Common Elements of Generic String Encoding Rules (GSER) Encodings

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Abstract

The Generic String Encoding Rules (GSER) describe a human readable text encoding for an Abstract Syntax Notation One (ASN.1) value of any ASN.1 type. Specifications making use of GSER may wish to provide an equivalent Augmented Backus-Naur Form (ABNF) description of the GSER encoding for a particular ASN.1 type as a convenience for implementors. This document supports such specifications by providing equivalent ABNF for the GSER encodings for ASN.1 types that commonly occur in Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) syntaxes.

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1. Introduction

The Generic String Encoding Rules (GSER) [7] define a human readable text encoding, based on ASN.1 [8] value notation, for an ASN.1 value of any ASN.1 type. Specifications making use of GSER may wish to provide a non-normative equivalent ABNF [3] description of the GSER encoding for a particular ASN.1 type as a convenience for implementors unfamiliar with ASN.1. This document supports such specifications by providing equivalent ABNF for the GSER encodings for ASN.1 types that commonly occur in LDAP [10] or X.500 [11] attribute and assertion syntaxes, as well as equivalent ABNF for the GSER encodings for the ASN.1 built-in types.

The ABNF given in this document does not replace or alter GSER in any way. If there is a discrepancy between the ABNF specified here and the encoding defined by GSER [7], then GSER is to be taken as definitive.

2. Conventions

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", and "MAY" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP 14, RFC 2119 [1]. The key word "OPTIONAL" is exclusively used with its ASN.1 meaning.

3. Separators

Certain separators are commonly used in constructing equivalent ABNF for SET and SEQUENCE types.

   sp = *%x20 ; zero, one or more space characters
   msp = 1*%x20 ; one or more space characters
   sep = [ "", ]

The <sep> rule is used in the ABNF description of the encoding for ASN.1 SET or SEQUENCE types where all the components are either OPTIONAL or DEFAULT. It encodes to an empty string if and only if the immediately preceding character in the encoding is "{", i.e., it is only empty for the first optional component actually present in the SET or SEQUENCE value being encoded.

4. ASN.1 Built-in Types

This section describes the GSER encoding of values of the ASN.1 built-in types, except for the restricted character string types.
The <BIT-STRING> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the
BIT STRING type without a named bit list.

BIT-STRING = bstring / hstring

If the number of bits in a BIT STRING value is a multiple of four the
<hstring> form of <BIT-STRING> MAY be used. Otherwise, the <bstring>
form of <BIT-STRING> is used. The <bstring> rule encodes each bit as
the character "0" or "1" in order from the first bit to the last bit.
The <hstring> rule encodes each group of four bits as a hexadecimal
number where the first bit is the most significant. An odd number of
hexadecimal digits is permitted.

hstring = squote *hexadecimal-digit squote %x48 ; '...'H

hexadecimal-digit = %x30-39 / ; "0" to "9"
               %x41-46 ; "A" to "F"

bstring = squote *binary-digit squote %x42 ; '...'B

binary-digit = "0" / "1"

squote = %x27 ; ' (single quote)

The <BOOLEAN> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the
BOOLEAN type.

BOOLEAN = %x54.52.55.45 / ; "TRUE"
         %x46.41.4C.53.45  ; "FALSE"

The <CHARACTER-STRING> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of
the associated type for the unrestricted CHARACTER STRING type.

CHARACTER-STRING = "{" sp id-identification msp Identification "",
                        sp id-data-value msp OCTET-STRING
                        sp "}"

id-identification = %x69.64.65.6E.74.69.66.69.63.61.74.69.6F.6E
                     ; "identification"

id-data-value = %x64.61.74.61.2D.76.61.6C.75.65 ; "data-value"

Identification = ( id-syntaxes ":" Syntaxes ) /
                ( id-syntax ":" OBJECT-IDENTIFIER ) /
                ( id-presentation-context-id ":" INTEGER ) /
                ( id-context-negotiation ":" ContextNegotiation ) /
                ( id-transfer-syntax ":" OBJECT-IDENTIFIER ) /
                ( id-fixed ":" NULL )
id-syntaxes = %x73.79.6E.74.61.78.65.73
             ; "syntaxes"

id-syntax = %x73.79.6E.74.61.78 ; "syntax"

id-presentation-context-id = %x70.72.65.73.65.6E.74.61.74.69.6F.6E
                            %x2D.63.6F.6E.74.65.78.74.2D.69.64
                            ; "presentation-context-id"

id-context-negotiation = %x63.6F.6E.74.65.78.74.2D.6E.65.67.6F
                         %x74.69.61.74.69.6F.6E
                         ; "context-negotiation"

id-transfer-syntax = %x74.72.61.6E.73.66.65.72.73.79.6E
                     %x74.61.78 ; "transfer-syntax"

id-fixed = %x66.69.78.65.64 ; "fixed"

