

sci.math: Re: [XPOST] A unique number for every "person" – can it be done?

Re: [XPOST] A unique number for every "person" – can it be done?

Source: <http://sci.tech–archive.net/Archive/sci.math/2005–02/10015.html>

spinoza1111_at_yahoo.com

Date: 02/28/05

Date: 27 Feb 2005 18:23:10 -0800

Doesn't a suitable encoding of the name, coupled with the date, place and time (down to second) of birth, form your identifier?

If twins pop out of Mom simultaneously, one by Caesarian section and the other rug rat by the normal canal, add a sequence number.

Encode place as a GPS coordinate. You said we can assume Earth-bound people.

Don't make the resulting string a "number" at all: just use it as a string, using Unicode, DBCS or a 32-bit character encoding.

My number would be the string "Edward George Nilges <gps coordinate of the Boston Lying–In Hospital> Nov 9 1949 AD 0215 AM".

Although variable length this string would be unique.

Numbers, after all, are things which can be members of algebraic groups subject to operators. To think we must use a number as an identifier is a cultural hold-over from the punched card era in which early pioneers selected "numbers" as UIDs because the engineers of their devices thought in terms of numeric voltages and dial positions.

The string is thus a more fundamental representation of the idea of a unique Leibnizian monad occupying a space and time coordinate to the exclusion even of his "twin" or doppelganger. Indeed what I see printed as my UID on my China visa is a variable length string, using special characters as delimiters.

The selection of a number which would cause, at some future date, a Y2K crisis is the SAME sort of thinking, that we MUST map to a number, that caused Cobol programmers to exclude the century.

If an existing person cannot or will not provide a GPS and date–time for birth date, change the birth date to a variable–length descriptor substituting personal details, such as "child found wandering in the

Re: [XPOST] A unique number for every "person" – can it be done?

sci.math: Re: [XPOST] A unique number for every "person" – can it be done?

Srebrenica minefield 7-4-1995 by Pvt. John McAuslan of the 4th Royal Scots Regiment". If you must, use Esperanto or some sort of self-defining language based on XML. In this (important) case, a person's UID would tend to be novelistic but this would be a good thing.

This particular extension and the entire proposal violates one of your most important requirements. This is that the UID provide no information about the person. To meet this requirement, it would have to be encrypted.

But it would meet a philosophical requirement. Human rights globally are based on the uniqueness and worth of each person and the only philosophical guarantor of uniqueness is the willingness as needed to read a variable-length biography.