

IRG N 1025

Member Activity Report Unicode Consortium 24 May 2004

Version 4.0.1 of the Unicode Standard was officially issued in March 2004. This included the first update to the Unihan database since the publication of Unicode 3.2. This update includes numerous corrections to the Mandarin readings in the database and extensions to the various other fields.

In particular, the database includes considerably extended information on characters used in Cantonese. This includes new pronunciation data, indices into Cantonese dictionaries, and extended definitions. We also are asking for public input as to whether or not we should modify the Unihan database to use the *jyut ping* Cantonese romanization developed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong and welcome input on this subject from the IRG delegations from the Hong Kong and Macao SARs.

We would also like to bring to the attention of the IRG two issues which we will be raising with WG2.

The first is the use of variation selectors in the future as a part of the encoding process for ideographs. We are concerned that it is becoming increasingly difficult for operating systems, fonts, applications, and end users to deal with the ideographic repertoire of ISO/IEC 10646 when there are so many variants separately encoded in the standard. We feel that the use of variation selectors will help simplify support and will give a demonstration of this at this IRG meeting.

The second issue we will raise with WG2 is the need for the IRG to adopt a “fast track” process to make it possible to add small, well-defined sets of ideographs to ISO/IEC 10646 without going through the lengthy review process needed for large sets. This has become an issue because major OS vendors are attempting to provide support for HK SCS and other important character sets via Unicode, which requires using some characters in the Private Use Area. This creates interoperability problems at the present, and also will require people to upgrade their data at some future point when the characters are formally added to 10646. We feel it is important that it is possible to speed up the review process for such small sets. We are submitting document N1024 to the IRG for information only; this document will also be sent to WG2 for consideration there.