## Code vs Code Item

Dan made the point at the previous meeting that C*ode* is a designation. Therefore the definition of a *Code* (as per the UML for the Specification layer) might be “F (Female)” where the definition of the *Code* might be read as “F designates the category ‘Female’”. The code in this definition is not just “The letter F”, the definition includes what is designated by “F”.

In Section II of the Specification Layer (the plain English documentation) para 83 says.

A *Code List*is also a type of *Concept System.* It isused for creating a group of *Codes* and their associated *Categories*. It can consist of one or more *Code Items.* A *Code* designates a *Category* providing representation to the meaning from the *Category. F*or example in "F - female", the *Code* is F and the *Category* is Female.

This reads to me that the *Code* is “F” and not “F (Female)”.

I interpret Dan as saying the UML is correct and Para 83, technically, is not. So, let’s assume the UML is correct. I still want to be clear from a business perspective whether I would want to manage *Code* separately from *Code Item*.

I can’t think of a particularly “official statistics” example off the top of my head, so let’s take “F (Ford)” as a *Code*. (F is the New York Stock Exchange for Ford).

I could have a number of different *Code Lists* with “F (Ford)” as a *Code Item*, eg

* Code List: US Fortune 500 companies
* Code List: Manufacturers of Pick-Up Trucks (worldwide)
* Code List: Companies that sell automobiles in the USA

While “F (Ford)” might be a *Code Item* in all three *Code Lists.* Each instance would be a different *Code Item* but would be the same *Code*. (In the case of the Motor Vehicle Census in Australia it is both a different *Code*, 1999999 (Ford) and a different *Code Item*.)

Other *Codes* might be used as *Code Item* in only one, or two, of the three *Code Lists*

I care about Ford as a Category, and I care about “F (Ford)” as a *Code Item* when I need to include it in a *Code List* but I am still not sure why I want to manage the *Code* “F (Ford)” as a separate business object.

If I particularly wanted to have recommended designations for categories then that could be an attribute of the *Category* itself, eg

* if you want to designate “Ford” by a code then “F” is recommended based on the NYSE designation

In general, I see managing attributes as “cheaper” than managing additional objects.

(I am not convinced there is even a business reason for this to be captured as an attribute - but if there is a business reason to capture it then attribute would be my preference at the moment.)