PUBLIC SIGNAGE (I)

PROPOSAL TO THE UNICODE CONSORTIUM
Preliminary proposal

DATE: 30 JULY 2006

SUBMITTED BY
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Signographers Network International

IN COLLABORATION WITH
Deborah Anderson and Johannes Bergerhausen

VERSION 2.0

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EDITORS NOTE

The initial concept of proposing Public Signage characters for encoding to the Unicode Standard first evolved in discussions between Dr. Deborah Anderson, Michael Everson, Prof. Johannes Bergerhausen and Andreas Stötzer, during the Unicode conference held in spring 2005 in Berlin. It was on my side than to begin with a proposal draft which we had to discuss. D. Anderson and J. Bergerhausen provided me with many valuable comments and a range of material which became part of the documentation testifying the usage of public signs. I wish to express many thanks for that to my colleagues. However, the finish of the current version of this proposal has been under my own responsibility, therefore I alone should be blamed for all possible oddities or mistakes which may be uncovered in this document.

Andreas Stötzer
I. Administrative

1. Title: Proposal to add Public Signage characters to the UCS
2. Requester’s name: Andreas Stötzer
3. Requester’s type: Individual
4. Submission date: 1st August 2006
5. Ref.: ...
6. This is a preliminary proposal.

II. Technical – General

1. This proposal is intended for a new block named »Public Signage«.
2. Number of proposed characters: 80
3. Proposed category:
4. Proposed level of implementation: L. 1
Rationale:
5. a. Character names: see p. 6
   b. Character names in accordance with guidelines
   c. Character shapes: see p. 5
6. A Postscript-font can be provided by the author of this proposal on request.
7. a. References are attached, see p. 9–31
   b. Published examples are attached, see p. 9–31
8. No.
9. Additional information is provided.

III. Technical – Justification

1. This proposal has not been submitted before.
2. Contact to user communities: Yes.
3. User community: the general public worldwide;
   environmental designers, producers of printed matters and screen designs for orientation and services
4. Context of usage: public areas of commerce, travel and services; Internet presentations,
   printed matters
6. ...
7. ...
8. ...
Rationale:
9. Composing ...
10. ...
11. ...
12. ...
13. ...

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II. Proposal to add Public Signage characters to the UCS

Everyone knows of many pictographical or ideographical signs which are widely used in the public environment, in printed matters as well as on internet presentations and screen interfaces. These signs give orientation to transport, travel, accommodation, tourism, services, commerce, leisure, cultural and sport activities. The author of this document and his collaborators believe that the most important ones of these signs ought to be regularly encoded in order to enable font providers to make them handy for a more effective usage.

During the last decades the use of public signage characters underwent a remarkable development which forces us to respond to it by forwarding this proposal. Public signage characters have

- seen a steady growth of use all over the world,
- developed semantically towards an unofficial near-to-standard level in many cases,
- become increasingly intertwined with alphabetical text composing.

For those reasons we see an urgent need of encoding public signage characters. As for the growing field of print production (transport schedules, maps and floorplans, travel handbooks, tourist guides, ...) the accessibility of public signs within the composing system is highly desirable. Safety and effectiveness of orientation in public areas will highly benefit from standardised font-based signage systems. The method of using image data to reproduce public signage characters is by no means satisfactorily and cause many losses of information, as some documented samples may show (see p. 9). Public signs have been done as fonts for quite a long time. But by now all these fonts are encoded randomly which makes data interchange impossible.

The selection of characters presented in this document is distilled from extensive collecting and research work undertaken by the contributors. It’s based on several files of hundreds of printed materials, archived website-screenshots and photographs (a representative scope hereof has been published by Andreas Stötzner: Wo ist Was? Publikzeichen im realen und virtuellen öffentlichen Raum. SIGNA Nº 5, 2003; see http://www.signographie.de/cms/front_content.php?idcat=18).

