

Advanced Lecture on Internet Applications

4. Text based Communication: Character Code and Internationalization

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<ftp://ftp.hpcl.titech.ac.jp/appli4e.ppt>

Reference Material

- 太田昌孝、「いま日本語が危ない」、光芒社、ISBN4－89542－146－5、平成9年

What is “Character”

- unit to represent language by graphic symbol
 - phonetic character
 - ideogram

What is Script(用字系)?

- system to represent language by characters
- never confuse language and character
 - 「でいすいずあぺん」 is English by Kana script
 - “Koreha pen desu.” is Japanese by Roman (Latin) script

Scripts to Represent Japanese

- kana (hiragana, katakana, manyogana)
- mixed kanji kana
- romaji (Hepburn, Monbusho, etc.)
 - “masataka” in French should be “massataka”
- and phonetic representations in various local script systems such as Hangul

Digital and Analog

- digital ignores small differences
 - can remove noise
- language (incl. spoken one) is digital
 - voice and song are digital
- character is digital
 - can represent very subtle feelings with 17 characters
 - calligraphy is analog
- to what extent, small differences should be ignored? (how many bits should be used?)

Character Code

- an encoding rule for strings using characters of a character set
 - not merely assign code (number) to characters
 - the rule may be very complicated
- the number of characters of a character set matters
 - if large, many bits are necessary
 - if small, many characters can't be represented
 - small differences between similar characters can't be represented

Byte

- originally mean # of bits to represent a character
 - 1 byte is not always 8 bits
- 4 bit byte can represent 16 characters
 - enough for numbers and “,.+-\$ “
- 6 bit byte can represent 64 characters
 - enough for capital Latin letters, numbers and symbols
 - used on 36bit/word computers
- ASCII use 7 (not 8) bit byte

Multi Byte Character Code

- self-contradictory concept
- simple if 1 byte = 1 character
- as the number of bits of a byte is fixed for a long time
 - becomes practically impossible to extend byte
- to represent a character by multiple bytes
 - represent a character by sequence of bytes
 - multi byte character
 - switch character sets by special bytes (control “character”)

ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange)

- US standard 7 bit byte character code
 - 95 (incl. space) **graphic** character set
 - capital and small letters, digits, symbols
 - 33 **control** characters
 - US local version of ISO 646
- enough to represent English
- simple character set in various ways
 - easy to computerise

ISO 646

- have same structure as ASCII
- among 95 (graphic) characters
 - 83 characters are internationally common
 - 12 characters can be different country by country
- japanese version of JIS X 0201 (JIS C 6220) Latin have two characters different from ASCII
 - “\” to “¥”, “~” to “—”

Simplicity of ASCII (or Latin Script for English)

- small number of characters
- horizontal only
- single (left to right) directional only
- ligature (variation of character shape by previous/next characters) is not necessary
- commonly shared recognition for character identifications and character shapes

Simplicity of ASCII (or Latin Script for English)

- correspondence between small/capital characters is clear and regular
- no characters with diacritical marks
 - such as “ä”
- character width can be constant
- widely spread and usable everywhere

Small Number of Characters of ASCII

- can represent all the characters by a single byte
- multi byte characters or character set switching not necessary

Latin Script of English needs Horizontal Writing only

- proper writing of Kanji is vertical
- Mongolian script is vertical, too

Latin Script of English is Unidirectional (left to right)

- horizontally written Kanji script is written from right to left
 - actually is vertical writing with 1 character/line
 - left to right horizontal writing introduced in Meiji era
- Arabic script is written right to left
 - numbers and Latin characters (quoted English etc.) are written left to right
 - directionality changes may be nested

Ligature is not necessary for Latin Script of English

- ligature
 - variation of character shape by previous/next characters
 - “i” of “fi” and “ffi” may be combined with “f”
 - may not be combined and not available with ASCII
- shape of Arabic and Devanagari (Indian) characters affected by previous/next characters
 - natural with hand writing
 - printing type not adopted

Commonly Shared Recognition on Latin Characters in English

- originally with Latin characters
 - “u” and “v” are same character (BVLGARI)
 - “W” is “UU” (double “U”)
- they are separate characters in modern Latin script for English
 - “a” and “ă” are same character

Regular Correspondence between Small/Capital Characters

- some Latin characters may have irregular case correspondences
 - capital form of “ÿ” may be “Y”, “Ÿ” or “IJ”
 - “y” “ÿ” “ij”
- no such irregularity in modern Latin script of English

No characters with Diacritical Marks in ASCII

- diacritical marks are introduced
 - to represent intermediate pronunciation
 - “Å” is “A” pronounced with flavor of “o”
 - “ö” is “o” pronounced with flavor of “e”
 - “e” became “..”

Latin Characters may have Fixed Spacing

- # of bytes of a string is proportional to display width
- “character display” was popular
 - to display 80×25 characters with 2kB RAM
 - and character generator ROM of, say, $7 \times 9 \times 128$ dots
- “line printer” was popular
 - to print a line of 132 characters at once
 - as a drum with 132 columns rotates once

ASCII is Widely Spread and may be used as Default

- not necessary to specify character set

Wrap Up

- character enables graphical representation of language
- character code is a rule to translate strings to byte sequences
- character code is restricted by the number of bits of a byte
- ASCII is “simple” character code in various ways