

# Conversion to execution encoding should not lead to loss of meaning

Document #: D1854R0  
Date: 2019-08-18  
Project: Programming Language C++  
Audience: SG-16, EWG  
Reply-to: Corentin Jabot <[corentin.jabot@gmail.com](mailto:corentin.jabot@gmail.com)>

*It's just semantic! - Keolin Henney*

## 1 Abstract

The current wording does not guarantee that sequences of characters will be preserved by compilation, which reduces the portability and reliability of C++ source code.

## 2 Motivation

Implementation defined behaviors related conversion to execution encoding reduce the portability of C++ program, and lead to silently incorrect programs as implementation are allowed to modify the characters they cannot represent in the execution encoding. Strings are text which carries intent and meaning; An implementation should not be able to alter that meaning.

## 3 Impact on the standard and implementations

This constitute a breaking change in the wording, as well as some implementations(MSVC) and matches other existing implementations. However, the code that would break would not be code that matches the developer intent.

## 4 Proposed wording

Modify 5.2.5 as follow

Each basic source character set member in a character literal or a string literal, as well as each escape sequence and universal-character-name in a character literal or a non-raw string literal, is converted to the corresponding member of the execution character set ([lex.ccon], [lex.string]); if there is no corresponding member, ~~it is converted to an implementation-defined member other than the null (wide) character~~ the program is ill-formed.

Modify 5.13.3.2 as follow

A character literal that does not begin with `u8`, `u`, `U`, or `L` is an *ordinary character literal*. An ordinary character literal that contains a single *c-char* representable in the execution character set has type `char`, with value equal to the numerical value of the encoding of the *c-char* in the execution character set. An ordinary character literal that contains more than one *c-char* is a *multicharacter literal*. A multicharacter literal, ~~or an ordinary character literal containing a single *c-char* not representable in the execution character set~~, is conditionally-supported, has type `int`, and has an implementation-defined value. An ordinary character literal containing a single *c-char* not representable in the execution character set is ill-formed.

Modify 5.13.3.6 as follow

A character literal that begins with the letter `L`, such as `L'z'`, is a wide-character literal. A wide-character literal has type `wchar_t`. The value of a wide-character literal containing a single *c-char* has value equal to the numerical value of the encoding of the *c-char* in the execution wide-character set, unless the *c-char* has no representation in the execution wide-character set, in which case the ~~value is implementation-defined~~ program is ill-formed. [*Note*: The type `wchar_t` is able to represent all members of the execution wide-character set (see ??). — *end note*] The value of a wide-character literal containing multiple *c-chars* is implementation-defined.

Modify 5.13.3.8 as follow

The escape `\ooo` consists of the backslash followed by one, two, or three octal digits that are taken to specify the value of the desired character. The escape `\xhhh` consists of the backslash followed by `x` followed by one or more hexadecimal digits that are taken to specify the value of the desired character. There is no limit to the number of digits in a hexadecimal sequence. A sequence of octal or hexadecimal digits is terminated by the first character that is not an octal digit or a hexadecimal digit, respectively.

~~The value of a character literal is implementation-defined if it falls outside of the implementation-defined range defined for `char` (for character literals with no prefix) or `wchar_t` (for character literals prefixed by `L`).~~

~~[*Note*: If the value of a character literal prefixed by `u`, `u8`, or `U` is outside the range defined for its type, the program is ill-formed. — *end note*]~~

If the value of a character literal is outside the range defined for its type, the program is ill-formed.

## 5 References

Richard Smith *Working Draft, Standard for Programming Language C++*  
<https://wg21.link/n4830>