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| Title: LOON –  Line Oriented Object Notation |

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# LOON – Line Oriented Object Notation

LOON is a simple file format for configuration data. It is intended to be easy for both humans and machines to read and write. It is a stripped-down form of JSON, that ends up looking similar to the format used by HTTP, SMTP etc.

An example LOON message is as follows:

# Some fake details about me

com.codalogic.aboutme {

Name: Pete

Height: 178

DoB: 1969-04-18

Children [

{

Name: Sarah

Height: 170

}

{

Name: Jenny

Height: 144

}

]

Grades [

A

B

C

]

PlaceOfBirth: " string with leading spaces! "

History <<END

Born a long time again

in a galaxy far, far away.

<<END

}

The ABNF is as follows (note that LOON is encoded in UTF-8 or US-ASCII. This ABNF is written in terms of bytes, not Unicode codepoints):

loon = preamble [ object-body / object / array ]

[ eol ]

preamble = \*( ( ows / comment ) eol )

comment = ows "#" \*not-eol

object-body = object-line \*( eol object-line )

object-line = comment / object-member

object-member = ows full-name ows value

full-name = [ realm "." ] name

realm = name \*( "." name )

name = ALPHA \*( ALPHA / DIGIT / "-" / "\_" )

value = object / array / multiline-string /

primitive-spec / null1

object = "{" eol [ object-body eol ] ows "}"

array = "[" eol [ array-body eol ] ows "]"

array-body = array-line \*( eol array-line )

array-line = array-member ; Comments not allowed

array-member = comment / ows value

primitive-spec = ":" ows primitive-value

primitive-value = null2 / true / false / number /

inline-string

null1 = "" ; Empty member value field indicates null

null2 = "\0"

true = true-kw

false = false-kw

; From RFC8259

number = [ minus ] int [ frac ] [ exp ]

decimal-point = %x2E ; .

digit1-9 = %x31-39 ; 1-9

e = %x65 / %x45 ; e E

exp = e [ minus / plus ] 1\*DIGIT

frac = decimal-point 1\*DIGIT

int = zero / ( digit1-9 \*DIGIT )

minus = %x2D ; -

plus = %x2B ; +

zero = %x30 ; 0

inline-string = naked-string / quoted-string

naked-string = \*char ; See notes on strings

quoted-string = quotation-mark \*char quotation-mark

multiline-string = "<<" name eol

\*( \*not-eol eol )

\*not-eol "<<" name

char = unescaped / escaped

unescaped = HTAB / %x20-5B / %x5D-FF

; not controls except TAB nor "\"

; N.B: quotation mark is NOT escaped

escaped = escape (

escape / ; \ i.e.: \\ -> \

; N.B. quotation-mark is NOT escaped

%x62 / ; b i.e.: \b -> backspace

%x66 / ; f i.e.: \f -> form feed

%x6E / ; n i.e.: \n -> line feed

%x72 / ; r i.e.: \r -> carriage return

%x74 / ; t i.e.: \t -> tab

%x75 (4HEXDIG / "{" 1\*6HEXDIG "}")

; \uXXXX or \u{XXXXXX} -> U+XXXX

escape = %x5C ; \

quotation-mark = %x22 ; "

eol = ows ( CR [ LF ] / LF )

not-eol = HTAB / %x20-FF

ows = \*WSP ; Optional white space

;; Keywords

true-kw = %x74.72.75.65 ; "true"

false-kw = %x66.61.6C.73.65 ; "false"

;; Referenced RFC 5234 Core Rules

ALPHA = %x41-5A / %x61-7A ; A-Z / a-z

CR = %x0D ; carriage return

DIGIT = %x30-39 ; 0-9

HEXDIG = DIGIT / "A" / "B" / "C" / "D" / "E" / "F"

HTAB = %x09 ; horizontal tab

LF = %x0A ; linefeed

SP = %x20 ; space

WSP = SP / HTAB ; white space

## String values

LOON string values need special treatment.

Leading and trailing whitespace of a string value will be automatically removed on parsing. If that whitespace is significant, make the string a quoted string by wrapping it in quotation marks, e.g.:

Description: " A string with leading whitespace "

Quotation marks within a quoted string are not escaped in any way:

Description: "A string with " marks in it"

A string must also be quoted if, after removing any whitespace from both ends of the string, any of the following apply:

* The string is a value in an array and consists solely of a single '{', '[' or ']' character
* The string is a value in an array and begins with a '<' character and matches the ABNF ("<<" name)
* The string is a value in an array and begins with a '#' character

For example:

# An object start

Example1 {

}

# A string consisting only of '{'

Example2: {

# The string "["

Example3: [

Example4 [

# A comment in an array

"# A string that starts with a comment marker"

] A string, not an array end

# The following is the string ] in an array

"]"

]

# Not an array start. It is an object-member value

Example5: [

Example6: << A simple-string, not a multiline-string

A multiline string begins with the "<<" HEREDOC marker followed by a name used to mark the end of the multiline string, e.g.:

LongMessage <<END

A message

that is long

goes here.<<END

Note that, unlike other HEREDOC formats, the end marker doesn't have to appear on its own line. It just needs to appear at the end of a line.

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**History**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Date | Change |
| A | 2 May 19 | Creation |
| B | 19 Nov 21 | Enable comments in arrays and clarify use of quoted strings for escaping |
|  |  |  |