

Re: octet vs. byte

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187 wrote:

[snip]

- > *Why can't Byte just have one meaning? Like mile or meter. I*
- > *saw someone compare it to have Dollars in US and Canada, and Aus, but*
- > *they are not all called dollar, but correctly called "US Dollar",*
- > *"Canadian Dollara", "Australian Dollar".*

Speaking as a Canadian who has visited Australia, and visits the USA, I can vouch that each country /correctly/ calls their currency "Dollar". You don't find Canadians in Toronto getting change in "Canadian Dollars", or Americans in New York paying for taxi's in "American Dollars". When I visit Detroit, they ask me for "Dollars", not "American Dollars" or "Canadian Dollars".

"American Dollars" vs "Canadian Dollars" vs "Australian Dollars" is the terminology of international finance, where such distinctions are necessary because of the frequency of the need.

And, in computing, a 'byte' is whatever the speaker means it to be. In the nation of Intel, and the nation of S/390, a 'byte' is understood to mean "an 8 bit byte", just as in the USA and in the US Virgin Islands, a "dollar" is understood to mean "an American Dollar". Similarly, in the nation of DEC, a 'byte' is understood to mean something else, even though in the world of computing it may actually be referred to as a "9 bit byte" or even a "variable number of bits byte".

- > *"Byte" is used just as that*
- > *regardless of how big (# of bits) it is, and I really feel this should*
- > *be standardized,*

You're starting to sound like a guy I conversed with a few years ago. He was aghast that "DoS" could mean "Denial Of Service", and thought that the world should standardize on "DoS" meaning "an operating system in the family of Microsoft MS-DOS and IBM PC-DOS operating systems". I

pointed out to him that, if he wanted to make /that/ case, then "DOS" should actually be standardized to mean "an operating system in the family of IBM's DOS / DOS/VS / DOS/VSE / VSE/SP / VSE/ESA operating systems", as that usage for "DOS" had far more history than his usage did.

Your arguments seem to reduce to " 'byte' should mean 8-bit quantity, because that's what I expect it to mean". Whatever will you do when quantum computing gets rolling and a 'byte' is redefined as "a collection of 8 quantum state decisions, with each quantum state decision having a variable number of potential values"? That blows the /bit/ portion of "8 bits" right out of the water, doesn't it? And your 'byte' will be history, just as the 9-bit byte and the 'variable # of bits byte' is now.

> *and that is a need some veery smart people have been*
> *working to.*
>
> *Actually didn't ISO once say something about the Byte?*

Only that the common "powers of two" measurements should not be applied to the ISO prefixes. Instead of Kilo, they recommend that 2^{10} be called a "Kibo", etc.

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(Opinions expressed here are my own, not my employer's)

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