

((lambda (discussions) (report on X3J13))
(work on an international standard))

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X3J13 has always taken a very active interest in the progress of an international standard for Lisp. We would very much like to make sure that the national and international standards for Lisp turn out to be the same.

At our meeting in Boston in July, the proposed New Work Item for an international standard for Lisp was discussed. After a mail ballot of the membership, it was decided (and subsequently endorsed by X3, the parent committee of X3J13 and the organization responsible for the final US vote on this issue) to forward the following comments with our ballot:

In the US there is a very strong feeling that "Lisp" is the name of a family of languages and that it is appropriate to standardize only on a particular dialect and that the name of this dialect must be part of the name of the standard. A name like "ISO Lisp 89" would be too broad and would not answer the concerns expressed here. Within the Lisp family, there have existed many popular dialects with fundamental differences in their design, implementation, and use. While some of these existing differences may be resolved, others will certainly appear since the Lisp family encourages such experimentation and development.

The US concern about the name for the resulting ISO standard and the wording of this proposed new work item is not a shallow comment about words only, but is an indication of our deep concern that the goals and objectives of developing a standard within the Lisp family should not interfere with continued developments in other parts of the Lisp family of languages. This is one of the first issues that must be considered by an ISO working group resulting from the approval of this new work item. This naming issue was also raised as part of the report of the SC22 ad hoc working group (ISO/TC97/SC22 N 266) that lead to this NWI proposal. The US feels that report should be one of the initial documents of the working group resulting from this NWI proposal and that the various issues it raises be addressed.

Other countries have also submitted comments -- France offered a Convenor, Japan thought there should be more emphasis on Common Lisp, and the United Kingdom emphasized the need for a single standard.

ISO/IEC JTC1/SC22 (the Subcommittee on Languages of Joint Technical Committee 1 of the International Organization for Standardization and the International Electrotechnical Commission) decided to form Working Group 16 on Lisp. Christian Queinnic was named Convenor and Richard Gabriel and William Klinger were named as project editors.

At that same meeting there was considerable discussion about the handling of large character sets in programming languages. While this issue is frequently thought of in terms of handling Japanese and Chinese, it is also important for European languages other than English and for modern text manipulation systems.

The first meeting of WG 16 will be held February 24 and 25, 1988, in Paris, France. There will be an International Workshop on Lisp Evolution and Standardization on February 22 and 23, also in Paris. Participation in the Workshop is separate from participation in the ISO/IEC Working Group.

The US participants in this ISO/IEC Working Group on Lisp are drawn from the US membership of X3J13. Membership in X3J13 is open to all who make a commitment to continued participation.