ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC2/WG2/ Ideographic Rapporteur Group

Source / Contribution Identifier: MS
Meeting: IRG#25 @ Berkeley, CA
Title: Japan Concern on CJK C1 Quality
Keywords: (none)
Status: Personal Contribution
Short Description: to be discussed on IRG #25
Proposed Conclusion / Requested Action: to be discussed at IRG #25
Arguments / Text of Contribution: See attachments.

Considerations on the Decision Recording for Extension C1 development

2005-11-30
Masahiro Sekiguchi

1. Foreword

This paper lists several considerations on the decision recording for Extension C1 development process (and future works) in IRG. It also tries to propose some improvements against the current IRG practices. Partly because this document is written in a short period of time, tt is preliminary and inomplete.

This paper is intended to be a startpoint of the discussion. Any comments and suggestions are welcome.

2. We need a record of comments and decisions

Currently, we don't keep the record of comments handy, especially those comments that were raised but not accepted. It makes the review on the later phase hard, since editors may make the same comment again, or he/she have to verify befor submission whether the suspicion is a new one or not, digging around the old IRG documents.

We don't keep the record of the accepted comments in a single place either. As a result, we sometimes receive a *reverting* comments. For example, for a character that has some ambiguous stroke structure, after a comment to correct the stroke count is accepted, another comment to revert the correction may be submitted by another editor.

Based on the considerations, I'd like to propose to have exhaustive record of decisions with all the revisions of the future C1 drafts. I have no concrete proposal on the format, but the record should contain all the comments and discussions that are made for a character. Just as an example, the following format may work:

> 200X-1-27 TCA: The stroke count of this character should be 11, instead of 10, because the *phonetic* counts 11 in Kangxi.
> 200X-2-12 Japan: The stroke count should be 10 as in the original submission,because the phonetic of this character is similar, but not exactly identical to the said Kangxi character XXXX.YY, and shape difference here is the theird stroke and the fourth stroke in the Kangxi glyph is connected in the phonetic of the proposed character, and the stroke count one less that the Kangxi is reasonable.
> 200X-2-28: IRG Editorial: Japan comment is not accepted, since the third stroke and the forth do not look like a single stroke, and considered as two separate strokes. The stroke count is changed from 10 to 11.

Inclusion of this kinds of decisioin records, as well as those against the past revision, may greatly reduce the editors effort to avoid the duplicate comments.

I also propose that characters that are discarded from C1 candidates be remain listed in the future C1 draft for reference, with clear indication that the character has been discarded and the record of the comments in the same format.

There is a (positive) side effect of doing this. As pointed out in the Japan contribution (IRG N1161), some ranges of C1 cnadidates are more reviewed than some other ranges..If we keep all the past comment and decisions in the latest C1 draft, just grancing it makes a brief idea that which parts of the draft are well reviewed and which parts are not.

Alternatively, we can keep the comment record separately from the latest C1 draft. Currently, the draft itself is distributed as a three column table in PDF files, and the consolidated comments as an Microsoft Excel file. We could use a format similar to the format of current consolidated comments for the accumulated comments and decisions. In that case, we need the date when the comment or the decision is made, in addition to the information available in the current consolidated comment format.

3. We need a rationale on every comment and decision

When member editors report back to a C1 draft, most of the comments consist only of the proposed corrections; i.e. what point of the draft should be changed to what. They usually lack explanation, or rationale, why the reviewer considered the proposed correction is required. It is hard for other editors to evaluate the validity of the comment without the rationale.

For example, when a comment says something like "The radical should be *grass* (艸) instead of fire (火)" for an ideograph with a shape of grass on its top and the shape of fire on its bottom, without supplying additional explanation, it is almost impossible to evaluate the comment.

It is not the sole responsibility of the reviewer; some ideogrpahs in the C1 proposal was, and some of them still is, assigned a radical suspicious based on its shape. Because we requested the orignal submitter to supply the radical information only and didn't request to supply the reason the character is classified to that radical, the reviewer has no information why the original submitter assigned the *unnatural* radical, he/she cannot determine whether the radical is simply wrong by a mistake or is correct because of the unusual background. He/she can only comment as "The radical just looks like XXX?" in the case.

We also experienced the cases that the decision made in an editorial group meeting is *appealed* by the original submitter after the next version of draft is distributed. When it happened, we discuss the same character again, but without the detailed record (memory) of the discussion held at the first decision. The second discussion hence becomes confusing.

I propose that all comments should supply some clear rationale why the reviewer considered so, preferrably with a reference to an external documents for validation. (E.g., one of unification rule in Annex S, a dicitionary, or whatever.) I also propose the same thing for the responder; those who considered a comment is inappropriate should supply his/her opinion with some clear rationale.

I also propose the following rule: if the original submitter of a character in question counter a comment to state the original submission is correct, the original submitter must always supply a printed material to proof the opinion, as a duty of the submitter.

If the original submitter couldn't find such material in time, and he/she still believes the original submission is correct, the character in question is suspended and temporary removed from the C1 candidate set until such a material is supplied.

4. Use of written documents

In the current IRG practice, the *final* dicision is made by oral discussin held in an IRG meeting. Although the decisions are recorded, most of the discussion are not. It makes the tracking of the decision process almost impossible. Moreover, the record discussed in the section 2 above is practically impossible for the oral discussion.

For example, when an editor commented against a character as "This should be unified with XXXXX", we usually discuss this comment on an editorial group meeting, editors expresses their opinions on the comment (and on the character in question), and the decision is made and recorded, but the record just says "Unify" or "Not unify" without the reason why the editorial group decided so. The discussion made at the meeting may be somewhat long, and it is inpractical to record the oral discussion in a decision record.

Based on the consideration, I'd like to propose that all IRG discussion regarding C1 except for simple final decision should be done through written documents. The editorial group then makes a decision in a form of simple Yes/No or "accepting which opinion". To do so, we just postpone the orally discuss about a comment until everybody expressed their opinion in written format. We need to use email-based communication between meetings more extensively than today.

If, after some pre-stated period such as three month, a discussion continued, IRG could just remove the haracter in questino from the C1 candidates and postpone to C2, to speed up the process.

<div align="right">(END OF DOCUMENT)</div>