ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2/WG 2 N4091

Date: 2011-06-01

Title: Notes on hentaigana
Source: Japan
Status: FYI
References: N 3698
Expected Action: none

WG 2 received an (apparently preliminary) proposal to encode *hentaigana* (変体 仮名) in UCS (N3698.)　The first reaction from Japan was "we have no strong requirements on *hentaigana*."

After two years, there is some discussion in Japan on the possibility to have a standard set of *hentaigana*.　However, the objective seems different from that of N3698.

The discussion is taking place in a context of Japanese e-Government project, and the objective is to allow electronic exchange of names of Japanese citizen. Until prohibited by a law in 1948, it was not unusual to name a kid using *hentaigana*.　As a result, a Japanese citizen whose age is above sixty something may have a name containing *hentaigana*.　Although the widely accepted practice today is to use ordinary *hiragana* in place of *hentaigana* when writing those names with PC or other electronic devices, some Japanese government agencies have positions to consider such substitution are unacceptable in some legal processes, and it is being recognized as an issue when promoting e-Government project.　One possible solution may be to accept the substitution, and another is to encode required *hentaigana* in the standard coded character set.

At this moment, Japan National Body has no further information on the issue.　If the Japanese government takes the direction to encode *hentaigana*, Japanese National Body will collaborate to produce a proposal.

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