

John is giving a short talk to several members of LocSARA staff so as to explain his analysis of the coding of the Locomotive device.

“I was not able to find anything in the Locomotive device that would show the underlying coding of a specific InterJolly. They are always displayed in the current language of the device. English seems to be built-in because if I go from English to any other supported language, the localized text to decode the InterJollies loads from elsewhere, and the same if I go from, say, French to German as the current language, indeed then going back to French loads again from elsewhere, but if at any time I go back to English it is instant.

“Yet the loading only takes place when the current language is changed, so it seems that the loading is for the localized text corresponding to each of the 524 InterJollies in the system.

“However, I was able to find what looks like it might be the underlying coding for an InterJolly simply by sending a short message including an InterJolly somewhere in the middle to an ordinary mobile telephone produced by another manufacturer.

“However, although it looked like the code for the particular InterJolly that I used was #883217 I did wonder whether there might possibly be a non-printing control code within it.

“So, I got another ordinary mobile telephone from yet another manufacturer, and I keyed a message with #883217 within it and sent it to the pink Locomotive, which was still set up for French as it happens, and it worked, the pink Locomotive displayed the sentence in French, in dark green.

“So there is no control code being used as far as I can tell. It all seems to be in the clear and so someone could, given a list of the codes and meanings in their own language, send a message to a Locomotive device and it be decoded just as if it had been sent from another Locomotive device.”

“That is interesting,” says Edward, “I wonder if Gigantic Business realizes that.”

“Well,” says Caroline “Gigantic Business is a large company and what with the hidden facility of using LocSARA codes built-in to the Locomotive device, it is quite possible that some of the staff, even the staff working on the project, do know about it and some do not. Maybe those who know are not saying. At the moment we have no idea how many people know about the Locomotive being able to use LocSARA codes, maybe it is just one person, maybe more than one person.”

“That supposes,” says Henry “that the software for the Locomotive device was developed internally by Gigantic Business. If the programming was outsourced it is quite possible that nobody at Gigantic Business knows about it.”

“That would be taking a risk for a contractor that did that.” says Edith.

“Well,” replies Henry “it need not be the contractor itself - maybe just an employee on his or her own - maybe a subcontractor, or someone who is employed by a subcontractor - who knows!”

“Well, yes, I suppose that could possibly be the case.” replies Edith.

“There is something else that occurred to me as a possibility.” adds Henry. “We have been assuming that the inclusion of the compatibility with the LocSARA encoding system has been done to do us a favour, as an act of someone seeking to be fair about it, but there is the possibility that Gigantic Business has done it itself as a corporate strategy to provide them with a sort of defence, or just a deflector of criticism, if public criticism is made of them for not mentioning LocSARA. That is, if nobody mentions it then maybe they may never mention it - maybe after a year or so they might just quietly delete it during some software update.”

“They do not need to mention LocSARA, there is no patent, it is all open literature and indeed open source.” says Edith.

“True, just a thought that occurred to me.” says Henry.

There is a pause.

“It is also possible,” says Henry “that someone - whoever - knows that it has been found.”

The others look thoughtful and rather concerned, realizing, now that it has been mentioned, that that is a real possibility.

“And,” continues Henry, “whilst I am aware that there is no location indicator advertised as included, that does not necessarily mean that there is not, so it is also possible that it is known where it was found - as in latitude and longitude - as in the latitude and longitude of this building.”

“And I suppose,” adds John, “continuing that, that if it has been done corporately by Gigantic Business, they might know to whom the two devices were sold.”

“Not everybody here knows who is that person, so no name to be mentioned please by those who do know, so I had better contact that person and advise that person of the possible situation.” says Edith, carefully speaking so as not to give a clue as to the gender of that person.