The selection of signs has been subject to discussions between the contributors over a period of about one and a half year. The chart on p. 5 contains a set of eighty most frequently used signs. Some of the decisions suggested in this proposal may be disputable and subject to revision. However, we believe that meanwhile our knowledge of the matter is sound enough to forward this proposal at a preliminary state for first evaluation to the UTC.
III. Table of characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Signage (I)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>xx0   xx1   xx2   xx3   xx4</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IV. List of characters

- Male Washroom
- Female Washroom
- Rightward Passenger
- Leftward Passenger
- Baby Changing Facility
- Meditation
- Rightward Exit
- Leftward Exit
- Rightward Entrance
- Leftward Entrance
- Rightward Ascending Staircase
- Leftward Ascending Staircase
- Rightward Ascending Escalator
- Leftward Ascending Escalator
- Elevator
- Meeting Point
- Autoahn
- Garage
- Car Rental
- Taxi
- Car Frontal
- Bus Frontal
- Tramway Frontal
- Railway Frontal
- Ship Frontal
- Airplane
- Departur
- Arrivals
- Connecting Flights
- Helicopter
- Bicycle
- Tickets
- Parkhaus
- Parking
- Motorail Train
- Car Ferry
- Car Lateral
- Bus Lateral
- Tramway Lateral
- Railway Lateral
- Ship Lateral
- Train
- Shuttle Train
- Berghahn
- Steam Locomotive
- Schwnebeahn
- Seilbahn
- Kabinenbahn
- Police
- Passport Control
- Customs
- Waiting
- Luggage Claim
- Luggage Check In
- Luggage Locker
- Bar
- Mini Bar Service
- Restaurant
- Snacks
- Coffee
- Bergschwebebahn
- Underground Railway
- Information Desk
- Porter
- Medical Aid
- Pharmaceutical Goblet
- Bed
- Couchette
- Cloakroom
- Pram
- Gifts
- Money Exchange
- Supermarket
- Market
- Electricity
- Drinks
- Lunch Room

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V. Explanations

**XX00, XX01**
This two well known characters happen to appear both on their own as well as in combination, than pointing at "toilets" in general. The design of the glyphs may considerably differ due to cultural expectations (e.g., XX01 ought to look different when used in Arabic countries).

**XX02, XX03**
**Directional signs**
We propose directional alternatives to be encoded separately for those signs which serve the directional guidance for passengers in public spaces. This applies also to XX06/7, XX08/9, XX10A/B and XX10C/D. If not variable, these signs may cause confusion by visually suggesting a wrong direction. This directional signs are likely to be used together with other arrows, as encoded in the Arrow's block (U+2190 – 219F). We suggest not to encode separately arrows for public signage.

**XX04**
Although at least three pictograms for "Baby changing facilities" have been documented, we propose to encode just one single character for that item. In this proposal the simple depiction of the baby has been preferred for clarity instead of a mother-and-child-view and the milk bottle, which quite often stands for nursing facilities.

**XX05**
The praying man evolved recently to become an obvious sign for "chapel", "meditation room" or the like, mainly used in airport information. It is meant to bear no specific religious connotations (the rooms themselves normally don’t, actually) but possibly appeal to everyone, of whatsoever confession.

**XX08**
Obvious differences of "elevator" signs are to be expected in reality, yet the meaning is always the same. The glyph in the table is to be regarded a representative of those various possibilities.

**XX10**
The (European) motorway sign is widely used not as a traffic sign only but even in printed matters, where it may stand in for "motorway nearby" (of a hotel, e.g.).

**XX11**
The garage sign sometimes appear featuring an angled roof-line instead of the rectangle (like in XX20), the meaning is the same. The sign is used mostly to indicate parking space of restricted accessibility, as hotel garages and the like.

**XX13**
"TAXI" may also appear without the car. We suggest to encode just one taxi character.

**XX14 – XX18, XX24 – XX28**
**Vehicles – lateral and frontal forms**
Our research has revealed that the most frequently occurring vehicle signs do exist both in frontal and lateral depictions. Though the meaning is (mostly) actually the same (for few exceptions see the documentation) we see some good reason for encoding both variants of those five items: car, bus, tram, railway and ship. The actual usage of either of these alternates often follows long lasting and well established customs (e.g. in railway schedules). To restrict the selection to only one of the two sets would cause acceptance conflicts.

**XX19**
The incorporation of the general "airplane" sign may be disputable, since U+2708 does also provide an airplane. Despite that fact we suggest maintaining it in the Public Signage section because it is very much used in context to all the other signs presented here. (It seems not desirable to force users into the unfortunate "Zapf Dingbats" block here). The direction of the airplane glyph is of no meaning, as is with the other vehicle signs of lateral view. The airplane may even appear in slanted position.

