

From: Unicode and US National Body
To: SC2 and WG2
Subject: Concerns about KS X 1026-1:2007
Action: For consideration by SC2 and WG2 members
Reference: WG2 N3422
Date: 13 October 2008

The US National Body (INCITS/L2) notes the publication of the new Korean Standard KS X 1026-1 which was distributed at the recent SC2 Plenary in Redmond, Washington for the information of SC2 members. The US National Body and the Unicode Consortium have reviewed this document and have serious concerns about incompatibilities with the important SC2 standard ISO/IEC 10646 and the synchronized Unicode Standard.

This standard provides a restated and non-conformant definition of normalization (NFC, NFKC, NFD, NFKD) which is incompatible with Unicode and 10646. The misuse of 10646 and Unicode terminology is a misrepresentation. This will lead to misunderstandings and is unacceptable. While the goal of this new standard is to provide a clear recommendation for the representation and processing of Korean text data, the approach taken would lead to non-conformant implementations which would cause severe interoperability problems. Normalization as defined by 10646 and Unicode is subject to very stringent stability requirements. This is to meet the needs of the many implementations, protocols, and other standards: IETF, W3C and many others. This definition cannot be changed.

However, the preferred format for any text doesn't need to be a Unicode normalization format. This is a general characteristic of Unicode and 10646. There are other scripts for which this is the case: examples are Arabic, Hebrew, Khmer, Myanmar.

A preferred format for Korean text can be defined without misusing well-defined, conventional terminology. Such a format can be given a meaningful name which does not cause confusion.

The US National Body and the Unicode Consortium would be very happy to cooperate with the Korean National Body to achieve a formulation which avoids the terminological problems while achieving the desired effect.