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## FOUNDATION FOR INTELLIGENT PHYSICAL AGENTS

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# FIPA Agent Message Transport Envelope 4

## Representation in Bit-Efficient Encoding 5

### Specification

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7

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39 **Contents**

40	1 Scope.....	1
41	2 Bit-Efficient Envelope Representation .....	2
42	2.1 Component Name .....	2
43	2.2 ACC Processing of Bit-Efficient Envelope .....	2
44	2.3 Concrete Message Envelope Syntax .....	3
45	2.4 Notes on the Grammar Rules.....	5
46	3 References .....	7
47	4 Informative Annex A — Examples.....	8
48	5 Informative Annex B — ChangeLog .....	12
49	5.1 2002/11/01 – version C by TC X2S.....	12

## 50    1 Scope

51    This document deals with message transportation between inter-operating agents and also forms part of the FIPA  
52    Agent Management Specification [FIPA00023]. It contains specifications for:

- 53    • Syntactic representation of a message envelope in bit-efficient form.

54    Informative examples of the bit-efficient envelope syntax are given in Section 4.  
55

## 58    2 Bit-Efficient Envelope Representation

59 This section gives the concrete syntax for the message envelope specification that must be used to transport messages  
 60 over a Message Transport Protocol (MTP - see [FIPA00067]). This concrete syntax is designed to complement  
 61 [FIPA00069].

62  
 63 The message envelope transport syntax is expressed in standard EBNF format<sup>1</sup> (see *Table 1*).  
 64

Grammar rule component	Example
Terminal tokens are enclosed in double quotes	" ( "
Non-terminals are written as capitalised identifiers	Expression
Square brackets denote an optional construct	[ " , " OptionalArg ]
Vertical bars denote an alternative between choices	Integer   Float
Asterisk denotes zero or more repetitions of the preceding expression	Digit*
Plus denotes one or more repetitions of the preceding expression	Alpha+
Parentheses are used to group expansions	( A   B ) *
Productions are written with the non-terminal name on the left-hand side, expansion on the right-hand side and terminated by a full stop	ANonTerminal = "terminal".
0x?? is a hexadecimal byte	0x00

65  
 66                      **Table 1:** EBNF Rules  
 67

### 68    2.1 Component Name

69 The name assigned to this component is:  
 70

71        fipa.mts.env.rep.bitefficient.std  
 72

### 73    2.2 ACC Processing of Bit-Efficient Envelope

74 According to [FIPA00067], a FIPA compliant ACC is not allowed to modify any element of the envelope that it receives.  
 75 It is however allowed to update a value in any of the envelope's parameters by adding a new ExtEnvelope element at  
 76 the beginning of the messageEnvelopes sequence. This new element is required to have only those parameter values  
 77 that the ACC wishes to add or update plus a new ReceivedObject element<sup>2</sup>.  
 78

79 The following pseudo code algorithm may be used to obtain the latest values for each of the envelope's parameters.  
 80

```
81 EnvelopeWithAllParams := new empty Envelope
82 while (not all envelopes processed) {
83     tempEnvelope = getNextEnvelope;
84     foreach parameter in an envelope {
85         if ((this parameter has no value in EnvelopeWithAllParams)
86             AND (this parameter has a value in tempEnvelope))
87             then copy the value of this parameter to EnvelopeWithAllParams
88     }
89 }
90
91 EnvelopeWithAllParams now contains the latest values for all the parameters set in the envelope.
```

<sup>1</sup> White space is not allowed between tokens.

<sup>2</sup> The new ReceivedObject parameter is forced, syntactically, to be in all envelopes of the messageEnvelopes sequence except the first one.

