transaction language identification such as the MIME Content-language header [RFC3282] and more general markup mechanisms such as those provided by XML. The Unicode Consortium has deprecated the language tag character facility and strongly recommends against its use. RFC 2482 has been moved to Historic status to reduce the possibility that Internet implementers would consider that tagging system an appropriate mechanism for identifying languages.

A discussion of the status of the language tag characters and their applicability appears in Section 16.9 of The Unicode Standard [Unicode52].

2. Action

RFC 2482 has been deprecated and reclassified as Historic. Internet protocols and Standards-Track documents should not use the facilities described in that document.

3. Security Considerations

By deprecating RFC 2482, we eliminate a facility that is no longer encouraged or supported by the Unicode Consortium and that may have been slightly risky in use if misinterpreted or if expectations of support were not met. So, if this action has any effect on Internet security at all, it should be positive.

4. Acknowledgments

Helpful comments were received from Peter Koch and S. Moonesamy.

5. References

5.1. Normative References

[RFC2482] Whistler, K. and G. Adams, "Language Tagging in Unicode Plain Text", RFC 2482, January 1999.

[Unicode52] The Unicode Consortium. The Unicode Standard, Version 5.2.0, defined by: "The Unicode Standard, Version 5.2.0", (Mountain View, CA: The Unicode Consortium, 2009. ISBN 978-1-936213-00-9).
<<http://www.unicode.org/versions/Unicode5.2.0/>>.

5.2. Informative References

[RFC3282] Alvestrand, H., "Content Language Headers", RFC 3282, May 2002.

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