**XX1A, XX1B, XX1C**
These three signs are frequently used in ground information systems and in airport leaflets.

**XX1F**
Actual glyphs may show one or two tickets.

**XX20, XX21**
The difference in meaning of the two “Parking” signs is that the one with the rooftop stands for a multi-storey park house, whereas the boxed P stands for parking in general, be it covered or not, public or restricted, small or big.

**XX29**
This sign is for particular denotations rather within the
railway context. It is not for the indication of “railway” as such in an outer sphere, for which xx17 and xx27 are provided.

XX2A – XX2F
Out of the various specialised bahns (and especially constructed ones) we choose a range of the most important ones. See also xx3E and xx3F.

XX37
The trolley may also appear without a piece of luggage.

XX38
The glyphic possibilities of depicting the "luggage locker" include a rectangular box (see xx11). Variants to this character may be left to future considerations.

XX39, XX3A
The cocktail glass is common for “bar” in hotel and restaurant environments. The mini-bar-service sign is used in railway schedules as a feature sign for certain trains.

XX3B
The “restaurant” sign is frequently found in a variant in which both fork and knife do stand upright instead of being crossed. Even more variants have been testified (spoon and fork, fork-knife-spoon). An arguable cultural background for those distinguished usages has not yet been researched in depth. In order to accommodate these variants an extension of the restaurant signs may be worth consideration and a future option. By now we suggest to include one restaurant sign only.

XX3C, XX4E
We do not intend to propose several characters for American style hamburgers and more French style baguettes. It should be left to the font designer to serve the one or the other under this codepoint, or even a German wurst, if appropriate.

The “snacks” sign sometimes happens to show a hamburger (or the like) combined with a beverage, like we give it under xx4E. Since this shape is used separately for “drinks” or “refreshments” we opted for two separate codepoints.

XX3D
This sign should be recognised separately from U+2615 (hot beverage) since it commonly lacks the steam and stands for “coffee shop” rather than for a single beverage or coffee brake.

XX40
The counter or information desk denotes a definitely personal assistance, in distinction to U+2139, which applies for information sources in general (and of various kinds).

XX41
The porter may also appear handling a trolley.

XX42
This sign stands nowadays for medical aid in general, whereas the Rod of Aesculap (U+2695) is rather usual as a sign for “medicine” and/or “pharmacy” as subjects or occupations. It is derived from the emblematic Red Cross. Since an usage in black and white lacks the possibility of giving the semantic value of colour the cross has to be in contour mode here.

XX43
The “Pharmaceutical goblet” is a rather modern derivation from the Rod of Aesculap, which has already been encoded under U+2695. The two ought not no get unified. Their meanings are related yet different. Today the goblet is in many countries a known part of official pharmacist’s emblems, it’ll therefore get recognised by people of many different countries if they happen to be abroad and spotting a pharmacy. There’s a separate documentation on this sign by Andreas Stötzer available at www.signographie.de.

XX44, XX45
Whereas the bed is widely applied to both railway train specifications and accommodation the couchette usually applies to railways only, where it indicates a significant difference of comfort.

XX4A
In railway guides the house sign is traditionally used for “frontier crossing-point”, in other environments it may stand for “important building”, “embassy” or the like.

XX4D
The electricity sign in this shape is commonly known and widely used in Europe. It should not be unified to U+26A1 because this would not be equally recognised by those who aren’t accustomed to it – though the meaning is quite similar.

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VI. Documentation

1. Internet presentation of the Irish tourist board, with ideograms indicating services and facilities to the public. The poor quality of signage rendering is due to the fact that the signs haven’t been available as fonts. The handling of such frequently-used signs as image files is an archaism which blocks clear and effective communication.

XX19, XX24, XX25, XX28, XX44
Extensive use of complementing ideograms in the composing of the famous French Michelin guides: as early as 1900 (left) and nowadays (bottom).

2. XX2C
3. XX0E, XX24, XX3B, XX4A
Selected range of the very large amount of ideograms as utilized in the official Italian Hotel guide handbook.

xx10, xx17, xx19
5. Signage of a European Hostel Guide, 2004; explanation, spread and enlarged sample. Approximately half the information is given in non-alphabetical signs.

