

INTERPRETATION FOR TRUNCATING NUMERIC DATA ELEMENTS N AND R DATA TYPES

REQUEST:

There are various applications of the rules for truncating numeric data elements (N and R data types). ID, AN, and shortly DT and TM data types may also come under this scrutiny. By specifying the specific order in which rules are to be applied and citing difficult examples the entire EDI community might be helped.

EXAMPLE:

My example concerns R data types. Precision is the problem. In specifying chemistry for a batch of steel in the Report of Test Results Transaction Set (863), I had the need to represent .000 Phosphorous. This measurement is important to the receiver of the transaction set. We sent the information, but the receiver's translators dropped the information. After checking around it appears some translators may condense this element to a null value! Nulls and zero are very different! Every provider talked to thinks their product follows the rules as stated yet there are at least a few variations. Hard rules with examples would help to avoid these consistency problems across product lines.

RESPONSE:

In response to your request for interpretation of October 1991, X12C Communications and Controls subcommittee provides the following:

X12.6 Application Control Structures allows for the representation of precision in a numeric data element. Any given translation product may or may not support this functionality. What a translator does with a number with respect to formatting is outside the scope of X12.6.