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US National Body Contribution to the Meeting on Cooperation and Coordination on Cross-Cultural and Linguistic Matters - 2003-06-02/03

Resolution 22 in JTC1 N6927 includes the following:

JTC1 recommends this ad hoc meeting address the following agenda items:

- *Coordination of standards development for projects relating to cross-cultural and linguistic matters affecting SCs and ways of cooperation;*
- *Recommendations to JTC1 on the appropriate SC or joint SC work for development of related standards;*
- *Consideration of how to address these issues on an on-going basis (e.g., special working group, co-located meetings, joint working group) and ensure continuity by periodic review.*

The US National Body appreciates this opportunity in JTC1 to cooperate with other national bodies to develop a cross-SC process that results in useful world-wide standards. Well defined, appropriate and timely standards that address cultural and linguistic issues are crucial, and benefit the diverse cultures of this world. The US hopes that this contribution can assist in developing a process that benefits all stakeholders.

This submission addresses each of the agenda items in the above resolution.

I. Recommendations to JTC1 on the appropriate SC or joint SC work for development of related standards.

SC2/WG2

WG2 is a large and active working group. Its scope includes the standardization of graphic character sets and their characteristics, associated control functions, their coded representation for information interchange and code extension techniques.

The last two meetings (May 2002 and December 2002) were well attended, with 37 and 33 delegates participating respectively from a number of countries, including Republic of Korea, Japan, USA, Ireland, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China, Singapore, Canada, and Finland.

WG2 has two very active projects (parts of the same standard), both of which will be merged into a single project this year. The projects with SC2/WG2 will continue for some time, as writing systems of the world (both living and historical) continue to be added to 10646.

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Number	Description	Editor
02.18.01	ISO/IEC 10646-1: Information Technology – Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set (UCS) – Part 1: Architecture and Basic Multilingual Plane	Michel Suignard
02.18.02	ISO/IEC 10646-2: Information Technology – Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set (UCS) – Part 2: Supplemental Planes	Michel Suignard

Completed or near-completed projects within SC2/WG2 include:

- ISO/IEC 10646-1: 2000 (SC2N3411) –published
- ISO/IEC 10646-1: 2000/Amd 1 ([SC2N3588](#)) –published
- ISO/IEC 10646-1/Amd 2 –FDAM ballot stage
- ISO/IEC 10646-2: 2001 –published
- ISO/IEC 10646-2/Amd 1 –FDAM ballot stage
- ISO/IEC TR 15285: 1998 (Character Glyph Model) –published

While the project list is quite short, the amount of work still outstanding is considerable. As the Universal Character Set, IS 10646 is the fundamental standard for well-internationalized software. There is great interest in the UCS outside the internationalization IT community as well; IS 10646 is an often-cited standard, as noted in [WG20N1022](#). (This document also shows that other SC2 standards such as 8859, 2022, and 646 also are highly cited on the web.)

Given the high interest in developing the UCS, high participation levels and successful productivity of this SC, SC2/WG2 should continue working as it has in the past.

SC2/WG3

The SC2/WG3 focus is on 7 and 8-bit codes and their extensions. The final two items in the program of work are almost finished:

- Revision of ISO/IEC 8859-7 (Greek) which is ready for submittal to SC2 for further processing (FDIS).
- ISO 2375, a registry of coded character sets maintained by IPSJ/ITSCJ in Japan (FDIS).

SC22/WG20

WG20 presently has about 5 permanent participants – Norway, Canada, Korea, Germany and the USA. Depending on the meeting location, personal attendance varies between 4 and 6 delegates, with options for dial-in participation for subjects of specific interest. As an example, the last meeting in February 2003 had 3 countries represented, and 2-3 teleconferencing for limited parts of the meeting.

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WG20's project list is not very long, and the list of active projects is even shorter.

Number	Description	Editor(s)
22.13 completed	Amendment of TR 10176 Guidelines for the preparation of programming language standards	Akio Kido Makoto Noda
22.13.1 completed	Amendment #1 to TR 10176 Correction of Annex A	Arnold F. Winkler
22.13.2 completed	TR 10176 third edition	Arnold F. Winkler
22.13.3 completed	TR 10176 fourth edition	Marc Küster
22.30.01 completed	TR 11017: Framework for internationalization This project is completed	T.K. Sato Arnold F. Winkler
22.30.02.01 no output	Functionality of the internationalization of applications (umbrella project)	Keld Simonsen
22.30.02.02 completed	ISO/IEC 14651: International string ordering	Alain LaBonté
22.30.02.02.1 completed	ISO/IEC 14651: International string ordering, Amendment #1 for 10646-2	Alain LaBonté
22.30.02.02.2	ISO/IEC 14651: International string ordering, Amendment #2	Alain LaBonté
22.30.02.03 approved, ready for publication	ISO/IEC TR 14652: Specification method for cultural conventions	Keld Simonsen
22.15435 withdrawn	ISO/IEC 15435: Internationalization API	Keld Simonsen
22.15897	ISO/IEC 15897: Procedures for registration of cultural elements	Keld Simonsen

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From this project list one can see that the work of WG20 is almost completed. Most key deliverables are finished. At this time, only a few projects remain, most in the final stages. The following two projects are quickly nearing completion.

1. Publication of TR 14652 – Specification method for cultural conventions

This project is completed but not yet published. There are publication issues; ITTF does not like references to specific countries' objections to the technical content of the TR, as approved by the National Bodies in the DTR ballot.

ITTF has made a recommendation for how to resolve this situation ([SC22/WG20 N1016](#)) and WG20 has accepted the proposal. TR 14652 will be published soon.