XX00, XX01, X0E, XX19, XX21, XX28XX2C, XX3C, XX3D, XX44, XX4C

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  Open Dates: 🕒 Savonlinna 70km
  Savonlinna 60km 🕒 16km
  ap Sulava 🕒 x 50
  200m 🕒 200m 🕒
6. Signage in the time table of Swiss airways.

7. Signage in the time table of Lufthansa airways.
8. 9.

From a guide to Denver airport.

8x00, 8x01, 8x0a, 8x0b, 8x0e, 8x17, 8x19, 8x39,

8x3b, 8x40, 8x48, 8x49
10. Schiphol airport folder (top). Note the simultaneous usage of frontal and lateral bus signs in the floor plan.

XX02, XX05, XX0F, XX12, XX13, XX15, XX1C, XX25, XX32, XX33, XX38, XX40, (XX41), XX42, XX44, XX49

11. Orientational signage at Schiphol airport, Amsterdam.

XX31, XX34, XX40
12. From a San Francisco airport information leaflet.

**AMENITIES**

**Aquarium**
An aquarium is located pre-security of Boarding Area C, Departures/Ticketing Level, Terminal 1. Presented in conjunction with the Sanfran Aquarum, California Academy of Sciences.

**Berman Reflection Room**
Center for quiet self-reflection and meditation. Located in the International Terminal, Main Hall, Departures/Ticketing Level, near Boarding Area C.
Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., Daily

**Christian Science Reading Room**
Hosted by the Christian Science Monitor, the Christian Science Reading Room is a quiet place to read or buy Christian literature. Located on the Departures/Ticketing Level of Terminal 1.

**Currency Exchange**
Travelers America, Inc. has several currency exchange offices and automatic currency exchange machines located throughout the International Terminal. A bank of cash machines is located at the International Terminal, Main Hall, Departures/Ticketing Level. Near the security checkpoint for Boarding Area G. Additional services provided at the office include travel insurance, Western Union, money orders, travelers checks, traveler’s checks cashing, credit card advances, money orders, traveler’s checks, and changing. Business hours vary due to flight scheduling.

**Elimination**
A public restroom is located near the security checkpoint for Boarding Area G. Services provided include hair styling, facial, nail and shoulder massage, foot massage, hair, and skin products, and lottery tickets.
Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

**Hotel Courtyard Shuttle**
Guests staying in the Hotel Courtyard Shuttles at participating hotels may be scheduled by contacting the hotel via the phone on the ticketing and attractions boards located at the airport/baggage claim level of all terminals, or from the rental Courtyard Shuttles located outside of the terminals in the Curbside shuttle area. Hotel Courtyard Shuttles depart from the International Terminal of all terminals.

**Lockers/Storage**
Due to security regulations, airline passengers will be out of service until further notice. Luggage service is available at the Airport Terminal A, located on the Departures/Ticketing Level of the International Terminal, near the security checkpoint for Boarding Area G.

**Lodging, Transportation and Attractions Board**
A free phone service to participating hotel, motels, rental car companies, and services is available to passengers. Buses are located on the Arrivals/Baggage Claim level of all terminals.

**Lost and Found**
Located at Terminal 1, Arrivals/Baggage Claim Level, across from Baggage Claim 17.

**Medical Clinic**
Located in Terminal 2, Arrivals Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

**Nursery**
Located in the Departure Level of Terminal 1, and the Terminal 3.

**Paging Services**
Paging Directly from an Airport service.

**Parking**
Parking and day park parking is available in the lots of USL. SOP offers two valet service to all of the automated entry and exit with a ticket. Parking brochure from an info.

**Postal Services**
Postage machines are located at all terminals. Mailboxes are available at the International Terminal of all terminals.

**Rental Car Center**
SDS consolidated rental car agencies located at all terminals, located at all terminals, located at all terminals, located at all terminals.

13. From a San Francisco airport information leaflet.

**AMENITIES**

**Theater**
Organization of volunteers devoted to assisting passengers in airports in the United States and Canada. Booths are staffed from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily. Located on the Departures/Ticketing Level of all terminals.

