Release Management Group Report to UTC #177

October 25, 2023
Peter Constable & UTC Release Management Group

The Release Management Group ("RMG") is composed of UTC working group leaders and other volunteers working on the process for development of the Unicode 16.0 release and for evolving processes for future Unicode Standard releases.

Unicode 16.0 scope and timeline

We anticipate Unicode 16.0 will be a "full" release including new characters and scripts, as previously discussed by UTC. This will already be a large release, in terms of new/revised content to be prepared. RMG advises UTC to be conservative in adding any new repertoire or significant algorithm changes.

RMG previously recommended that UTC consider future of UAX #42, given that the people that maintained it in the past are no longer available. PAG has considered this and is recommending that UAX #42 be stabilized. RMG supports that plan.

This will also be the first release that includes the core spec in HTML. Because this will involve new publication format, tools and processes, RMG recommends an early public review, during the alpha, of a representative sample of the core spec to get feedback on the use of the new formats. This would not include the full spec content, and feedback would not be solicited on the content itself.

A timeline for the development and release of Unicode 16.0 is proposed with the following key dates:

- 2023-11-3, UTC #177: Confirm scope and timeline for Unicode 16.0
- 2024-1-12: snapshot of PRI feedback
- 2024-1-26, UTC #178: Finalize alpha content
    - New characters / emoji, charts
    - Property data
    - Advance in-progress UTSes, UAXes
    - Representative sample of core spec content
- 2024-2-6: Start of alpha
- 2024-4-2: End of alpha, snapshot of feedback

- 2024-4-25, UTC #179: Finalize beta content
  - Charts
  - Property data
  - Draft UTSes, UAXes
  - Complete core spec content
- 2024-5-21: start of beta review
- 2024-7-2: end of beta public review
- 2024-7-25, UTC #180: Finalize 16.0 content
- 2024-9-10: Unicode 16.0 release

RMG recommends the following UTC action:

> UTC approves the proposed scope and plan for Unicode 16.0 outlined in document L2/23-264.

Unicode 15.1 release

Unicode 15.1 was released on September 12, according to plan. French charts are normally completed some time following the main release; the French charts for 15.1 have also been completed and published.

Process development

During a post-mortem exercise after the Unicode 15.1 release, RMG discussed what process improvements that could have significant impact should be considered as priorities during the Unicode 16.0 release cycle. The following were identified:

- CJK & Unihan: Ensure backup resources. (Currently, Ken Lunde alone has expertise and is a single point of failure.)
- Improve processes for release collateral

Regarding the first item, Ken Lunde will be preparing documentation on tools and process to be incorporated into a unihan-tools repo (currently owned by Ken but to be transferred to unicode-org later).

Regarding the second item, PAG has started working to streamline and front-load the process for developing data for new repertoire. RMG will continue to explore opportunities for improvements as the Unicode 16.0 project progresses.