# Title: UTC Liaison Report from WG2 #63, SC2 #19

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Action: For review by UTC, Unicode officers

SC2 and SC2/WG2 meetings were held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, September 29 – October 3, 2014. This document reports on select topics arising from these meetings that will be of interest for the Unicode Consortium.

For the complete WG2 outcomes, see L2/14-287 (= N4604).

## Progress on ISO/IEC 10646 amendments and new editions

During WG2 #63, DAM ballot comments were discussed for Amendment 1 to the fourth edition (ISO/IEC DIS 10646:2014), and also for a PDAM of Amendment 2 of the fourth edition.

There were no technical comments in the DAM ballot for Amendment 1. This amendment will proceed directly to publication.

A PDAM ballot for Amendment 2 to the fourth edition has been completed. While the ballot outcome was positive, the consensus in WG2 was to continue developing Amendment 2 with additional repertoire for further committee-level balloting. A new draft (PDAM2.2) has already been circulated for balloting; the ballot will close 2015-1-14. New target dates for this amendment are: DAM 2015-05, FDAM 2015-11. This timing would allow for synchronization with Unicode 9 (summer 2016).

Action was also taken to initiate work on the 5th edition. No specific repertoire additions or timetable have yet been specified. We can tentatively anticipate timing to synchronize with Unicode 10 (summer 2017).

The following is a tentative schedule for future WG2 meetings and potential timetable for progress on amendments and the 5th edition.

| WG2 Meeting | 4th Edn, Amd 1 | 4th Edn, Amd 2 | 5th Edn |
|---|---|---|---|
| September 2014 (Sri Lanka) | DAM ballot disposition; progress to publication | PDAM ballot disposition; continue with 2nd PDAM | |
| Spring 2015 | n/a | PDAM2.2 ballot comments disposed (no face-to-face meeting); DAM ballot issued | CD ballot started? |
| October 2015 (Japan) | n/a | DAM ballot comments discussed; progression to FDAM | CD ballot comments discussed and progress to DIS? |

| WG2 Meeting | 4th Edn, Amd 1 | 4th Edn, Amd 2 | 5th Edn |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fall 2016** | n/a | n/a | DIS ballot comments discussed? |

## Emoji

WG2 took up the Unicode proposal on skin tone modifier symbols (L2/14-213). There was fairly lengthy discussion based on this, spread over a few days of the WG2 meeting. It led to a variant proposal coming from Japanese experts (L2/14-227) as well as a significantly-different alternate proposal from Michael Everson (L2/14-226). In the end, there was no consensus among experts at the meeting on one approach to solve the problems that the Unicode proposal aims to address.

Here are some general observations that can be made from the WG2 discussion:

- The problems that implementers in the US are facing are not universally felt. The initial reaction of experts from several countries was that they didn't understand why there was a concern over skin tone variations. For example, experts from Hong Kong and Sri Lanka said they had only though of the emoji as culturally and ethnically neutral until presented with this proposal.

- Some cultures appear to have rather opposite tendencies to the reactions seen in the US. For example, it appears there is a cultural preference in Sri Lanka to avoid any suggestion of class distinctions since asserting distinctions of that nature has negative associations with class-based prejudice and oppression from the past. Experts from Western nations other than the US also expressed a preference to avoid anything that asserts any kind of class distinction.

- There were strong reactions generally against reference specifically to skin tone. (Revised character names could easily mitigate that concern.)

- While there wasn't a consensus on one preferred approach, there was a general desire for the issue to be given consideration by national bodies. To that end, WG2 wanted the project editor to make some decision, at his own discretion, to incorporate one approach into PDAM2.2 so that it would be visible to national bodies, thereby inviting their feedback.

- There was a strong general reaction that this issue needs to be resolved with particular care and with broad, international feedback.

In regard to the last point, the SC2 plenary re-iterated that concern and decided on a resolution making a request to the Unicode Technical Committee:

> **RESOLUTION M19-08: Tones for Human Beings Emoji**
> SC 2 instructs its Chairman and Secretariat to communicate to the Unicode Consortium that SC 2 would like UTC to have a public review [issue] on the encoding to satisfy "tones on human beings emoji" to enable national bodies to get public feedback from their countries or regions. SC 2 also reminds its national bodies of keeping a lookout for the announcement of such a public review issue on the Unicode website.

Thus, the desire of SC2 is that UTC not make quick decisions on this issue in relation to Unicode 8.0 but rather to use available time prior to publication (e.g., no final decision before the February, 2015 UTC meeting) to ensure options are thoroughly evaluated.