2. Enhancement of the registration process in IS 15897 – Registration of cultural elements

The registration process of 15897 is being aligned with the registration process in ISO 2375 (which governs the registration of character sets). If the editor cooperates, the standard should be ready for FCD ballot in April 2003.

If the registration standard is approved, it is the job of the registration authority to perform their job according to the standard.

Once these two projects are completed (and this should happen in the very near future), there is only one project left in SC22/WG20 to address:

3. Continuing maintenance of IS 14651—International String Ordering

This remaining project will require on-going updates, since all characters in ISO/IEC 10646 must be accounted for in IS 14651.

The US's recommendation for the continued work in IS 14651 is to assign the maintenance of the "Common Template Table" to SC2/WG2. This recommendation also reflects the opinion of numerous National Bodies and the former convenor of SC22/WG20, Arnold Winkler.

Moving IS 14651 to SC2/WG2 and finishing the two outstanding projects listed above will close out the work in SC22/WG20.

II. Coordination of standards development for projects relating to cross-cultural and linguistic matters affecting SCs and ways of cooperation.

The major coordination project we see necessary is the outstanding work in IS 14651. We recommend that the maintenance of the table that drives culturally correct ordering from 14651 be assigned to SC2/WG2 for the following reasons:

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1. The participants in SC2/WG2 have a good working relationship with many experts (in both technical and linguistic specialties) working in multiple standards organizations and consortia. This results in good cross-pollination between standards, and areas of key cultural and linguistic importance are addressed across the IT industry in an appropriate, technically sound and timely manner. Successful collaborative efforts include:
 - the internationalized domain names specification (with the IETF)
 - the character-glyph model (with the W3C)
 - the implementation of 10646 in various programming and scripting languages (with ECMA)
 - the synchronization of the Unicode Standard and IS 10646 (with the Unicode Consortium)
 - input to CDSG (Cultural Diversity Steering Group) to help prepare a report on Internationalization technology addressing European localization requirements (with CEN)
2. The participants in SC2/WG2 are willing and able to take on the outstanding work in 14651 and continue to develop it, following the precedent set by the contributors in WG20.
3. Other advantages to moving IS 14651 to SC2/WG2 include:
 - The experts in character encoding are often also the experts in culturally correct ordering.
 - All sorting experts currently participating in WG20 are also in SC2/WG2 (e.g., Alain LaBonté, Keld Simonsen, Professor Kyongsok Kim, Ken Whistler, Marc Kuester). Additionally, SC2/WG2 can provide help for scripts not yet represented in WG20 through additional experts, e.g. John Clews, Kent Karlsson, Mark Davis, Markus Scherer, as well as other experts specializing in East Asian and Indic scripts.
 - Since SC2/WG2 already determines the character repertoire for IS 10646, the maintenance of the 14651 table is only a small additional task for the experts, The ordering table could be potentially approved faster by the process in SC2/WG2 than by the current mechanism within WG20 which meets only once every 9 months, often out of sync with WG2.
 - Moving IS 14651 out from under the SC22 umbrella frees up the subcommittee to focus their resources on their specialty: programming languages. However, SC2/WG2 would continue to work with SC22 in any areas that required expert input concerning the interaction of character sets and programming languages. (In the future, there will be a need for the SC22 WGs to cooperate with organizations such as the IETF, the Unicode Consortium and the W3C to address issues around identifiers. This cooperation will be especially important as the various SC22 standards all move towards using IS 10646 as their reference encoding.)

III. Consideration of how to address these issues on an on-going basis (e.g., special working group, co-located meetings, joint working group) and ensure continuity by periodic review.

SCs have a number of options for addressing the on-going work within the area of cultural and linguistic technologies. Two suggestions follow.

1. Meetings

- Numerous suggestions have been made for the co-location of this joint-SC meeting (e.g., with the JTC1 Plenary, with one of the various SC meetings). Given however the state of the world economy,

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the need for face-to-face meetings is dubious. Many committees successfully and economically accomplish work via teleconferences, e-mail and other collaborative technologies, meeting only when absolutely necessary.

- Participation by e-mail or telephone also allows for greater participation by those stakeholders who may not have the financial means to travel to and physically attend a meeting. If the true purpose of this work is to address world-wide technology matters, we should allow as much accessibility by as many cultural and linguistic interests as possible, and not just those who have the financial means to participate. Keeping costs down via teleconferencing and e-mail enables greater participation by a wider and more diverse range of people.
- However, if face-to-face meetings are indeed necessary, we believe they should be co-located with the meetings where the greatest number of (and the most active) stakeholders participate: SC2/WG2, for reasons discussed earlier.

2. *Meeting agendas*

- Meetings (in person or otherwise) should only be held when there is a well-defined need to meet. A complete and accurate meeting agenda is the best means to determine the need for a meeting, and meetings should only be held when there is an actual agenda, and written contributions. There should be some type of taxonomy to determine what qualifies as an agenda item, e.g.:
 - a. Work on an existing project
 - b. A complete and well-defined NP proposal
 - c. Transfer of work from one organization to another
- If these clearly-outlined criteria are not met, or there are no written contributions for agenda items, a definitive agenda is not established and the meeting should not take place.

The US National Body is pleased to have the opportunity to propose the recommendations in this contribution. We hope to participate at the meeting in Geneva and to represent our vision and ideas for the coordination of potential work on linguistic and cultural subjects. We also hope that many will join us in our proactive approach to electronic communication and virtual meetings, when required.