

## Re: what does "serialization" mean?

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**From:** Mike ([m.fee\\_at\\_nospam.irl.cri.nz](mailto:m.fee_at_nospam.irl.cri.nz))

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In article

<[f5dda427.0406221835.5fefa5a@posting.google.com](mailto:f5dda427.0406221835.5fefa5a@posting.google.com)>, spinoza1111@yahoo.com says...

> Mike <[m.fee@nospam.irl.cri.nz](mailto:m.fee@nospam.irl.cri.nz)> wrote in message news:<[MPG.1b4365c1a7bc317d9896d6@newshost.comnet.co.nz](mailto:MPG.1b4365c1a7bc317d9896d6@newshost.comnet.co.nz)>...

>> *The majority of people in the world also attempt to use*  
>> *a word in one of its accepted meanings or definitions,*  
>> *or create a new meaning only when no acceptable*  
>> *alternative exists. It is fine to coin a new definition*  
>> *for a word but:*  
>> *1) this isn't generally useful when another perfectly*  
>> *good word already exists, and;*  
>> *2) when doing so it is useful to pick a word that*  
>> *already has close to the required sense of meaning*  
>  
> *This misapplies the sort of thinking I find characteristic of the*  
> *worst sort of English teacher to a mathematical activity.*  
>  
> *The received wisdom is twofold: (1) one never "creates" language, only*  
> *uses it "correctly" and thus is accepted in polite circles*

How do you possibly arrive at this interpretation from my comment 1) above, when I specifically write that it is fine to coin new definitions?

> *"correctness" is however not defined by tradition or the natural law*  
> *of any sort but by "generally accepted usage".*

The "generally accepted.." definition of palindromic is the traditional and very specific one used by word-smiths and amateur mathematicians. The term was invented for that specific descriptive purpose and is both the tradition and the accepted usage.

> *This received wisdom is massively incoherent because the referent of*  
> *"general usage" is one of those terms that is conveniently vague for*  
> *political reasons, like "terrorist". It in fact becomes any society to*  
> *which the student desires to be accepted no matter how deviant.*  
>

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- > *The received wisdom manages to be far more moronized than the usage in*
- > *a society like that of ancient China, where tradition was controlling,*
- > *or the Catholic Church, where definitions and right-naming was*
- > *Scholastically derived from natural law.*

- >
- > *This is because the referent of accepted usage becomes, in a truly*
- > *Humpty Dumpty fashion, not what "I" would like it to be but what*
- > *unnamed power would like it to be.*

Is any of this of any relevance?

- >
- > *Insistence on this creates havoc in systems analysis and in*
- > *programming because when people start insisting on "accepted" usage,*
- > *the problem is that "accepted" usage is unusably vague...with the*
- > *normalized deviant result that the system encapsulates prejudice,*
- > *sometimes in a literal sense.*

- >
- > *In the 1980s the computer field was overrun by rejects from the*
- > *humanities owing to their expansion in the 1960s and subsequent*
- > *contraction. Thus English majors in this era started insisting on*
- > *avoidance of terms of art and a misconstrued "simplicity of language"*
- > *with disastrous results in MIS.*

>

Mathematics and the physical sciences, and in fact most technological studies and discussions thereof, require that the terms of reference are precise and clear. One does not want to drive on a bridge designed by somebody who decides that a more poetic Newton should only be 2/3 of the value "accepted" by the vaguaries of the physics profession.

- >
- >>
- >>> *It is in fact correct to say that the palindrome of a string is its*
- >>> *reverse, and that a palindromic string is identical to its*
- >>> *re(in)verse. Therefore a function like serialize is palindromic if it*
- >>> *has a proper inverse.*

- >>
- >> *In this case:*
- >> *1) already existing terms 'reversible function' or*
- >> *'reversible transform' are available. I think they would*
- >> *be simpler and clearer in meaning to most of the*
- >> *audience in this group, and;*
- >> *2) palindromic has such a specialised meaning that*
- >> *one is forced to 'undefine' it, so to speak, to apply it*
- >> *in the manner you suggest. A palindrome is symmetric, it*
- >> *might be considered as its own inverse, or as an*
- >> *identity under the 'reversing' operator. I can envisage*
- >> *functional forms that might be described as palindromic,*
- >> *but –merely– reversible doesn't make the grade.*

- >>
- >> *In essence, to coin the definitoin palindromic =*
- >> *reversible, weakens the meaning of palindromic and,*

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> > *ultimately, weakens the language.*

> *Oh dear, weakening the language. Look, buddy, what weakens the  
> language is insistence on following vague usage. Look, friend, what  
> weakens the language is two spelling errors in the same line.*

They are called typos where I come from.

> *Look,*

> *dear heart, I'm the best thing that's happened to the English language  
> since Henry James. Behold, mein gnadige Friend, a static language is a  
> dead language.*

When I talk of politics, art or love – I use language in a dynamic and extensible form. When I paint a portrait – I don't insist that the skin is a "realistic" shade of brown. When I cook – I add a "slosh" of this and a "pinch" of that. On a mountain-bike – I push the envelope. But when I discuss technology (not the sociology of technology, or the zen of technology, but the meat and potatoes of technology) – I take care to use terminology that is understood by other technologists. When I draw a blue-print – I insist that right-angles are right. When I perform a chemical analysis – I carefully weigh out the chemicals. When driving on the open road – I obey the road rules.

> *"Reversible" is bad usage here because like many generally accepted  
> terms in this area, it imparts a physical metaphor such that  
> "reversible" is like a car's reversibility, in which it has "reversed"  
> EVEN IF it has not returned to its starting point.*

Zip compression of files is reversible, multiplication by anything other than zero is reversible, chemical reactions can be reversible. Yes, you can reverse a car, although I have never seen the term "reversibility" used to describe that utility and I cannot imagine anyone assuming that physical metaphor in the case of a "reversible function". (But maybe you can).

> *Whereas palindromic by its very strangeness INSISTS that you are  
> either palindromic in my sense such that*

>

> *palindromic(f,g) iff  $g(f(x))=x$*

>

> *or else you must leave the room and take a shower.*

Ahhh, I understand your error now. You don't mean a palindromic function – you must mean a runcible function!