## Implementation of new JTC1 procedures and implications for SC2, WG2, OWG-SORT and IRG

As anticipated, new JTC1 procedures have been implemented at the JTC1/SC2 level and are in the process of being implemented within the SC2-internal organization. The first reflection of this in relation to WG2 was that the WG2 #63 meeting was conducted not as a meeting of national body delegations but rather as a meeting of experts providing recommendations and assistance to SC2 and to the project editor for ISO/IEC 10646. Related to this was increasing recognition among participants of the mandate given to the SC2 secretariat and project editor in processing committee-level drafts — that decisions on content are not subject to formal WG2 approvals. This will further our wishes to see WG2 and SC2 work on development of 10646 proceed with greater agility and efficiency.

There are other implications as the new JTC1 procedures are implemented within SC2, however. Earlier this year, the SC2 document register was migrated into the LiveLink system, with the effect that UTC members no longer have general access to SC2 documents. (See further discussion below.) The next major changes we should anticipate are in the location of WG2 documents and how participation in WG2 and access to WG2 documents is determined.

Under new JTC1 procedures, working group experts must be appointed by a participating SC member body and registered into the ISO Global Directory (a component of the LiveLink system). In relation to this, SC2 adopted the following resolution:

> **RESOLUTION M19-09: Registration in the ISO Global Directory**
> SC 2 recommends its members and WG experts to be registered into the ISO Global Directory through NBLO.

UTC will need to coordinate with INCITS/L2 on registration of experts by the US NB.

The SC2 secretariat will be working with the WG2 convenor (Michel Suignard, newly appointed as convenor) in setting up the working area for WG2 in the LiveLink system. This will include creation of a WG2 document register. This will be discussed further below.

Also discussed in the SC2 plenary was how OWG-SORT and IRG should be handled going forward. As OWG-SORT work has historically been relatively lightweight, usually involving only interaction within the project editorial team (editor Alain LaBonté and contributing editor Ken Whistler), it was felt that there was no need for a working group structure for ISO/IEC 14651. Hence, OWG-SORT is henceforth dissolved. Ad hoc meetings to discuss 14651 projects may be arranged during future SC2 plenary meetings as needed.

For the time being, no structural changes are being made in relation to IRG. As the restructuring of WG2 operations proceeds, IRG status may be revisited. One possibility, for example, might be to formally define a new working group under SC2 with a mandate to do the same scope of work that IRG currently does, though now formalized into recognized JTC1 structures.

## Liaison status and access to SC2 documents

In the previous liaison report to Unicode (L2/14-072), the implication of new SC2 process in relation to Unicode access to ballot documents (and SC2 documents generally) was mentioned — i.e., the fact that UTC members can no longer directly access these documents. Given the nature of new JTC1 procedures, it was recommended that Unicode's liaison relationship with WG2 be changed instead to a Category A liaison relationship with SC2. That change has been made. As a result, Unicode as a liaison to SC2 does have access to SC2 documents, including drafts under ballot. Hence, access to these documents can be provided as needed to UTC members for their review, though we could not post them in the Unicode document register with full public access.

## WG2 document register

WG2 documents have been maintained for many years on the std.dkuug.dk site. As the JTC1 procedures are implemented at the WG2 level, this will have to change: the general expectation is that working group documents are maintained within the LiveLink system.

In practice, we know that the vast majority of WG2 documents are proposals for new character encoding, or comments on proposals or other such documents that propose changes in the UCS repertoire and associated code charts. As such documents have direct implication for the Unicode Standard, they have routinely been added to the UTC document register in parallel. Going forward, it will continue to be important for such documents to go into the UTC register, regardless of how they are managed for WG2.

This was taken into consideration during the WG2 meeting: none of the experts present voiced any insistence on using the LiveLink system to obtain these documents if they are also accessible in the UTC document register. Also, it was noted that WG2 experts will regularly cite other public sources for information relevant to WG2 work. Hence, there are options that can be considered for managing WG2 documents going forward: documents can be added individually into the WG2 register in LiveLink, or summary documents might be added to the WG2 register with pointers to external information in the UTC document register, or some combination of approaches might be used. The Unicode officers are invited to consider what implications this might potentially have for the public UTC document register and ways that Unicode might offer assistance to WG2 in this area.

Of course, certain WG2-related documents such as meeting announcements, and activity reports or working group recommendations for SC2 and the project editor will need to reside in the WG2 register on the LiveLink system.