

Margaret, the editor of Arts Magazine is holding a planning meeting with her journalists.

The meeting is progressing. Various matters have been discussed.

Margaret continues to the next item on the agenda.

“I’ve received a letter to the editor, an email actually, from someone who went to the Recycling through Future Time exhibition that we previewed in the Forthcoming Events section and she is trying to link that to the Localizable Sentences thing that Jane wrote about. Specifically, she is suggesting some symbols for localizable sentences specifically for a sculpture of that kind. I have the sentences here, yes, one is ‘Plastic pieces stored for recycling in the future.’ and another is ‘This time capsule was started at the following time.’ and there are a few more as well and indeed she includes some art work for some designs. Caroline, Jane, could you have a look at it please and make a recommendation over whether we should publish it please.”

Caroline and Jane both signal agreement. Caroline wrote the preview about the Recycling through Future Time exhibition and Jane wrote the reports about the Poetry through the Language Barrier events. Yet neither of them went to both events.

The meeting continues.

Edith is in her office. The telephone rings. Edith answers. It is Jane.

“Hello Jane, how are you?”

“I’m fine thank you. Edith, can I ask your advice please, about localizable sentences?”

“Certainly.”

“Well, the editor, Margaret, has received an email, as a Letter to the Editor for Arts Magazine. It is from a woman who is suggesting some glyphs for some new localizable sentences about recycling. There was an exhibition called Recycling through Future Time, about a time capsule for plastic things like bottle tops that some Local Authorities don’t recycle at present.”

“Yes, I read about it in Arts Magazine, though I didn’t go to the exhibition.”

“Anyway, she suggests some new localizable sentences for things such as I’ve got them here yes, the first one is ‘Plastic pieces stored for recycling in the future.’ and the second one is ‘This time capsule was started at the following time.’ and there are a few more, all relating to this particular time capsule idea.”

“Yes.”

“Well, what do you think? Should we publish them? Would it tread on your toes?”

Edith pauses slightly then replies.

“Well, it is not for me to say whether you should publish them, that is a decision for you. I am not one to try to stop some new idea being published even if it did, as you put it, tread on my toes. But in fact I like those sentences.”

“You’ve seen them?” asks Jane, somewhat surprised.

“Well, I have seen the two sentences that you read out and I have seen glyph designs for them, though as I have not seen the designs that you have I cannot say whether the designs are the same, and I do not know that the other sentences that you have are the same as what I have seen.”

Jane reads out the other sentences and Edith confirms that they are the same. Jane sends an email to Edith with the images of the five glyphs attached. Edith confirms that the designs appear to be the same, subject to needing detailed checking.

Edith continues. “Actually, we have assigned code numbers for those five sentences.”

Jane is surprised. “Oh, so these designs are already established then.”

“No, not at all. We have a policy that localizable sentence technology is intended to help people communicate through the language barrier, so when someone suggests some sentences that he or she would like to use then we consider them and if they are not unreasonable to have in the lists then we encode them. However, they are encoded in a registered private use part of the code space, so we are not endorsing them, we are just noting the fact that they have been requested and we are facilitating them being used if people choose to use them.”

“You said ‘not unreasonable’ - a double negative, how does that differ from ‘reasonable’?”

“Well, we are not saying that it is reasonable to encode them because, for example, with these particular sentences, we do not know whether the idea for the recycling time capsules will catch on or whether it is just a one-off use in an art exhibition. However, the idea might catch on, even just once, so it is not unreasonable to encode them.”

“Oh.” says Jane, somewhat puzzled.

“Anyway, I have the code numbers here if you would like them. Shall I email them to you?”

“Yes please.”

Edith sends Jane an email with the five code numbers.

“So you won’t necessarily encode every sentence that is suggested?”

“That is correct. However, we encode most that are suggested: in fact we have not rejected any yet, though we have only had a few.”

“Such as?”

“There is one for the sentence ‘Could you photograph that item with a static camera please?’ for use in making a documentary about visiting an art gallery. That has a glyph that is encoded as a registered private use localizable sentence.”

“That sounds interesting. Is there a code number for that?”

“Yes, let me look it up, ah yes, I have found the code number for that particular sentence. Though in practice that particular sentence is usually just used as a glyph printed on a card during a filming session rather than in an electronic communication - though it is fully in the system so it could be used in electronic communication so that localized text could be displayed. In fact that particular localizable sentence is interesting in that there are three possible glyphs depending on the relative positions of the speaker, the person being addressed and the item to which reference is being made. One glyph has an arrow pointing to the left, one glyph has an arrow pointing to the right and one glyph has no arrow.”

“If the code number is sent in an electronic message, how does the computer know which glyph to display?”

“Well that is an interesting question. We have looked at that yet have not formed a definitive view at the present time. One possibility is to use three code numbers, one for each glyph, another possibility is to suggest using an arrow character with the sentence. Anyway, we have left two code numbers empty just after the one for that particular sentence just in case we decide, in discussion with the person who suggested that sentence, that three code points are the best solution.”

“Ah. When would the versions with the arrow be used electronically?”

“Well, we thought that someone might have a mobile telephone yet not have the cards available, so might want to display the glyph on the screen by selecting the sentence from the cascading menu, not actually sending it by a text message over a telephone link.”

“Ah yes.”

“We will probably use the three code numbers: it is better to have the facility available in case it is needed even if it is not actually ever needed rather than not have it available and it be needed.”

After that discussion becomes more general for a while and then Jane thanks Edith for her help and the discussion ends.