

3.5 Private Use Area

The Private Use area of the Unicode standard encodes area reserved for private use.

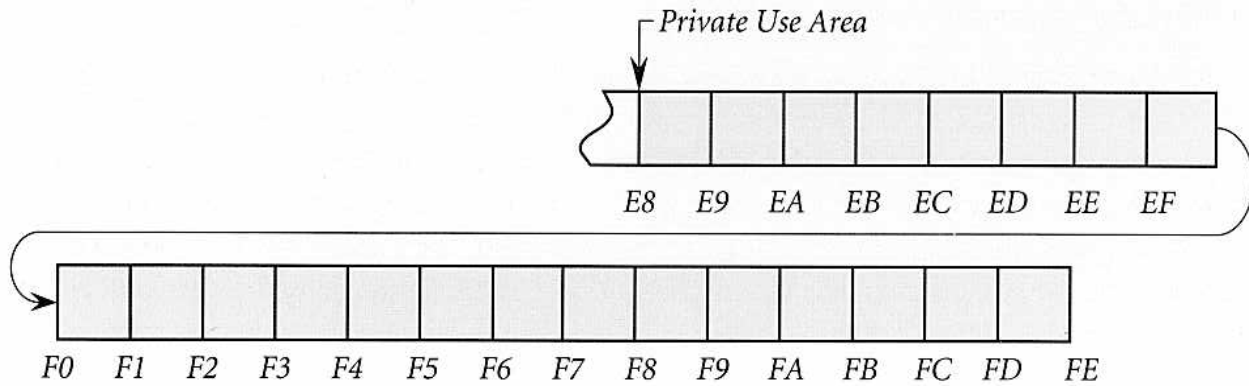


Figure 3-13. Private Use Area

Private Use Area U+E800 → U+FDFF

The Private Use Area is reserved for use by software developers and end users who need a special set of characters for their application programs. The code points in this area are reserved for private use and do not have defined, interpretable semantics except by private agreement.

Corporate Use Zone. Systems vendors and/or software developers may need to reserve some private use characters for internal use by their software. The Corporate Use Zone is the preferred area for such reservations. Assignments of character semantics in this zone could be completely internal, hidden from the end users, and used only for vendor-specific application support, or could be published as vendor-specific character assignments available to applications and end users. An example of the former case would be assignment of a character code to a system support operation such as <MOVE> or <COPY>; an example of the latter case would be assignment of a character code to a vendor-specific logo character such as Apple's *apple* character.

End User Zone. The End User Zone is intended for private use character definition by end users, or for scratch allocations of character space by end user applications.

Allocation of Zones. Vendors may choose to reserve private use codes in the Corporate Use Zone and make some defined portion of the End User Zone available for completely free end user definition. This convention is for the convenience of system vendors and software developers. No firm dividing line between the two zones is defined, as different users may have different requirements. No provision is made in the Unicode standard for avoiding a “stack-heap collision” between the two zones in the Private Use Area.

Promotion of Private Use Characters. In future versions of the Unicode standard, some characters which have been defined by one vendor or another in the Corporate Use Zone may be defined as regular Unicode characters, if their usage is widespread enough that they become candidates for general use. Likewise, some well-defined set of characters (such as an ancient script) may be used by private agreement in the End User Zone and later be proposed for formal inclusion as a defined block in normal Unicode character code space.

These possibilities are to be distinguished from the treatment of characters defined in the Compatibility Zone.

Encoding Structure. The Private Use Area is divided into the following ranges:

U+E800 → U+FDFF Reserved for private use

By convention, the Private Use Area is divided into a Corporate Use Zone, starting at U+FDFF and extending downward in values, and an End User Zone, starting at U+E800 and extending upward in values.