Syntaxes = "{" sp id-abstract msp OBJECT-IDENTIFIER ","
           sp id-transfer msp OBJECT-IDENTIFIER
           sp "}"

id-abstract = %x61.62.73.74.72.61.63.74 ; "abstract"

id-transfer = %x74.72.61.6E.73.66.65.72 ; "transfer"

ContextNegotiation = "{" sp id-presentation-context-id msp
                     INTEGER ","
                     sp id-transfer-syntax msp
                     OBJECT-IDENTIFIER
                     sp "}"

The <INTEGER> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the
INTEGER type without a named number list. The <INTEGER-0-MAX> rule
describes the GSER encoding of values of the constrained type INTEGER
(0..MAX). The <INTEGER-1-MAX> rule describes the GSER encoding of
values of the constrained type INTEGER (1..MAX).

INTEGER         = "0" / positive-number / ("-" positive-number)
INTEGER-0-MAX   = "0" / positive-number
INTEGER-1-MAX   = positive-number
positive-number = non-zero-digit *decimal-digit
decimal-digit   = %x30-39 ; "0" to "9"
non-zero-digit  = %x31-39 ; "1" to "9"

The <EMBEDDED-PDV> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the
associated type for the EMBEDDED PDV type.

EMBEDDED-PDV = "{" sp id-identification msp Identification ","
               sp id-data-value msp OCTET-STRING
               sp "}"

The <EXTERNAL> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the
associated type for the EXTERNAL type.
EXTERNAL = "{" [ sp id-direct-reference msp
    OBJECT-IDENTIFIER ","," ]
[ sp id-indirect-reference msp INTEGER ","," ]
[ sp id-data-value-descriptor msp
    ObjectDescriptor ","," ]
sp id-encoding msp Encoding
sp "}""

id-direct-reference = %x64.69.72.65.63.74.2D.72.65.66.65.72
%x65.6E.63.65
; "direct-reference"

id-indirect-reference = %x69.6E.64.69.72.65.63.74.2D.72.65.66
%x65.72.65.6E.63.65
; "indirect-reference"

id-data-value-descriptor = %x61.74.61.2D.76.61.6C.75.65.2D.64
%x65.73.63.72.69.70.74.6F.72
; "data-value-descriptor"

id-encoding = %x65.6E.63.6F.64.69.6E.67
; "encoding"

Encoding = ( id-single-ASN1-type ":" Value ) / 
( id-octet-aligned ":" OCTET-STRING ) / 
( id-arbitrary ":" BIT-STRING )

id-single-ASN1-type = %x73.69.6E.67.6C.65.2D.41.53.4E.31.2D.74.79
%x70.65
; "single-ASN1-type"

id-octet-aligned = %x6F.63.74.65.74.2D.61.6C.69.67.6E.65.64
; "octet-aligned"

id-arbitrary = %x61.72.62.69.74.72.61.72.79
; "arbitrary"

The <Value> rule is defined by GSER [7]. It represents the GSER
encoding of a single value of the ASN.1 type identified by the
direct-reference and/or indirect-reference components.

The <NULL> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the NULL
type.

NULL = %x4E.55.4C.4C  ; "NULL"

The <OBJECT-IDENTIFIER> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of
the OBJECT IDENTIFIER type.

OBJECT-IDENTIFIER = numeric-oid / descr
numeric-oid = oid-component 1* { "." oid-component }
oid-component = "0" / positive-number
An OBJECT IDENTIFIER value is encoded using either the dotted decimal representation or an object descriptor name, i.e., <descr>. The <descr> rule is described in RFC 2252 [4]. An object descriptor name is potentially ambiguous and should be used with care.

The <OCTET-STRING> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the OCTET STRING type.

```
OCTET-STRING = hstring
```

The octets are encoded in order from the first octet to the last octet. Each octet is encoded as a pair of hexadecimal digits where the first digit corresponds to the four most significant bits of the octet. If the hexadecimal string does not have an even number of digits, the four least significant bits in the last octet are assumed to be zero.