93     **2.3 Concrete Message Envelope Syntax**

94     MessageEnvelope                 = (ExtEnvelope)\* BaseEnvelope Payload.

95     BaseEnvelope                     = BaseEnvelopeHeader (Parameter)\* EndOfEnvelope.

96     ExtEnvelope                     = ExtEnvelopeHeader (Parameter)\* EndOfEnvelope.

97     BaseEnvelopeHeader             = BaseMsgId EnvLen ACLRepresentation Date.

98     ExtEnvelopeHeader             = ExtMsgId EnvLen ReceivedObject.

99     EnvLen                         = Len16  
105                                 | JumboEnvelope.                     /\* See comment 1 (Section 2.4) \*/

106     JumboEnvelope                 = EmptyLen16 Len32.

107     BaseMsgId                     = 0xFE.

108     ExtMsgId                     = 0xFD.

109     EndOfEnvelope                 = EndOfCollection.

110     Payload                         =                                     /\* See comment 2 (Section 2.4) \*/

111     Parameter                     = PredefinedParameter  
118                                 | UserDefinedParameter. /\* See comment 5 (Section 2.4) \*/

119     PredefinedParameter          = 0x02 AgentIdentifierSequence             /\* to \*/  
121                                 | 0x03 AgentIdentifier                     /\* from \*/  
122                                 | 0x04 ACLRepresentation                     /\* acl-representation \*/  
123                                 | 0x05 Comments                             /\* comments \*/  
124                                 | 0x06 PayloadLength                         /\* payload-length \*/  
125                                 | 0x07 PayloadEncoding                         /\* payload-encoding \*/  
126                                 | 0x09 IntendedReceiver                     /\* intended-receiver \*/  
127                                 | 0x0a ReceivedObject                         /\* received \*/  
128                                 | 0x0b TransportBehaviour.                     /\* transport-behaviour \*/

130     ACLRepresentation          = UserDefinedACLRepresentation  
131                                 | 0x10                                     /\* fipa.acl.rep.bitefficient.std [FIPA00069] \*/  
132                                 | 0x11                                     /\* fipa.acl.rep.string.std [FIPA00070] \*/  
133                                 | 0x12.                                     /\* fipa.acl.rep.xml.std [FIPA00071] \*/

134     Date                         = BinDateTimeToken.

135     Comments                     = NullTerminatedString.

136     PayloadLength                 = BinNumber.

137     PayloadEncoding             = NullTerminatedString.

138     IntendedReceiver             = AgentIdentifierSequence.

139     TransportBehaviour          = Any.

140     UserDefinedACLRepresentation  
141                                 = 0x00 NullTerminatedString.

142     ReceivedObject              = By  
143                                 Date  
144                                 [From]  
145                                 [Id]  
146                                 [Via]

```

155                               (UserDefinedParameter)*
156                               EndOfCollection.

157
158     By                      = URL.
159
160     From                     = 0x02 URL.
161
162     Id                       = 0x03 NullTerminatedString.
163
164     Via                      = 0x04 NullTerminatedString.
165
166     BinNumber                = Digits.           /* See comment 4 (Section 2.4) */
167
168     Digits                   = CodedNumber+.
169
170     NullTerminatedString     = String 0x00.
171
172     UserDefinedParameter    = 0x00 Keyword NullTerminatedString.
173
174     KeyWord                  = NullTerminatedString.
175
176     Any                      = 0x14 NullTerminatedString
177           | ByteLenEncoded.
178
179     ByteLenEncoded           = 0x16 Len8 ByteSequence
180           | 0x17 Len16 ByteSequence
181           | 0x19 Len32 ByteSequence.
182
183     ByteSequence              = Byte*.
184
185     AgentIdentifierSequence = (AgentIdentifier)* EndOfCollection.
186
187     AgentIdentifier          = 0x02 AgentName
188           [Addresses]
189           [Resolvers]
190           (UserDefinedParameter)*
191           EndOfCollection.
192
193     AgentName                = NullTerminatedString.
194
195     Addresses                 = 0x02 UrlSequence.
196
197     Resolvers                 = 0x03 AgentIdentifierSequence.
198
199     UserDefinedParameter     = 0x05 NullTerminatedString Any.
200
201     UrlSequence               = (URL)* EndOfCollection.
202
203     URL                      = NullTerminatedString.
204
205     StringSequence            = (NullTerminatedString)* EndOfCollection.
206
207     BinDateTimeToken          = 0x20 BinDate           /* Absolute time      */
208           | 0x21 BinDate           /* Relative time (+) */
209           | 0x22 BinDate           /* Relative time (-) */
210           | 0x24 BinDate TypeDesignator /* Absolute time      */
211           | 0x25 BinDate TypeDesignator /* Relative time (+) */
212           | 0x26 BinDate TypeDesignator /* Relative time (-) */
213
214     BinDate                  = Year Month Day Hour Minute Second Millisecond.
215                               /* See comment 3 (Section 2.4) */
216
217     EndOfCollection           = 0x01.
218
219     EmptyLen16                = 0x00 0x00.

