GEOGRAMS AND INTERNET LOGOLOGY

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Chappaqua, New York

In previous issues readers have been challenged to think of words which are composed of the two-letter state abbreviations, like RIME, PANE, and HIND. Recently, a new set of two-letter abbreviations has received widespread recognition, namely the country codes (International Standards Organization, document ISO 3166) that are used to identify locations of internet users. The ISO codes enable us to recognize that, for example, unige.it is the internet address of the Università degli Studi di Genova, Italy, while unige.ch is the Universitè de Genève, Switzerland. Words can be made from these two letter combinations, e.g. CHEESE (CH Switzerland, EE Estonia, SE Sweden), JOVIAL (JO Jordan, VI Virgin Islands, AL Albania), TOMATO (TO Tonga, MA Morocco), etc. We may then ask what the longest geogram is. The longest one I have found is STRONGARMS (ST Sao Tome and Principe, RO Romania, NG Nigeria, AR Argentina, MS Montserrat), but there are certainly longer ones to be found.

To aid in the search, here is a list of legal country codes. First letters are capitalized and second letters in lower case, so, for example, the first few entries are AD, AE, AF, AG, ...

Adefgilmnoqrstuwz Babdefghijmnorstvwyz Cacfghiklmnoruvxyxz
Dejkmoz Eceghst Fijkmor Gabdehilmnpqrtuwy Hkmnrtu Idelnoqrst
Jmop Keghimnprwyz Labcikrstuvy Macdghlmnopqrstuvwxyz
Nacefgiloprtuz Om Paefghklmnrtwy Qa Reouw Sabcdeghijlmnortuvyz
Tcdfghjkmnoprtvwz Uagmsyz Vaceginu Wfs Yeu Zamrw

This list shows signs of careless proofreading, for there are two countries with the code SL (Sierra Leone, Slovakia).