The <REAL> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the REAL type.

```
REAL = "0" ; zero
/ PLUS-INFINITY ; positive infinity
/ MINUS-INFINITY ; negative infinity
/ realnumber ; positive base 10 REAL value
/ ( "-" realnumber ) ; negative base 10 REAL value
/ real-sequence-value ; non-zero base 2 or 10 REAL value
```

```
PLUS-INFINITY = %x50.4C.55.53.2D.49.4E.46.49.4E.49.54.59 ; "PLUS-INFINITY"
```

```
MINUS-INFINITY = %x4D.49.4E.55.53.2D.49.4E.46.49.4E.49.54.59 ; "MINUS-INFINITY"
```

```
realnumber = mantissa exponent
mantissa = (positive-number [ "." *decimal-digit ])
/ ( "0." *("0") positive-number )
exponent = "E" ( "0" / ([ "-" ] positive-number))
```

```
real-sequence-value = "{" sp id-mantissa msp INTEGER "," sp id-base msp ( "2" / "10" ) "," sp id-exponent msp INTEGER sp "}"
```

```
id-mantissa = %x6D.61.6E.74.69.73.73.61 ; "mantissa"
id-base = %x62.61.73.65 ; "base"
id-exponent = %x65.7B.70.6F.6E.65.6E.74 ; "exponent"
```

A value of the REAL type MUST be encoded as "0" if it is zero.
The `<RELATIVE-OID>` rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the RELATIVE-OID type.

\[
\text{RELATIVE-OID} = \text{oid-component} \ast ( \text{"." oid-component} )
\]

5. ASN.1 Restricted String Types

This section describes the GSER encoding of values of the ASN.1 restricted character string types. The characters of a value of a restricted character string type are always encoded as a UTF-8 character string between double quotes. For some of the ASN.1 string types, this requires a translation to or from the UTF-8 encoding. Some of the ASN.1 string types permit only a subset of the characters representable in UTF-8. Any double quote characters in the character string, where allowed by the character set, are escaped by being repeated.

The `<UTF8String>` rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the UTF8String type. The characters of this string type do not require any translation before being encoded.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{UTF8String} &= \text{StringValue} \\
\text{StringValue} &= \text{dquote} \ast \text{SafeUTF8Character} \text{dquote} \\
\text{dquote} &= \%x22 \text{ ; " (double quote)} \\
\text{SafeUTF8Character} &= \%x00-21 / \%x23-7F / ; \text{ASCII minus dquote} \\
& \quad \text{dquote dquote / ; escaped double quote} \\
& \quad \%xC0-DF \%x80-BF / ; 2 \text{ byte UTF-8 character} \\
& \quad \%xE0-EF 2(\%x80-BF) / ; 3 \text{ byte UTF-8 character} \\
& \quad \%xF0-F7 3(\%x80-BF) ; 4 \text{ byte UTF-8 character}
\end{align*}
\]

The `<NumericString>`, `<PrintableString>`, `<VisibleString>`, `<ISO646String>`, `<IA5String>`, `<GeneralizedTime>` and `<UTCTime>` rules describe the GSER encoding of values of the correspondingly named ASN.1 types. The characters of these string types are compatible with UTF-8 and do not require any translation before being encoded. The GeneralizedTime and UTCTime types use the VisibleString character set, but have a strictly defined format.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{NumericString} &= \text{dquote} \ast (\text{decimal-digit} / \text{space}) \text{dquote} \\
\text{space} &= \%x20
\end{align*}
\]
PrintableString = dquote *PrintableCharacter dquote
PrintableCharacter = decimal-digit / space
                 / %x41-5A ; A to Z
                 / %x61-7A ; a to z
                 / %x27-29 ; ’ ( )
                 / %x2B-2F ; + , - . /
                 / %x3A    ; :
                 / %x3D    ; =
                 / %x3F    ; ?

ISO646String = VisibleString
VisibleString = dquote *SafeVisibleCharacter dquote
SafeVisibleCharacter = %x20-21
                    / %x23-7E ; printable ASCII minus dquote
                    / dquote dquote ; escaped double quote

IA5String = dquote *SafeIA5Character dquote
SafeIA5Character = %x00-21 / %x23-7F ; ASCII minus dquote
                    / dquote dquote ; escaped double quote

century = 2(%x30-39) ; "00" to "99"
year = 2(%x30-39) ; "00" to "99"
month = ( %x30 %x31-39 ) ; "01" (January) to "09"
        / ( %x31 %x30-32 ) ; "10" to "12"
day = ( %x30 %x31-39 ) ; "01" to "09"
      / ( %x31-32 %x30-39 ) ; "10" to "29"
    / ( %x32 %x30-31 ) ; "30" to "31"
hour = ( %x30-31 %x30-39 ) / ( %x31 %x30-33 ) ; "00" to "23"
minute = %x30-35 %x30-39 ; "00" to "59"
second = ( %x30-35 %x30-39 ) ; "00" to "59"
        / ( %x36 %x30 ) ; "60" (a leap second)

