

Personal thoughts about the future of SC22/WG20 – Internationalization
for consideration by the SC22 plenary in Nara

From: Arnold F. Winkler (convenor)

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The following contribution to the SC22 plenary holds my very personal thoughts about the work of SC22/WG20 (Internationalization) and what I see as the best way to serve the programming language community in SC22.

I think, it is time to wrap up WG20's life.

WG20's most important work will hopefully be completed this fall:

- making the world aware of I18N in TR 11017
- carrying ISO 10646 and I18N into programming languages in TR 10176
- establishing a culturally correct sorting method for ISO 10646 encoded data in IS 14651

When we started working on these projects, and when we asked for projects for a cultural specification standard and an API standard, mainly using POSIX syntax, there was no other method on the market. This is not true any more, object orientation and Java, and the web, and W3C, and LINUX, and even Microsoft's I18N have changed the playing field for ever. WG20 "inherited" the CEN registration for cultural conventions as IS 15897, once again a bit late for the modern languages and implementations.

In my (and the US) opinion, WG20 should not do much more new development work. It could go away totally, when the sort standard is approved and when we have found good homes for the maintenance of the completed work.

I would not touch **TR 11017**, unless somebody makes a comprehensive contribution that covers the full extent of I18N technologies and requirements as presented in the marketplace today. The web, the proliferation of ISO 10646, access technologies for disabled persons in all countries - these are subjects that could, but don't NEED to be addressed in TR 11017, in case somebody has the time, resources, and interest to do a revision.

TR 10176 is fine, the amendments due to extended character repertoire (Annex A) could easily be done by SC2. That's where the experts are.

IS 14651, the sort standard, will also need amendments once it is approved, to keep up with the repertoire additions in ISO 10646. Again, it is the maintenance of the table and could/should be done by SC2.

The cultural elements stuff (specification, API, registry) is in my opinion outdated and most likely almost unnecessary. With lots of input from the US (Ken Whistler), and valuable additions from Japan (Takata), both 14652 and 15435 will get new drafts before the meeting in November in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

ISO/IEC 14652 is now a TR, and could be useful to the specific group it was defined for. However, the US is only interested in ensuring that compliance with this document is never a requirement for modern programming languages, such as Java.

Project **22.15435**, the API standard, should be withdrawn. There is no interest in the user community and the project has not seen a ballot document for 3 years.

One concern is the registry **ISO/IEC 15897** - DKUUG is the registration authority. I believe that no real standards work is needed, but good registration procedures need to be established. We are currently looking into the SC2 registration process for character sets - ISO 2375 is being distributed to WG20 as a template for a working process with all the ingredients: submission process (who - individuals, companies, NBs), review process (who, time), resolution of difficulties, etc... If we can get this set up correctly, the registry will be helpful, especially if it can be made available on the web.

And any additional work would be related to **character properties** - much better located in SC2 where we find all the experts. We had a short discussion in the last meeting and I was told that I had “no vision” for new work. I guess, this is right, but nobody else came up with anything either that fit into the WG20 scope. The UK pushed transliterations, the WAP pictograms came up, and user interfaces - none of which is within the knowledge base of WG20 and other subjects are already placed in other WGs in JTC1 or ISO or other SDOs.

There will be a meeting of the Technical Direction (CLAUI) for cultural and linguistic adaptability and user interfaces – October 19-20 in France. I will NOT be able to go there to represent WG20. This would be the best place to find competent homes for the maintenance of the WG20 completed work and agree on the registration process, at least in principle.

I would like to see WG20 :

- complete the sort standard ISO 14651
- find home(s) for the maintenance of its completed work (TR 11017, TR 10176, and sort), preferably in SC2
- agree on registration processes for the registration of cultural elements in ISO/IEC 15897 by adjusting the ISO 2375 process
- move the project TR 14652 for the specification of cultural conventions to SC22/WG15
- withdraw ISO 15435, the API standard
- and go out of business in about 1½ years.

This would mean for SC22:

- Agree with this plan in principle
- Encourage WG15 to take over TR 14652
- Withdraw project 22.15435
- Ask SC2 for specific support in the complex issues of character properties as they apply to identifiers in programming languages
- Move the maintenance of IS 14651 and TR 10176 to SC2 (provided SC2 agrees, e.g. at the CLAUI meeting)
- Dissolve SC22/WG20 when all above items are completed and the registry is operational.

Best regards
Arnold