Comments received for the MEEK CWA

Apostolos Syropoulos, 15.6.2009

Dear Madam/Sir,

I have skimmed through the draft CWA on 'Functional multilingual extensions to European keyboard layouts' and I have noticed on page 20 that the "FiveScripts Keyboard" includes support for the Hebrew script but not full support for rhe Greek script! First of all, it is obvious that Hebrew is not a European script but I guess if one insists to include it, then why not include the Arabic script as well? So, I believe the Hebrew script should be removed. Next, when I say that the Greek is not fully supported, I mean that as it stands one cannot write polytonic Greek. Sure monotonic Greek is the official "script" in Greece and Cyprus, nevertheless, thousand even millions of books, papers, articles, etc. have been written in the polytonic "script". So, it is more than necessary to include support for polytonic Greek.

Sincerely,

Apostolos Syropoulos

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Albrecht Dreiheller, 18.6.2009

Dear CEN Workshop,

on page 19 of the draft PDF file
http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/businessdomains/businessdomains/isss/meekcwa08062009ekml.pdf, the second table "The added diacritical marks ..." is ill-formatted.
In the lines starting with "Caron" and "Breve", the columns "Key" and "Letters" appear incomplete. The line-wrapped contents of the table fields is truncated.

With best regards,
Albrecht Dreiheller
Siemens AG, I DT MC

Albrecht Dreiheller, 6.7.2009

Dear Mr Kolehmainen,

when reviewing the Draft on Multilingual Extensions to European (Latin) Keyboard Layouts once again, I would like to give some comments.

1) In general: I consider the dead key method a reasonable approach to cover a large amount of composite characters. I have been using the Microsoft "US International" layout for many years, demanding me to type [SHIFT + Quote] [o] to get an ö character, for example. This doesn't make it easier to type my mother tongue, German, but it is quite easy to accustom oneself to it, and it gives me access to many other European characters which I need in my daily work.

2) LATIN CAPITAL LETTER I WITH DOT ABOVE.
I wonder whether it is acceptable for people typing Turkish and Azerbaijani input to have three of four versions of letter i to be typed in directly, i.e.
[i] yields U+0069 LATIN SMALL LETTER I
[SHIFT + i] yields U+0049 LATIN CAPITAL LETTER I
[AltGr + i] yields U+0131 LATIN SMALL LETTER DOTLESS I,
whereas the fourth version needs a dead key sequence, i.e. [AltGr+SHIFT+Full stop]
[SHIFT + i] yields U+0130 LATIN CAPITAL LETTER I WITH DOT ABOVE.

This might be confusing for those users, and to satisfy them, the suggestion is obvious to put this U+0130 onto the AltGr+SHIFT position of the Key [i], thus having all four versions spread on the four levels of the same key. Of course, this violates the principle of having as few additional letters on the keys as possible, especially not any composite letters that can be produced elsewhere. We note that the letters ø Ø ö Ö ä Ä å Å violate this principle, too. Balancing the pros and cons I would say it would be a reasonable exception to have the additional U+0130 on the AltGr+Shift position of the [i] key. Turkish writers will still be confused enough since they would expect to have U+0130 = SHIFT + U+0069 and U+0049 = SHIFT + U+0131, but this cannot be met without confusing all others.

3) Well-defined behaviour One bothering problem with current implementations of keyboard drivers for layouts with dead key method is that the result of a sequence that does not make any sense is undefined. For example, on the previously mentioned keyboard layout by Microsoft, "US International", a dead key is saved across some (not all) non-combining keys and re-appears later on. For example, ["] [a] yields [ä], as expected. To get the double quote itself, use ["] [Space]. But what happens if you type ["] [b] ? ==> This yields ["b]. Until here, everything is fine. However, ["] [Tab] or ["] [Enter] produce the control character, [Tab] resp. [Enter], and then

leave the dead key still waiting in internal buffers. So ["] [Tab] [i] yields [Tab] [ï], or [` ] [ Enter ] [ Enter ] [ Enter ] [ h ] yields [ Enter ] [ Enter ] [ Enter ] [ `h], so the grave accent is delayed to the beginning of the next word if the user enters some empty lines after accidentally hitting the grave accent key. The mentioned driver even keeps the diacritics alive across a [Backspace] key! Imagine the user wants to type the english word [for], but accidentally falls into Swedish which would be [för]. So he types a double quote to get this diaresis dead key, but after typing the double quote he notices his mistake and uses the backspace key to erase the dead key. Then the following happens: Typing [f] ["] [Backspace] [o] [r] yields [ör] since the Backspace key erases letter [f] but leaves the double quote in the dead key buffer.

Accidentally typing a dead key might even spoil entering passwords -- of course, the user is always in a hurry when entering his or her password. The base problem is that there is no feedback for the user that the IM is in "dead key mode".

This leads me to two suggestions:
- As an implementation rule the following must be assured: In any combination, the next key after a dead key
  [of course, with the exception of the Shift, Ctrl, Alt, and AltGr keys] must either
  a) produce a composite character,
  b) or make the dead key visible,
  c) or must silently cancel the dead key.
  The behaviour must be well defined, i.e. all implementations of the standard must behave the same.
- Whenever the hardware or software platform allows it, the pressing of a dead key should give a feed back to the user. For example, the nearly obsolete "Scroll Lock" feature has a LED on many common keyboards. This LED could be used to signal the state "dead key is active". A feedback on the screen might be even better.

With best regards,
Albrecht Dreiheller
Siemens AG, I DT MC, Germany

Mark Davis, 7.7.2009

Interesting. I was curious how serious the 5 scripts method was; also why Hebrew was included there; can you shed any light on those?

Mark

Martin-Éric Racine, 10.8.2009

Terve!

