

## Re: Standards question on edited fields

**Source:** <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Cobol/comp.lang.cobol/2004-01/0484.html>

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**From:** Judson McClendon ([judmc\\_at\\_sunvaley0.com](mailto:judmc_at_sunvaley0.com))

**Date:** 01/17/04

Date: Sat, 17 Jan 2004 17:18:40 GMT

"LX-i" <[lx0007@netscape.net](mailto:lx0007@netscape.net)> wrote:

> *Judson McClendon wrote:*

>> *"LX-i" <[lx0007@netscape.net](mailto:lx0007@netscape.net)> wrote:*

>>

>>> *We have a field that is 9 characters – a 2–digit day, a 3–character*

>>> *month, and a 4–digit year. It's defined as follows...*

>>>

>>> *01 My–Date.*

>>> *03 My–Day Pic 9(02).*

>>> *03 My–Month Pic X(03).*

>>> *03 My–Year Pic 9(04).*

>>

>>

>> *Why would you store a date in such a way?*

>

> *Who said I was storing it?*

>

>> *Dates in that format would*

>> *not sort correctly, and it seems you would not present such a format to*

>> *a human directly without editing, as your question demonstrates. I can't*

>> *see a reason for storing a date in such a format, because it would need*

>> *to be modified for either internal computer use or external human use,*

>> *making it useless in its current form. Is there a valid reason for this, or*

>> *is it just sloppy design? :-)*

>

> *I can't think of a military–format date in our database. However, being*

> *in the military, we have many requirements to display dates this way*

> *(today would be "16 Jan 04" most places, "16 Jan 2004" in a few). We*

> *either display the current date, or convert a data out of the database,*

> *which is usually stored in YYYY–MM–DD (relational) or YYYYDDD (DMS).*

>

> *So, it's not a sloppy design at all – and there is a valid reason.*

I believe you, and having spent four years programming at command level for the Air Force myself, I understand the requirement for such display and print formats. I'm just curious what your specific reason is for having a date that is (currently) stored inside the computer in

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that form? I didn't say 'permanent storage'. :-)

Perhaps it's changed a lot in the three decades since I was in the USAF,  
but I saw lots of crummy design. Lots of good design too, of course. :-)

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"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that  
whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."