Edith is chairing a meeting of the research staff at the research centre.

"Well that is most of the items on the agenda completed, just Any Other Business now. .... Has anyone got anything to discuss please?"

Henry and Caroline each raise a hand a little.

"Henry, could you present your topic please."

"Thank you. .... I am concerned that there are starting to be multiple encoding formats for localizable sentences, yet none of them is part of an international standard. I am proposing that we aim for three and only three standardized formats, two of which exist already and one of which would be the international standard if it can one day become that if it is possible to achieve such a status.

"The first format to be the integral sign as the base character followed by a sequence of circled digit characters, as we are using now for research purposes. This would be for electronic communication. It is a markup system rather than a formal encoding at the level of an international standard yet it can be used now and by using circled digit characters rather than just the ordinary digit characters there is some protection against getting muddled up with ordinary text.

"The second format is to be the exclamation mark as the base character followed by ordinary digit characters, as in the postcard that Caroline sent to us from France."

"Caroline, is your item for discussion on this same topic?" asks Edith.

"No." says Caroline.

"Henry, please continue."

"This format could be used both for the use of localizable sentences in GS1-128 barcodes, and for electronic communication where only a seven-bit format is possible, and in text messages, including hand-written messages and hardcopy print outs, and by voice over a telephone link.

"The third format would be the international standard if it can be achieved. I am suggesting that a new character be encoded at hexadecimal FFF7 specifically as a base character for a localizable sentence, and that in use an FFF7 character would be followed by a sequence of tag digit characters. It is possible that a cancel tag would be added at the end, but that is not really necessary as the length of the sequence is calculated from the digit sequence, but if adding a cancel tag at the end is what is standardized, then that is not a problem.

"The three formats would be convertible form one to another as the same code numbers would be used for each of them.

"The thing is, I am a bit concerned that Gigantic Business is using hashtags, I think that it could be ambiguous with other uses of hashtags, so I would like to see that gone and replaced with using the second format that I mentioned. Also, there is an older format that was suggested for barcodes using colon colon as the base character, then ordinary digit characters and then at the end having a colon and a semicolon. At the time the colon colon sequence seemed like a good idea, but alas it has since been noticed that colon

colon is sometimes used on web pages at the start of each item in a list of items, so although it could still work, I opine that it would be better to use the format with the exclamation mark as the base character for encoding a localizable sentence code in a GS1-128 barcode."

There is a pause.

"Anybody?" asks Edith, looking around the table.

"That sounds good, but what about Gigantic Business? Are they going to change?" asks John.

"I don't know." replies Henry.

John continues. "They do have a facility to update the software on each device remotely. So maybe there is a chance that they would - if asked and a good case made."

"Well, if there is a chance it would be good to try to make an effort to get it changed." replies Henry.

Edith speaks, addressing Henry. "John, Caroline and I are going to the launch event tomorrow as we discussed earlier in the meeting - there are four seats in the car, so you are welcome to come along with us if you wish - you might get a chance to have a chat with someone with influence in the matter - it seems worth a try."

"Yes please." says Henry.

"Good." says Edith.

"So can we vote on Henry's suggestion for the encoding formats please. All in favour, please show."

Everyone raises his or her right hand a little.

"So that is unanimously agreed." says Edith.

There is a pause.

Edith speaks. "Caroline, can you present your topic please."

"Yes, thank you. I have been looking at the glyphs that are listed for 'Welcome' and 'Thank you for visiting.'. To me they are too angular and whilst they were designed for use as art gallery signs with the code number available encoded in a radio frequency identification device and they are fine for that, there are also other uses possible uses such as on a printed notice along with localizations into several languages where those glyphs would not, in my opinion, look good.

"So I have designed some new glyphs. I am wondering how they could become included in the system. For example, would there be two different code numbers for 'Thank you for visiting.', one for each glyph?"

There is a pause.

John speaks. "I think that that would be best."

Caroline continues, using her laptop computer to display the glyphs as she talks about them.
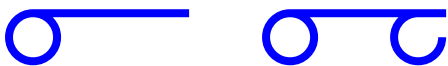
"Here are the existing glyphs for 'Welcome.' and 'Thank you got visiting.' respectively. They are shown in blue, but the colour does not affect the meaning. For example, they could be shown in white on a coloured background in some situations if so desired.

"Now, they were each derived by combining part of the following glyph, which has been defined to have the meaning 'Some of the signage items each have a radio frequency identification device in the lower left corner.'.

"and, respectively, and part of the glyph for 'Good day.' and 'Best regards,'.

"Now, the designs that I am suggesting are, respectively, for 'Welcome.' and 'Thank you for visiting.' as follows."

Edith looks around.

John speaks. "I suggest that we encode localizable sentence 'Welcome.' that is associated with the new glyph using the code number 127 and localizable sentence 'Thank you for visiting.' that is associated with the new glyph using the code number 983. That makes a sort of symmetry with the code numbers for 'Good day.' and 'Best regards,'.

"So using the two formats that we agreed earlier, that would be as on the screen of my laptop computer."

∫①②⑦ Welcome.

∫⑨⑧③ Thank you for visiting.

!127 Welcome.

!983 Thank you for visiting.

People express approval.

"I agree, excellent." says Edith.