Sorry for not replying to this any sooner. The main issues I have are, in no particular order:

1) the Kotoistus keyboard layout didn't take into consideration existing extensions to the basic layout, such as those in the traditional Finnish X11 keyboard map, which had enjoyed a de-facto standard status for several years.
2) the additional symbols' placement was anything but practical or even logical, for those of us who actually need to use them. For instance, the çédille is something that looks like a comma and goes under the letter. The traditional Finnish X11 layout indeed provided this as a deadkey on the comma, which made perfect sense. The Kotoistus layout moved this somewhere else. Ditto for the macron accent that is needed for Latvian: the traditional Finnish X11 layout had it as a deadkey on the dash/underscore key and with good reason; it looks like some sort of a dash. Not anymore on the Kotoistus layout. There are many more like this one I noticed, back when I tried to adapt to the Kotoistus layout. In the end, I gave up, because the Kotoistus layout simply isn't practical for those of us who actually need the extra symbols.
3) the layout ignored interoperability with the our immediate Estonian neighbor, such as having Š and Ž via AltGr keys on the S and Z keycaps. Instead, it focused on maintaining compatibility with other Nordic layouts at all cost.
4) the same could be said for the placement of accents for Turkish and Vietnamese. Confusing and unpractical.
5) the current proposal doesn't take into consideration the possibility of adding Cyrillic symbols as a standard part of the Finnish layout, to be toggled via a standardized key, and yet, the Russian language has a far grater importance to Finland than e.g. Danish or Icelandic could ever have. Instead, the current proposal only brushes on what could become a standard input method for generating foreign glyphs. Personally, I would have loved to see a real proposal for implementing a YAWERTY layout as a standard secondary set of glyphs on the Finnish keyboard layout.

Those are just some of the issues that pop to mind.

Best Regards, Martin-Éric

Evgeniya Zhegova, 18.8.2009

DEAR PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS,

The development of this document is a result of an expert's hard work. In this regard I highly appreciate the efforts for production of CWA on MEEK. However, I would like to express some consideration on issues I noticed.

1. In relation to clause 2 Informative references - in my opinion the title should be changed. Taking into account that proposed document is a standardization document I think that more adequate to the document's content is a title Normative references instead of Informative.

2. In relation to Annex 2. Comparing the present draft with the draft submitted to internal comments (in March 2009}I noticed a new added annex 2 "A tentiative "Five Scripts Keyboard layout design". I personally doubt whether this annex has to be part of this document. Here are my arguments:

   - According to me proposed five scripts keyboard layout is an attempt to define a Pan-European keyboard layout , which is out of the scope of CWA on MEEK (referring to adopted last January business plan);
   - Proposed arrangement of Cyrillic characters differs from Cyrillic keyboard layout, which is currently in use in Bulgaria. Actually there is a national standard BDS 5237-78 "Keyboard arrangement for typewriters and calculating machines" (dated from 1978, but is still in force and in use for computer's keyboard layout).
   - Such a candidate for keyboard unification will cause difficulties and confusions among the users. I am not sure if a mentioned in Annex 2 "Five Scripts Keyboard layout design"is a user-friendly.
   - As I have noticed, probably Five Scripts Keyboard layout design is based on some phonetic similarity between Latin and Cyillic alphabet . However I have doubts as to applicability of a mechanism.

I hope my comments (and proposals) will be taken into consideration before final version of the CWA.

Evgeniya Zhegova
Editor at Publishing activity Unit
Bulgarian Institute for Standardization August 2009

Alain LaBonté, 2.9.2009

Dear all,

I just had a look at the draft that you will discuss tomorrow (http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/sectors/sectors/isss/activity/meekcwa20090707ta.pdf if I understood well). As I will be out for the everning I could not read it entirely but browsed through it perhaps too quickly.

However there are a certain number of assertions in this draft that are incorrect and that seem obvious about what is said on 9995-3 and on 9995-9 (btw, we also finished last week the SC35 WG1 and Plenary which took resolutions on keyboard standards evolution).

First the new 9995-3 has been revised to be minimally compatible with what is engraved on Canadian keyboards (we do not show all of 9995-3) and the rest has been deprecated to make sure that it is better workable (in particular to take into accoun the excellent work of Karl Pentzlin) [the only implementation affected would be the Microsoft Windows -- all versions -- keyboard drivers, but fixing this is easier than engraving new keyboards]). This new 9995-3 has been approved without comments after these modifications (no comment from European countries to which you all belong, nor from other countries, so it is difficult to understand why MEEK would find it so unsuitable at this point). It is going out now for FDIS ballot. It would be unfortunate that something be built in parallel that would be totally incompatible with this standard. That would create confusion forever.

Second 9995-9 is now an approved NP, it had been sent with a working draft, and there is certainly a schedule as the project has to produce results within a determined period so at to not be canceled by ISO. We should build on it instead of trying to work into another divergent direction.

Finally I personally doubt that any parallel project that does not respect national keyboards as a base would ever work (9995 respects this because attempts of doing one and only one keyboard, flavourless, has never worked -- the principle of cultural and linguistic adaptability requires to respect local customs, and not to impose a "one-size-fits-all" solution, it has been tried before). All solutions must respect national keyboards and national standards, and the current International Standard 9995 has long built on this wise principle.

I hope that these comments are taken into consideration before some damage be done. There are also other linguisitic needs outside Europe and these also need to be accomodated harmoniously (for example in Canada many aboriginal languages do not use

the Latin script, nor a small alphabet like other European scripts, but rather syllabic with a somewhat bigger number of characters -- that said without talking about other scripts of the world, some of which have peculiar properties).

Regards.

Alain LaBonté
Convenor, ISO/IEC SC35/WG1
Project Editor, ISO/IEC 9995 series (published in English and French)
(and co-editor with Karl Pentlzlin of new 9995-9)