Appendix D

Repertoire: Clicks and Stops

As noted in section \_\_\_, the Latin alphabet is used for an enormous number of languages; far more than any other writing system. The reason for this is well known: When Europeans (colonizers and missionaries) encountered native languages which had no writing system, they used symbols from the alphabet that they were familiar with to render the phonemes of those languages. That worked fine, as long as the phonemes were at least roughly similar to those in the European languages which they knew.

But some native languages also included other phonemes such as clicks (dental, labial, uvular, etc.) and stops (glottal, velar, etc.). For those, the Europeans had no immediately available symbols. The solution that they came up with was to use symbols other than the basic Latin letters. For example:

ǀ U01C0 LATIN LETTER DENTAL CLICK

ǁ U01C1 LATIN LETTER LATERAL CLICK

ǂ U01C2 LATIN LETTER ALVEOLAR CLICK

ǃ U01C3 LATIN LETTER RETROFLEX CLICK

ɂ U0242 LATIN SMALL LETTER GLOTTAL STOP

ʻ U02BB MODIFIER LETTER TURNED COMMA

ꞌ U2019 MODIFIER LETTER APOSTROPHE

Often, as you can see, sometimes those symbols were ones whıch were already readıly avaılable to them, beıng punctuatıon marks from theır own language (or, in Unıcode, variants of them). One can argue about the wısdom of this approach. But regardless of ıts merits, that ıs the realıty that we have to deal wıth today.

RFC mmmm (“<title>”) specifically DISALLOWs the use of punctuation marks in domain names. We have followed that mandate, both in developing our repertoire and in the recommendation we have made ([email subject line and date]) for adding click and stop symbols to MSR. However it must be said that the ban on these symbols is simple an example of the kind of ethnocentric blindness that the project for Internationalization of Domain Names is intended to redress. The IETF might want to take another look at the subject, in order that the IDN can be done right.