```

```

219
220 Len8           = Byte.          /* See comment 6 (Section 2.4) */
221
222 Len16          = Short.        /* See comment 6 (Section 2.4) */
223
224 Len32          = Long.         /* See comment 6 (Section 2.4) */
225
226 Year           = Byte Byte.
227
228 Month          = Byte.
229
230 Day             = Byte.
231
232 Hour            = Byte.
233
234 Minute          = Byte.
235
236 Second          = Byte.
237
238 Millisecond     = Byte Byte.
239
240 String           =          /* As in [FIPA00070] */
241
242 CodedNumber      =          /* See comment 4 (Section 2.4) */
243
244 TypeDesignator   =          /* As in [FIPA00070] */
245

```

## 2.4 Notes on the Grammar Rules

1. Normally, the length of an envelope does not exceed 65536 bytes ( $2^{16}$ ). Therefore, only two bytes are reserved for envelope length (len16). However, the syntax also allows envelopes with greater lengths. In this case, the sender sets the reserved envelope length parameter (two bytes) to length zero and the following four bytes are used to represent the real length (maximum envelope length is therefore  $2^{32}$  bytes).

The length of the envelope comprises all the parts of the envelope, including the message identifier and the length parameter itself. The length of the envelope is expressed in the network byte order.

2. The payload (ACL message) starts at the first byte after the BaseEnvelope. White space is allowed between the envelope and the ACL message only if the syntax of ACL allows this. For instance, `fipa.acl.rep.string.std` allows white space, but `fipa.acl.rep.bitefficient.std` does not.
3. Dates are coded as numbers, that is, four bits are reserved for each ASCII number (see comment 4 below). Information as to whether the type designator is present or not is coded into an identifier byte. These parameters always have static length (two bytes for year and milliseconds, one byte for other components).
4. Numbers are coded by reserving four bits for each digit in the number's ASCII representation, that is, two ASCII numbers are coded into one byte. *Table 2* shows a 4-bit code for each number and special codes that may appear in ASCII coded numbers.

If the ASCII presentation of a number contains an odd number of characters, the last four bits of the coded number are set to zero (the `Padding token`), otherwise an additional `0x00` byte is added to the end of the coded number. If the number to be coded is either an integer, decimal number, or octal number, the identifier byte `0x12` is used. For hexadecimal numbers, the identifier byte `0x13` is used. Hexadecimal numbers are converted to integers before coding (the coding scheme does not allow characters from `a` through `f` to appear in number form).

272

Token	Code	Token	Code
Padding	0000	7	1000
0	0001	8	1001
1	0010	9	1010
2	0011	+	1100
3	0100	E	1101
4	0101	-	1110
5	0110	.	1111
6	0111		

273

274

**Table 2:** Binary Representation of Number Tokens

275

- 276 5. All envelope parameters defined in [FIPA00067] have a predefined code. If an envelope contains a user-defined  
 277 parameter, an extension mechanism is used (byte 0x00). The names of the user-defined envelope parameters  
 278 should have the prefix "X-CompanyName-".
- 279 6. Byte is a one-byte code word, Short is a short integer (two bytes, network byte order) and Long is a long integer  
 280 (four bytes, network byte order).
- 281
- 282

**283    3 References**

- 284 [FIPA00067] FIPA Agent Message Transport Service Specification. Foundation for Intelligent Physical Agents, 2000.  
285 <http://www.fipa.org/specs/fipa00067/>
- 286 [FIPA00069] FIPA ACL Message Representation in Bit-Efficient Encoding Specification. Foundation for Intelligent  
287 Physical Agents, 2000.  
288 <http://www.fipa.org/specs/fipa00069/>
- 289 [FIPA00070] FIPA ACL Message Representation in String Specification. Foundation for Intelligent Physical Agents,  
290 2000.  
291 <http://www.fipa.org/specs/fipa00070/>
- 292 [FIPA00071] FIPA ACL Message Representation in XML Specification. Foundation for Intelligent Physical Agents,  
293 2000.  
294 <http://www.fipa.org/specs/fipa00071/>
- 295

