

## IEEE Standards Interpretations for IEEE Std 1003.2™-1992 IEEE Standard for Information Technology--Portable Operating System Interfaces (POSIX®)-- Part 2: Shell and Utilities

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### Interpretation Request #113

**Topic:** \$< macro evaluation **Relevant Clauses:** 6.2.7.7

Subclause 6.2.7.7 states, lines 607-610: In an inference rule, the \$< macro shall evaluate to the file name whose existence allowed the inference rule to be chosen for the target. In the .DEFAULT rule, the \$< macro shall evaluate to the current target name. The \$< macro shall be evaluated only for inference rules. What does it mean to "be evaluated only for inference rules"? There seems to be a contradiction since the 2nd last sentence describes the behaviour for the .DEFAULT rule, but .DEFAULT is not an inference rule. How should one interpret this apparent contradiction? What happens to \$< in rules that are not inference or .DEFAULT? Should \$< remain a literal string (e.g "\$<") or should it be treated as an empty string "" (as is done in some historical makes) or are alternate implementation defined behaviours allowed (e.g some non-USL based makes, such as from MKS and GNU, substitutes \$< to be the list of all the prerequisites) Thank you for your attention to this matter.

### Interpretation Response

As has been pointed out, the standard contains a contradiction for the \$< macro and no conformance distinction can be made between alternative implementations based on this. This is being referred to the sponsor.

### Rationale for Interpretation

None.