

SEISA-APIT

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COUNTRY REPORT
SRI LANKA

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SRI LANKA STANDARDS INSTITUTE (SLSI)

- The Standards authority of the country
- Most ISO standards are adopted by SLSI
- e.g. country code, currency code,
EDIFACT standards

Character code for Sinhala

- Tamil developed by India
- Initial Sinhala work helped by Thailand (mid 80's)
- 7 bit SLASCII
- Proposal to Unicode by experts from UK, USA & Ireland – opposed by SL through SLSI
- Work on SL proposal begins
- Keyboard for electronic type writers and computers developed modifying existing typewriter keyboard

Applications in Sinhala

- Many fonts, applications developed.
- No standard & not compatible
- Collaboration with Thailand, Singapore
- All these were not UNICODE compatible
- This trend is still continuing
- Developers are waiting for Microsoft to come out with Sinhala

UNICODE FOR SINHALA

- Language experts agree on alphabet and alphabetical order after much debate
- CINTEC initiative
- SLS 1134 (1996)
- WG meeting in Crete, Greece (1997) approves our proposal presented by STN, JBD. Japan, Holland support us.
- Confirmed at WG meeting in USA(1998)
- Microsoft agrees to include sinhala in WIN NT ver 6 (1998)
- SLS 1134 modified to be inline with UNICODE

Recent developments

2003-2004

- Microsoft begins to develop sinhala product
- Keyboard improved by ICTA committee and placed before SLSI WC
- No change to UNICODE but rules re-visited and approved
- Revision to SLS 1134 approved by WC of SLSI
- Objections from certain parties

Rules

- Special cases
- Characters not represented in UNICODE
- Glyphs made up by joining characters
- Touching characters
- Use of ZWJ and ZWNJ
- Keyboard input as when writing but internal representation has consonant first

Current work

- Microsoft beta version released
- SL Linux Group working on product
- UCSC has several working on various aspects
- IDRC Localisation project will provide collation rules

Need for localisation

- Web publishing
- Print & Electronic media
- People data base
- E-learning
- E-Governance