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The Unicode Standard claims that the identity of the dingbats in the Dingbats block is uniquely given by the Zapf dingbats design. ISO/IEC 10646 does not recognize this claim - resulting in the renaming of the block from Zapf Dingbats to Dingbats between Unicode 1.0 and Unicode 2.0.

The following symbols were originally considered ‘generic’ enough that one could not insist on their encoding as uniquely “Zapf” designs and they were extracted into the Miscellaneous symbols block.

2605 ★ , 260E ☎ , 261B ☞ , 261E ☞ , 25A0 ■ , 25CF ● , 25B2 ▲ , 25BC ▼ , 25C6 ◆ , 25D6 ◐ , 2192 → , 2194 ↔ , 2195 †

However, characters such as “✈” and “☞”, which occur with just as many variants as “☎” were not encoded as Miscellaneous Symbols. In principle this would leave open the possibility of encoding them again for use in contexts where the Zapf-specific glyph is not intended.

Further, there are three sequences of circled numbers in the Dingbats block, one of which is actually continued elsewhere and with a non-zapf like type style even in our standard.

2776 ①–277F ⑩ is continued as 24EB ⑪–24F4 ⑳ .
 (The other series are explicitly sans-serif, viz 2780 ①–2789 ⑩)

Proposal

Characters with change in status

The following characters in the Zapf Dingbats range should explicitly be considered as subject to the regular glyph variations:

2701 ☞ , 2702 ☞ , 2703 ☞ , 2704 ☞ , 2706 ☎ , 2708 ✈ , 2709 ☞ , 2713 ✓ , 2717 ✕ , 271D † , 2720 ✕ , 2721 ✕ , 272A ✕ , 272B ★ , 272D ★ , 272D ★ , 2744 ✕ , 2772 (, 2773) , 2776 ①–277F ⑩ , 27A1 ➡

All other characters in the Dingbats block should be considered as being defined by their glyphic appearance - this is different from saying that only the Zapf outlines are valid representations, but rather that unifications will only be made where visual deviation is much more limited than usual.

Missing characters

There is a 24EA ⑩ corresponding to 2780 ① , but not a character corresponding to 2776 ① , although it is commonly found in character sets that implement the series starting at 2776 ① .

Detailed rationale

- 2776 ①–277F ⑩ are a unified sequence with 24EB ⑪–24F4 ⑳ . The whole set are mapped from a.o. EA legacy sets and the expectation would not be that the range 2776 ①–277F ⑩ is of Zapf design, while the rest follows the font binding.

- 2713 ✓ Check mark is a very generic symbol. Having only the Zapf design encoded is unduly limiting. In practice, non-Zapf fonts containing such a glyph would map it to 2713 ✓ .

- Similar arguments can be made for these characters: 2701 ☞ , 2702 ☞ , 2703 ☞ , 2704 ☞ , and 2709 ☞ .

- The set of crosses, 2715 ✕ , 2717 ✕ and 2716 ✕ , 2718 ✕ are also implemented in non-Zapf designs. However, there is already one generic variant encoded at 2613 ✕ .

- 2708 ✈ is one of a family of common airplane symbols, that are employed with some difference in semantics. If the intent was to have 2708 ✈ be the single generic airplane symbol in Unicode, then claiming a Zapf design as sole conformant representation is unduly restrictive, If, on the other hand, the intent was to allow for future coding of one or more of the other members of that family then a change in status of 2708 ✈ would have considerably less impact, but would still allow unification of several widespread variants.

- 271D † , 2721 ✕ and 2730 ✕ , taken as standard symbols, may inherently not allow much glyphic variation, but given their use as political and religious symbols, it seems unwarranted to only consider the precise Zapf design as ‘conformant’.