Subject: W3C I18N WG Liaison Report
Source: Martin Duerst
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from: W3C Internationalization WG
to: ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG2
date: 6 October 2003

The WG is continuing its work in three task forces:

- The Core Task Force:
   - has reviewed various numerous other W3C specifications
   - continues to work on the Character Model, and recently
     republished this as an interim working draft documenting
     progress on addressing comments (http://www.w3.org/TR/charmod).
   - is working on addressing the remaining issues in the
     Internationalized Resource Identifiers Internet-Draft
     (see http://www.w3.org/International/iri-edit/)

- The Gudelines, Education & Outreach (GEO) Task Force
   - has published a "Framework Document for i18n Guidelines" working
     draft at http://www.w3.org/TR/i18n-guide-framework
   - is working on publishing the first working draft of
     "Authoring Techniques for XHTML & HTML Internationalization 1.0"
   - is producing a series of weekly questions and answers (FAQ)
     at http://www.w3.org/International/questions.html
     (also available as an RSS feed at
      http://www.w3.org/International/questions.rss)

- The Web Services Task Force
   - is working on Web Services Internationalization Usage Scenarios
     (working draft at http://www.w3.org/TR/ws-i18n-scenarios/)
   - is reviewing other W3C specifications in the area of
     Web services

We encourage members of SC2/WG2 to comment on the above documents and
to participate in our work (see
http://www.w3.org/International/about.html#participation
for details).

The W3C Internationalization WG also wishes to call your attention to
its following resolution:

 >>>>>>>>
The Internationalization Working Group (I18N WG) of the World Wide Web
Consortium (W3C) strongly supports the letter sent by W3C Director Tim
Berners-Lee to ISO President Oliver Smoot, expressing the W3C's deep
concerns over a recent proposal by the ISO Commercial Policies Steering
Group (CPSG) to charge fees for the commercial use of ISO codes such

as ISO 639 (language codes), ISO 3166 (country codes), and ISO 4127
(currency codes).
(see http://lists.w3.org/Archives/Public/www-
international/2003JulSep/0213.html
for full text).

The I18N WG also agrees with the Unicode Technical Committee (see
http://www.unicode.org/consortium/utc-positions.html) and others
regarding the highly problematic recent re-assignement of "cs"
(formerly
Czechoslovakia) to Serbia and Montenegro. This code assignement should
be rescinded as soon as possible, and the underlying policy should be
fixed to not allow code reuse, at least not for a very long period of
time, for example 100 years.
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A copy of the letter to Mr. Smoot is appended for your convenience:

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Text of message to Oliver Smoot

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To: Dr. Oliver Smoot, President, International Organization for
Standardization

Dear Dr. Smoot,

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) wishes to express its deep concerns
over a recent proposal by the ISO Commercial Policies Steering Group
(CPSG) to charge fees for the commercial use of ISO codes such as ISO
639 (language codes), ISO 3166 (country codes), and ISO 4127 (currency
codes).

These and similar codes are widely used on the Web. In particular the
language and country codes are of direct interest to W3C and the users
of W3C Recommendations in the context of HTTP, HTML and XML and various
other technologies. Language and country codes currently provide a
single, standard way of identifying languages (and locales) throughout
the Web. Multilingual Web sites and Web pages, as well as
internationalization and localization features, would be particularly
affected.

Any charges for the use of these standards are going to lead to
fragmentation, delay in deployment, and in effect a lack of
standardization. In particular, those users who depend upon multi-
lingual or non-English language services will suffer.

In their considerations, the CPSG notes "the necessity for a number of
ISO standards to be published as databases". Web technology today
allows publication and reuse of data at a small fraction of the costs a
few years ago. If it is the case that the costs of maintaining these
databases is beyond ISO's capacity to cover, we would suggest that ISO

open a discussion with the larger user community about how these
services might be hosted in a manner that covers these costs.

Given that this policy would have profound impact not only on ISO, but
also on industry and users of the Web at large, we urge ISO to further
consider this policy and its broader implications and consequences, and
to reassure the community as quickly as possible that there will be no
charges for the use of these standards.

Best regards,

Tim Berners-Lee, W3C Director
Steven R. Bratt, W3C Chief Operating Officer