**Customs/Immigration**
Located on the Arrivals/Baggage Claim Level of the International Terminal.

**Police/Emergencies**
Located at Terminal 1, Arrivals/Baggage Claim Level, across from Baggage Claim 17.

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14. From SFO airport information.
xx12, xx17, xx19

15. 16.
From SFO airport information.
xx00, xx01, xx05, xx0c, xx0e, xx17, xx39, xx49
Welcome to Zurich Airport

This convenient map is intended to help you with your flight transfer at Zurich Airport. Please note the required transfer times shown on the reverse.

We wish you a pleasant stopover and hope you will enjoy the shopping facilities and restaurants in the "shopping & waiting area.

Please follow the corresponding signs:

17. \(\text{xx33, xx3c, xx39, xx3d, (xx3e), xx40, xx48}\)

18. \(\text{xx00, xx01, (xx04), xx05, xx0e, xx21, xx27, xx30, xx35, xx36, xx38, xx40, xx41}\)

From Zurich airport information.

**Pläne**

**Zeichenerklärung**

- Andachtsraum/Seelsorge
- Bahngepäckaufgabe
- Bahnhof
- Behindertentoilette
- Check-in
- Gepäckaufbewahrung
- Information
- Kinder
- Lift
- Parking
- Pass- und Ticketkontrolle
- Porter
- Raucherzone
- Sanität
- SBB-Tickets
- Schließfach
- Sicherheitskontrolle
- Toilette
- Transferschalter
- Zoll
19. Signs used in schedules edited by the Deutsche Bahn.

| XX19 | XX1E | XX25 | XX28 | XX29 | XX3B | XX3D | XX44 | XX45 | XX4A |

20. Signs used in schedules by the Italian State Railways.

| XX1E | XX25 | XX3A | XX3B | XX3D | XX44 | XX45 |  
21.
Local transport network plan from Lisbon.
Vehicle signs alongside the gift and elevator signs.
xx0e, xx15, xx17, xx18, xx48
22. From a Lisbon tourist guide.

xx15, xx26, xx28, xx3F

24. Use of frontal versions of bus, train and tram; from a German local transport brochure. XX15, XX16, XX17

25. Frontal tram signs as displayed in Amsterdam. XX16

26. Frontal tram sign as displayed in Cologne. XX16
27. A suspension railway sign at SFO airport. 

xx19, xx2d

28. A suspension railway sign at an online schedule of the famous municipal Schwebebahn of Wuppertal, western Germany. 

xx2d
29. Indication of ferry services in a railway schedule.

From schedules of Deutsche Bahn AG.

30. (above) xx25, xx2c

31. XX19, XX28
32. Buses and bikes in a printed schedule of the Deutsche Bahn. XX1E, XX25

33. Selection of signs in a Deutsche Bahn schedule. XX1E, XX3B, XX3D, XX44, XX45
34. 35. 36.
Usage of several vehicle signs in a printed schedule of the Deutsche Bahn.
xx19, xx25, xx28, xx2b, xx2c, xx2e, xx3b
37. Three different bergbahn signs are featured in this web presentation from Pilatus, Switzerland. XX27, XX28, XX2B, XX2E, XX2F,

38. Two different bergbahns of Dresden. XX2B, XX3E
39. 40. 41.
A variety of vehicle signs used simultaneously at the Internet, in print and on signposting.

XX0F, XX25, XX26, XX27, XX2B, XX3B
42. Ferry and airport signs on a map of the Channel (France – Great Britain). Unusual is the usage of four different ship signs (see below). xx19, xx28

43. From the website of Wendelsteinbahn (Bavarian Alps). xx24, xx2e
44. 45.

From the popular "Eyewitness Travel Guides" series edited by Dorling Kindersley Publ., explanation and composing sample. Note the simultaneous use of frontal and lateral bus signs (right, middle).

xx00, xx01, xx0e, xx15, xx17, xx19, xx21, xx25, xx26, xx28, (xx30), xx39, xx3b, xx3d, xx42, xx46, xx4a, xx4c
46. From a British Museum leaflet.
xx3b, xx3d, xx42, xx46

47. Natural History Museum, London.
xx00, xx01, xx04, xx0b, (xx0e), xx3b, xx3d, xx46,
xx44, xx45, xx4f