

Re: A very quick, informal survey

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/General/comp.programming/2004-04/0900.html>

From: William (*Reply_at_NewsGroup.Please*)

Date: 04/13/04

Date: Tue, 13 Apr 2004 11:19:12 -0500

"Steven O." <null@null.com> wrote in message
news:og49709khdbf1rr09thq6ko7vc8vpk9glm@4ax.com...
> *I write documentation. The company I'm working for is developing a
> product that transmits data from one computer to another, and the
> order or sequence of data transmission is important.*
>
> *We need to specify whether the data transmission and storage is
> Big-endian or Little-endian. I've argued that, in addition to stating
> which it is, we need to explain what these terms mean. The
> programmers claim that any programmer worth their salt will know what
> these terms mean.*

This is why most programmers don't write good end-user documentation, even for other programmers. They think only programmers as experienced and knowledgeable as they are will read it.

Since you can't guarantee that, make no assumptions. When a term's misunderstanding can lead to failure, define the term (in a footnote, will do). Worst case is an extra page or two of documentation, best case is a call to support that won't be made.

It's especially silly not to define the terms in this case since it only takes a few words. -Wm