



ISO/TC 37/SC 2 "Terminology workflow and language coding"

Secretariat: **SCC**

Committee manager: **Benhoff Maryse Ms**



Next steps for ISO 12199

Document type	Related content	Document date	Expected action
Project / Other	Project: ISO 12199:2022 Ballot: CIB on ISO/12199 (restricted access)	2023-10-05	VOTE by 2023-11-07

Description

Dear member,

Kindly find attached an explanatory document with regards ISO/12199.

A CIB ballot was created (*CIB on ISO/12199*).

Please cast your vote via your member body.

Best regards,

Gabriela Talimba



Document:	ISO / TC 37 / SC 2
ISO / TC 37 / SC 2 / WG 8 – Alphabetical ordering, revision	
Subject:	Next steps for ISO 12199 and ISO/TC 37/SC 2/WG 8
Prepared by:	Håvard Hjulstad (convenor of ISO / TC 37 / SC 2 / WG 8)
Date:	2023-10-05

ISO 12199:2000 was published 2000-08-01. Title: *Alphabetical ordering of multilingual terminological and lexicographical data represented in the Latin alphabet*.

The document was confirmed by Systematic Review four times:

- in 2005 (document ISO/TC 37/SC 2 N 352) with no votes to withdraw and two votes to revise (United Kingdom and Serbia and Montenegro);
- in 2011 (document ISO/TC 37/SC 2 N 602) with no votes to withdraw and one vote to revise (Spain);
- in 2016 (document ISO/TC 37/SC 2 N 816) with no votes to withdraw and four votes to revise (Argentina, Mexico, Serbia, and Sweden);
- in 2021 (document ISO/TC 37/SC 2 N 993) with one vote to withdraw (USA) and four votes to revise (Iran, Norway, Serbia, and Sweden).

Following the 2021 Systematic Review ISO 12199:2000 underwent a minor revision to recognize that the Serbian language is among the languages using the Latin alphabet. The revised ISO 12199 went directly to FDIS. ISO 12199:2022 was published 2022-07-14.

The convenor has submitted a document outlining “Possible ways forward” with ISO 12199 (document ISO/TC 37/SC 2/WG 8 N 21), with the following:

The “minor revision” of ISO 12199 was published on 2022-07-14. Formally it is a valid International Standard until July 2027, unless ISO/TC 37/SC 2 in the meantime decides to

1. extend its validity for another five years, a process that may be repeated an indefinite number of times;
2. revise the entire document;
3. withdraw ISO 12199 as such, but develop a new document based on parts of the current document, in particular informative parts; or
4. withdraw ISO 12199 in its entirety with no replacement.

The Unicode Consortium submitted on 2021-08-18 a document with extensive comments on ISO 12199. The document is available as ISO/TC 37/SC 2 N 996 as well as ISO/TC 37/SC 2/WG 8 N 14, and it is highly relevant to the question at hand.

During the Brussels meeting of ISO/TC 37/SC 2 and WG 8 there was some discussion about the value and relevance of ISO 12199. However, no resolution was reached. Therefore ISO/TC 37/SC 2 issues a Committee Internal Ballot (CIB) to allow its members to decide. The current document is drafted to facilitate that decision.

The general principles of character string ordering and comparison is standardized in ISO/IEC 14651, *Information technology — International string ordering and comparison — Method for comparing character strings and description of the common template tailorable ordering*. The document has been prepared by ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2. All characters of the Unicode character set (ISO/IEC 10646) are included. The default ordering template may be tailored to accommodate language-specific ordering requirements. ISO/IEC 14651 has been revised multiple times, and it is expected that it will be kept up-to-date with future development of the Unicode character set.

ISO/IEC 14651 specifies rules for ordering and comparing individual Unicode characters and character sequences. It has no method for distinguishing between characters of different fonts or typefaces (bold, Italics, etc.), nor of feature like subscript and superscript (except those characters that are explicitly encoded as such). It has been noted that this type of features may be of concern in some scientific communities.

ISO 12199 includes in informative annexes information about character sets and ordering rules of a number of individual languages. This information is not included in ISO/IEC 14651, but most of this information may be derived from the Unicode Common Locale Data Repository (CLDR). The CLDR is being continuously updated, while the informative annexes of ISO 12199 have not been updated since 2000.

Members of ISO/TC 37 may be concerned that the sequence to the alphabet and rules for alphabetical ordering “belong” to the field of linguistics rather than that of information technology. Should ISO/TC 37 “protect its field of expertise”? It must be emphasized that experts of ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2 and Unicode include expert linguists!

Where to go

As mentioned in document N 21, ISO/TC 37/SC 2 needs to choose between the following options:

1. SC 2 may decide to extend the validity of ISO 12199:2022 with no revision. This may be done for five years at a time, and the process may be repeated an indefinite number of times.
2. SC 2 may decide to revise the entire document. That would be a major task consisting in principle of two parts: (a) going through each normative specification to ensure total harmonization with ISO/IEC 14561; and (b) making sure that all language-specific information is up-to-date, as well as adding language-specific information for additional languages. Or alternatively, the revision could develop an entirely new document different from the current ISO 12199.
3. SC 2 may decide to withdraw ISO 12199 as such, but to develop a new document based on parts of the current document, in particular informative parts. This would probably be a Technical Report (rather than an International Standard).
4. SC 2 may decide to withdraw ISO 12199 in its entirety with no replacement.

The CIB questions

What should ISO/TC 37/SC 2 do with ISO 12199:2022?

Options:

1. The validity of ISO 12199 should be extended with no revision.
(Yes / No / Abstain / Comment)
2. ISO 12199 should be totally revised.
(Yes / No / Abstain / Comment)
3. ISO 12199 should be withdrawn as such, but a new document should be developed based on parts of the current document, in particular informative parts.
(Yes / No / Abstain / Comment)
4. ISO 12199 should be withdrawn in its entirety with no replacement.
(Yes / No / Abstain / Comment)