

Re: use of small kana on the increase?

## Re: use of small kana on the increase?

---

*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang.japan/2006-12/msg00247.html>

---

- *From:* Phil Yff <[phil.yff@xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:phil.yff@xxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Tue, 5 Dec 2006 19:25:54 -0500
- 

On Tue, 05 Dec 2006 07:20:37 -0800, Dan Rempel wrote:

Louise Bremner  
<[trap\\_for\\_junk\\_mail@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:trap_for_junk_mail@xxxxxxxxxx)> dixit:

I do so wish you'd used  
ROT13 .....

ROT13? Hugh and Nye are showing our  
ages. Who knows about ROT13  
these days?

It's still in the usenet newsreader standard. Of course, usenet,  
too, is  
showing it's age. Kids are more into instant messaging and  
chat. The  
command my newsreader (40tude dialog has) is  
scramble/unscramble with rot13  
in parentheses.

I should add that one of the reasons it crept into the newsreader standard  
is because it was easy to do on UNIX systems. There's a UNIX utility (tr)  
that does the cipher automatically. Back in the 80s when ROT13 came into  
vogue, UNIX protocols were a heavy influence on Usenet. After all, Usenet  
itself originated as a UNIX to UNIX file transfer protocol.

Or more probably because it both encodes and decodes 26-character input  
like the English alphabet. I don't think ease of use had much to do with  
it: 'tr' doesn't do ROT-13 any more automatically than it will do any  
other substitution.

I know for a fact that it did because I was a sysad back when it came into  
use. I first started seeing it in 1982. There used to be a group called  
net.jokes. Jokes with real or perceived offensive material generated a lot

Re: use of small kana on the increase?

Re: use of small kana on the increase?

of flame wars. People started to use the rot13 cipher using the tr (transliterate) utility. The reason I know that is that my news server was not UNIX and I started getting questions about it.

Although the tr utility can do other substitutions, the rot13, was the simplest cipher to use with the English alphabet. Later, after it started seeing widespread use, it was incorporated into the usenet newsreader standard.

Phil Yff

.