UTCTime = dquote year month day hour minute [ second ]
          [ %x5A / u-differential ] dquote
u-differential = ( "-" / "+" ) hour minute

GeneralizedTime = dquote century year month day hour
                 [ minute [ second ] ] [ fraction ]
                 [ %x5A / g-differential ] dquote
fraction = ( "." / "," ) 1*(%x30-39)
g-differential = ( "-" / "+" ) hour [ minute ]

The <BMPString> and <UniversalString> rules describe the GSER encoding of values of the BMPString and UniversalString types respectively. BMPString (UCS-2) and UniversalString (UCS-4) values are translated into UTF-8 [6] character strings before being encoded according to <StringValue>.
BMPString = StringValue
UniversalString = StringValue

The <TeletexString>, <T61String>, <VideotexString>, <GraphicString>,
<GeneralString> and <ObjectDescriptor> rules describe the GSER
encoding of values of the correspondingly named ASN.1 types. Values
of these string types are translated into UTF-8 character strings
before being encoded according to <StringValue>. The
ObjectDescriptor type uses the GraphicString character set.

TeletexString = StringValue
T61String = StringValue
VideotexString = StringValue
GraphicString = StringValue
GeneralString = StringValue
ObjectDescriptor = GraphicString

6. Directory ASN.1 Types

This section describes the GSER encoding of values of selected ASN.1
types defined for LDAP and X.500. The ABNF rule names beginning with
uppercase letters describe the GSER encoding of values of the ASN.1
type with the same name.

AttributeType = OBJECT-IDENTIFIER

The characters of a DirectoryString are translated into UTF-8
characters as required before being encoded between double quotes
with any embedded double quotes escaped by being repeated.

DirectoryString = StringValue /
  ( id-teletexString "$" TeletexString ) /
  ( id-printableString "$" PrintableString ) /
  ( id-bmpString "$" BMPString ) /
  ( id-universalString "$" UniversalString ) /
  ( id-uTF8String "$" UTF8String )

id-teletexString = %x74.65.6C.65.74.65.78.53.74.72.69.6E.67
  ; "teletexString"

id-printableString = %x70.72.69.6E.74.61.62.6C.65
  %x53.74.72.69.6E.67 ; "printableString"

id-bmpString = %x62.6D.70.53.74.72.69.6E.67 ; "bmpString"

id-universalString = %x75.6E.69.76.65.72.73.61.6C
  %x53.74.72.69.6E.67 ; "universalString"

id-uTF8String = %x75.54.46.38.53.74.72.69.6E.67
  ; "uTF8String"
The <RDNSequence> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the RDNSequence type, which is syntactically equivalent to the DistinguishedName and LocalName types. The <RDNSequence> rule encodes a name as an LDAPDN character string between double quotes. The character string is first derived according to the <distinguishedName> rule in Section 3 of RFC 2253 [5], and then it is encoded between double quotes with any embedded double quotes escaped by being repeated.

\[
\text{DistinguishedName} = \text{RDNSequence} \\
\text{LocalName} = \text{RDNSequence} \\
\text{RDNSequence} = \text{dquote} *\text{SafeUTF8Character} \text{dquote}
\]

The <RelativeDistinguishedName> rule describes the GSER encoding of values of the RelativeDistinguishedName type that are not part of an RDNSequence value. The <RelativeDistinguishedName> rule encodes an RDN as a double quoted string containing the RDN as it would appear in an LDAPDN character string. The character string is first derived according to the <name-component> rule in Section 3 of RFC 2253 [5], and then any embedded double quote characters are escaped by being repeated. This resulting string is output between double quotes.

\[
\text{RelativeDistinguishedName} = \text{dquote} *\text{SafeUTF8Character} \text{dquote}
\]

The <ORAddress> rule encodes an X.400 address as an IA5 character string between double quotes. The character string is first derived according to Section 4.1 of RFC 2156 [2], and then any embedded double quotes are escaped by being repeated. This resulting string is output between double quotes.

\[
\text{ORAddress} = \text{dquote} *\text{SafeIA5Character} \text{dquote}
\]

7. Security Considerations

This document contains an alternative description of parts of the Generic String Encoding Rules, but does not replace or alter GSER in any way. For the full security implications of using GSER, see the Security Considerations section for GSER [7].

8. References

8.1. Normative References


8.2. Informative References


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