## 296    4 Informative Annex A — Examples

- 297    1. Here is a simple example of an envelope encoded using XML representation:

```

298
299      <?xml version="1.0"?>
300      <envelope>
301          <params index="1">
302              <to>
303                  <agent-identifier>
304                      <name>receiver@foo.com</name>
305                      <addresses>
306                          <url>http://foo.com/acc</url>
307                      </addresses>
308                  </agent-identifier>
309              </to>
310              <from>
311                  <agent-identifier>
312                      <name>sender@bar.com</name>
313                      <addresses>
314                          <url>http://bar.com/acc</url>
315                      </addresses>
316                  </agent-identifier>
317              </from>
318
319          <acl-representation>fipa.acl.rep.xml.std</acl-representation>
320
321          <date>20000508T042651481</date>
322
323          <received>
324              <received-by value="http://foo.com/acc"/>
325              <received-date value="20000508T042651481"/>
326              <received-id value="123456789"/>
327          </received>
328      </params>
329  </envelope>
330

```

331    Using the bit-efficient representation, the envelope becomes:

```

332
333 0xfe 0x00 0x88 0x12 0x20 0x31 0x11 0x06 0x19 0x15 0x37 0x62 0x59 0x20 0x02 0x03 0x02
334  'r'  'e'  'c'  'e'  'i'  'v'  'e'  'r'  '@'  'f'  'o'  'o'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  0x00
335  0x02  'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'
336  'c'  'c'  0x00  0x01  0x01  0x02  's'  'e'  'n'  'd'  'e'  'r'  '@'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'
337  'c'  'o'  'm'  0x00  0x02  'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'
338  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  0x00  0x01  0x01  0x0a  'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'
339  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  0x00  0x20  0x31  0x11  0x06  0x19
340  0x15  0x37  0x62  0x59  0x20  0x03  '1'  '2'  '3'  '4'  '5'  '6'  '7'  '8'  '9'  0x00  0x01
341

```

342    The length of the original message is about 584 bytes and the encoded result is 136 bytes giving a compression  
343    ratio of about 4:1.

345 2. Here is an example that covers all aspects of an envelope.

```
346 <?xml version="1.0"?>
347 <envelope>
348   <params index="1">
349     <to>
350       <agent-identifier>
351         <name>receiver@foo.com</name>
352         <addresses>
353           <url>http://foo.com/acc</url>
354         </addresses>
355       <resolvers>
356         <agent-identifier>
357           <name>resolver@bar.com</name>
358           <addresses>
359             <url>http://bar.com/acc1</url>
360             <url>http://bar.com/acc2</url>
361             <url>http://bar.com/acc3</url>
362           </addresses>
363         </agent-identifier>
364       </resolvers>
365     </agent-identifier>
366   </to>
367
368   <from>
369     <agent-identifier>
370       <name>sender@bar.com</name>
371       <addresses>
372         <url>http://bar.com/acc</url>
373       </addresses>
374     <resolvers>
375       <agent-identifier>
376         <name>resolver@foobar.com</name>
377         <addresses>
378           <url>http://foobar.com/acc1</url>
379           <url>http://foobar.com/acc2</url>
380           <url>http://foobar.com/acc3</url>
381         </addresses>
382       </agent-identifier>
383     </resolvers>
384   </agent-identifier>
385 </from>
386
387   <comments>No comments!</comments>
388
389   <acl-representation>fipa.acl.rep.xml.std</acl-representation>
390
391   <payload-encoding>US-ASCII</payload-encoding>
392
393   <date>20000508T042651481</date>
394
395   <intended-receiver>
396     <agent-identifier>
397       <name>intendedreceiver@foobar.com</name>
398       <addresses>
399         <url>http://foobar.com/acc1</url>
400         <url>http://foobar.com/acc2</url>
401         <url>http://foobar.com/acc3</url>
402       </addresses>
403     <resolvers>
404       <agent-identifier>
405         <name>resolver@foobar.com</name>
406         <addresses>
407           <url>http://foobar.com/acc1</url>
```

```

409      <url>http://foobar.com/acc2</url>
410      <url>http://foobar.com/acc3</url>
411    </addresses>
412    <resolvers>
413      <agent-identifier>
414        <name>resolver@foobar.com</name>
415        <addresses>
416          <url>http://foobar.com/acc1</url>
417          <url>http://foobar.com/acc2</url>
418          <url>http://foobar.com/acc3</url>
419        </addresses>
420      </agent-identifier>
421    </resolvers>
422  </agent-identifier>
423 </intended-receiver>
426
427  <received>
428    <received-by value="http://foo.com/acc" />
429    <received-from value="http://foobar.com/acc" />
430    <received-date value="20000508T042651481" />
431    <received-id value="123456789" />
432    <received-via value="http://bar.com/acc" />
433  </received>
434
435  </params>
436
437 </envelope>
438

