

The New C Standard (Excerpted material)

An Economic and Cultural Commentary

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5.2 Environmental considerations

Commentary

Rationale The C89 Committee ultimately came to remarkable unanimity on the subject of character set requirements. There was strong sentiment that C should not be tied to Ascii, despite its heritage and despite the precedent of Ada being defined in terms of Ascii. Rather, an implementation is required to provide a unique character code for each of the printable graphics used by C, and for each of the control codes representable by an escape sequence. (No particular graphic representation for any character is prescribed; thus the common Japanese practice of using the glyph “¥” for the C character “\” is perfectly legitimate.) Translation and execution environments may have different character sets, but each must meet this requirement in its own way. The goal is to ensure that a conforming implementation can translate a C translator written in C.

For this reason, and for economy of description, source code is described as if it undergoes the same translation as text that is input by the standard library I/O routines: each line is terminated by some newline character regardless of its external representation.

References