

JTC1/SC2/WG2 N2734**in031265****INCITS RESPONSE TO ISO AND ANSI STATEMENTS CONCERNING AVAILABILITY OF ISO CODES***17 October 2003***TO:** ANSI**FROM:** INCITS Executive Board**SUBJECT:** INCITS Response to ISO and ANSI Statements Concerning Availability of ISO Codes

INCITS wishes to thank ANSI, the ANSI ISO Council, and ISO Council for the clarifications with respect to the issue raised in INCITS's inquiry about the availability of ISO Codes, as expressed in INCITS document IN031008, dated 1 August 2003. That contribution was part of the ANSI ISO Council document AIC021-03, which concerned ISO Council document 36/2003 regarding a proposal from the ISO CPSG with respect to ISO 3166, ISO 4217, and ISO 639.

Background:

At the ISO Council meeting in September 2003, ISO Council Resolution 32/2003 was issued, which says:

Council, regarding the public availability of country, currency and language codes, notes the two following points of clarification

- a) the reproduction of the full standard should follow the normal ISO copyright rules;
- b) no copyright fee should be charged for the reproduction of the 2-digit codes of ISO 3166, ISO 4217 and ISO 639 in books, magazines, academic work and for internal use by companies, institutes and organizations;

regarding the proposal that software developers or commercial resellers requesting permission to embed ISO codes in their products for resale would be required to purchase each code in electronic form and to pay to

the member body concerned or the Central Secretariat, as appropriate, either an annual fee or a one-time fee and any applicable maintenance fees, asks the CPSG to elaborate further on the clarification it wants from Council and to submit a new proposal.

Subsequent to the ISO Council meeting, ISO issued Press Release 2003-871 titled "ISO Reaffirms free-of-charge use of its country, currency, and language codes" the text of which is appended to this contribution. While reaffirming "free of charge use" this Press Release appears to restrict such use to the "two-digit country codes" in ISO 3166 (ignoring 3-digit country codes). The Press Release also refers to a possible "service package" offering for ISO 3166 which would be charged, while pointing out that no decision has yet been taken about such an offering by ISO.

Finally, ANSI has confirmed to INCITS that it intends to follow ISO policy with respect to these codes.

INCITS Response:

INCITS appreciates the clarification with respect to the two-digit country codes and free-of-charge use of the country, currency and language codes as embodied in ISO 3166, 4217 and 639. INCITS considers the clarification as expressed in ISO Press Release 2003-871 as a positive step in addressing our concerns. INCITS understands that these codes may be freely used in commercial products, and requests confirmation that this clarification of ISO policy applies to similar content in other ISO standards.

INCITS requests, via ANSI, further clarification on points which have either not been considered or which were excluded from the Press Release. In particular, INCITS requests confirmation that:

1. The statements in Press Release 2003-871, as they apply to ISO 3166, also apply to the 3-digit country codes;
2. In addition to affirming that the codes are available to purchasers of ISO 3166, 4217 and 639 for incorporation in customers' products free of charge, no license agreement will be required with respect to other aspects of such usage;
3. The stated free use provision for the contents of these code standards applies to similar content in other ISO standards.

Noting that ISO Council Resolution 32/2003, asking the CPSG to elaborate further on the "clarification it wants from Council" and to submit a new

proposal, predates ISO Press Release 2003-871, INCITS requests confirmation that the Council Resolution is overtaken by events.

Attachment: Text of ISO Press Release 2003-871:

"ISO issues the following statement in response to recently publicized misunderstandings of its current practice and intentions regarding its widely used country, currency and language codes.

- ISO is to continue with its established practice of allowing free-of-charge use of its country, currency and language codes from, respectively, the ISO 3166, ISO 4217 and ISO 639 standards, in commercial and other applications.
- There is no proposal currently being considered by ISO to impose charges for use of these codes, including on the World Wide Web and in software applications.

"Based on international consensus reached within the ISO standards development system, these codes reduce the confusion that could be created if there were multiple, conflicting codes in common use. The development of the Web and of electronic commerce has been facilitated by the existence of the ISO standardized codes and their use has become pervasive.

"ISO encourages such developments by making the two-letter country codes contained in ISO 3166 available free of charge on [ISO's Web site](#), along with a great deal of regularly updated information related to the codes and their use. The ISO Web site also has hyperlinks to the sites of the British Standards Institution (BSI) and the US Library of Congress - where the [currency](#) and [language](#) codes are, respectively, publicly available.

"The full ISO 3166, ISO 4217 and ISO 639 standards from which these codes are drawn are available from ISO and its members on a sales basis, as a contribution to supporting the standards development process. However, ISO and its members do not charge for the use made of the codes contained in these standards, subject to this being consistent with ISO's copyright. For example, ISO does not charge organizations for the inclusion of the country codes in their Internet domain names, and ISO does not charge banks for using the currency codes in their electronic financial transactions.

"If a user of the codes, such as a software developer, wishes to claim that its product incorporates the codes in conformity with the ISO standards (which could be perceived by the market as an added value), then it would have an interest in buying the standards to make sure that this is indeed the case. But this is a "one-off" transaction for purchase of the standards; ISO does not subsequently charge a fee for use of the codes in the software product and has no plans for doing so.

"Like many organizations, ISO continually reviews its practices and products in order to provide added value to its customers. With regard to ISO 3166, ISO is considering a proposal to develop an optional software service package that would facilitate incorporation and maintenance of the country codes in IT products. The service package being considered would include regular updating of the codes, which would add value to products because they would be conforming to the International Standard ISO 3166. The service package being considered would be a charged option. However, no decision has yet been made to go ahead and even if this option were developed, ISO will continue to allow use of its country, currency and language codes free of charge."