```

Using the bit-efficient representation, the envelope becomes:

```

440
441 0xfe 0x01 0xdb 0x12 0x20 0x31 0x11 0x06 0x19 0x15 0x37 0x62 0x59 0x20 0x02 0x02 'r'
442  'e'  'c'  'e'  'i'  'v'  'e'  'r'  '@'  'f'  'o'  'o'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  0x00 0x02
443  'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'
444  'c'  0x00 0x01 0x03 0x02 's'  'e'  'n'  'd'  'e'  'r'  '@'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'
445  'o'  'm'  0x00 0x02 'h'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'
446  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  0x00 0x01 0x07 'U'  'S'  '-'  'A'  'S'  'C'  'I'  'I'  0x00
447  0x01 0x09 0x02 'i'  'n'  't'  'e'  'n'  'd'  'e'  'd'  'r'  'e'  'c'  'e'  'i'  'v'
448  'e'  'r'  '@'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  0x00 0x02 'h'  't'
449  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'
450  'c'  'c'  '1'  0x00 'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'
451  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  '2'  0x00 'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'
452  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  '3'  0x00 0x01
453  0x03 0x02 'r'  'e'  's'  'o'  'l'  'v'  'e'  'r'  '@'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'
454  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  0x00 0x02 'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'
455  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  '1'  0x00 'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'
456  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  '2'
457  0x00  'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'
458  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  '3'  0x00 0x01 0x03 0x02 'r'  'e'  's'  'o'  'l'  'v'  'e'
459  'r'  '@'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  0x00 0x02 'h'  't'  't'
460  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'
461  'c'  '1'  0x00 'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'
462  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  '2'  0x00 'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'
463  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'  '3'  0x00 0x01 0x01
464  0x0a  'h'  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'
465  'c'  'c'  0x00 0x20 0x31 0x11 0x06 0x19 0x15 0x37 0x62 0x59 0x20 0x02 'h'  't'  't'
466  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'f'  'o'  'o'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'
467  'c'  0x00 0x03 '1'  '2'  '3'  '4'  '5'  '6'  '7'  '8'  '9'  0x00 0x01 0x01 0x04 'h'
468  't'  't'  'p'  ':'  '/'  '/'  'b'  'a'  'r'  '.'  'c'  'o'  'm'  '/'  'a'  'c'  'c'
469  0x00  0x01

```

471        The length of the original message is about 2360 bytes and the encoded result is 475 bytes giving a compression  
472        ratio of about 5:1.  
473

## 474 5 Informative Annex B — ChangeLog

### 475 5.1 2002/11/01 – version C by TC X2S

476 Entire document: Removed encrypted field  
477 **Page 4, line 159:** **Added optional UserDefinedParameter to the ReceivedObject**  
478 **Page 4, line 202:** **Changed the identifier byte of the UserDefinedParameter from 0x04 to 0x05**  
479 **Page 4, line 210:** **Added signs to BinDateTimeToken**  
480 Page 7, lines 281-464: Moved Section 3 to Informative Annex A  
481