**International Council on English Braille**

**Mid-Term Executive Meeting**

**April 17-21, 2018**

**Dublin, Ireland**

**Report of the**

**CODE MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE (CMC)**

**Phyllis Landon, Chair**

**Members and Observers as of March 2018.**

Members of the CMC:

James Bowden (United Kingdom) [from Jan 1/13]

Jennifer Dunnam (United States) [from May 27/16]

Leona Holloway (Australia)

Bill Jolley (Australia) [from May 27/16]

Phyllis Landon (Canada) - CHAIR

Stuart Lawler (Ireland) [from Apr 9/13]

Peg Mercer (Canada) [from Jul 30/16]

Jean Obi (Nigeria)

Maria Stevens (New Zealand)

Joe Sullivan (United States)

Tamaryn Watson (South Africa) [from Dec 1/16]

Observers on the CMC listserve:

All members of the Executive are observers. Not including the Executive, the number of observers from each country is as follows:

Australia 6

Canada 45

Ireland 1

New Zealand 1

Nigeria 0

South Africa 6

United Kingdom 12

United States 38

**Updates to *The Rules of Unified English Braille* (RUEB)**

Since the GA, the CMC has discussed and approved the following revisions to RUEB. They are posted on the ICEB/UEB web page.

2.6.3 Add the line indicator to the "standing alone" rule with a new example. (Change as of April 19, 2017)

2.6.3 A letter or letters-sequence is considered to be "standing alone" when the following common punctuation and indicator symbols intervene between the letter or letters-sequence and the *following* space, hyphen or dash:

* comma, semicolon, colon, full stop (period), ellipsis, exclamation mark or question mark
* closing parenthesis (round bracket), closing square bracket or closing curly bracket (brace bracket)
* closing quotation mark of any kind
* nondirectional quotation mark of any kind
* apostrophe [also see Section 2.6.4]
* typeform terminator of any kind
* capitals mode terminator
* closing transcriber's note indicator
* line indicator
* or any combination of these.

*Example:*

[an Emily Dickinson poem transcribed in linear format:]

The sun kept setting, setting still;

No hue of afternoon

Upon the village I perceived

From house to house 'twas noon

,! sun kept sett+1 sett+ /2\_ ,no hue ( afn\_ ,^u ! village ,i p]cvd\_ ,f h\se to h\se 'twas noon

10.12.2 Error in brailling of example (Change as of March 15, 2017)

The lower groupsign for "ea" is not used in the word "reactor"

*Strong contractions; See Section 10.3:*

CANDU reactor ,,c&u reactor

[Canada Deuterium Uranium]

15.1.3 New. Allows the use of the line indicator in tabular material changed to a linear format in braille. (Change as of April 19, 2017)

15.1.3 When columned or tabular material is changed to a linear format in braille, the line indicator may be used to mark the breaks between the columns. The line indicator is unspaced from the text in the preceding column and is followed by space before the text of the following column. Use of the line indicator within tables is not mandatory and should be determined according to the format guidelines of the producing agency or braille authority. Other methods for separating columns in braille are also permissible.

Example:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Child | Brenda Rose Laura | Sept. 16, 1952 | Medicine Hat | AB | Canada |
| ... |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

,\*\_ ,br5da ,rose ,laura\_ ,sept4 #af1 #aieb\_ ,m$ic9e ,hat\_ ;,,ab\_ ,canada

444

**Apostrophe, Quotation Marks**

Following the General Assembly in May 2016, the CMC had a general discussion of the issues involved in transcribing apostrophes and quotation marks. The suggestions for solutions were compiled into four options with examples. This document was posted on the ICEB website and publicized as widely as possible. A survey was conducted online in June and July of 2017.

The options offered, in brief, were:

1: Current UEB rules.

2: Lower g for opening single quote and dot 3 for closing single quote.

3: All single quotes are dot 3.

4: Single quote and apostrophe depend on position.

The results of the survey were released in August. Over 600 responses were received (U.S. 56%, U.K. 19%, Australia 11%, Canada 9%, Other 5%).

Overall results: Option 1 40%, Option 3 35%, Others or no preference 25%.

Results from touch readers: Option 1 35%, Option 3 40%, Others or no preference 25%.

Results from educators: Option 1 42%, Option 3 28%, Others or no preference 30%.

Almost all respondents included comments on their survey. Whatever their point of view, they were grateful for the opportunity to participate in the process.

After discussing the survey, the Executive sent the details of the results to our member braille authorities and asked for their recommendations on how to proceed. Once again, the responses were divided. Australia, New Zealand and Ireland prefer no change; U.K., Canada and South Africa prefer Option 3; U.S. doesn't feel there is enough information about Option 3 to make a decision. The Executive asked the CMC to discuss the issue off-list and make a recommendation.

As this report is being prepared, the matter is still being discussed by the members of the CMC.

My thanks to Leona and James for their work in putting together the document which outlined the various options and presented examples to illustrate them. Leona is due a huge vote of thanks for her preparation of the online survey and her analysis of the results.

**New Symbol Approved**

Triple vertical bar: The braille symbol for the triple vertical bar (⦀ U+2980, ⫴ U+2af4, and ⫼ U+2afc) has been assigned as #\_l (dots 3456-456-123). This was approved August 16, 2017. The symbol is a comparison sign and will be added to 3. Signs of Operation and Comparison in the revision of the GTM.

**New Symbol Under Discussion**

Check mark, tick: A proposal was put to the CMC to assign "% (dots 5-146) as the symbol for the check mark (✓ U+2713 and 🗸 U+1f5f8). It is currently the braille sign for the square root sign without vinculum (√ U+221a). This was suggested because the signs are very similar in appearance in print. However, the motion failed. An alternative assignment of @% (dots 4-146) is under discussion at the time this report is being prepared.

**Revision of *Guidelines for Technical Material* (GTM)**

Because we expect the work to be extensive and not of interest to all observers on the CMC list, we established a separate listserve (UEB-TECH) for this project. All members of the CMC are on the list so we can vote on issues just as we do on the CMC list. The members of the Executive are automatically observers. The number of observers (not including the Executive) from each country are:

Australia 4

Canada 22

Ireland 3

New Zealand 1

Nigeria 0

South Africa 0

United Kingdom 5

United States 34

Following the GA in May 2016, Bill Jolley undertook to lead the revision of the GTM. He did an initial draft for the revision to Signs of Operation and Comparison which we worked on together extensively. However, in February 2017, he resigned from the position, deciding he does not have the requisite knowledge of school-level maths or print technical notation. He remains as an expert member of the CMC. I am grateful for his thoughtful and thorough presentation of an initial draft. It was very helpful going forward.

Lorraine Banks, a Canadian transcriber and a former high school math teacher, agreed to assist me in preparing the materials for the revision. In March 2017, we started discussions on the list for the revision of 3. Signs of Operation and Comparison with a call for examples and suggestions. A new symbol for the triple vertical bar was considered and approved. (See the topic "New Symbols Approved" above.) In November 2017, a draft of the rule was distributed and discussion on specific issues was requested. Much of the work on this rule has concerned use of Unicode values in the symbols table, what names to use for symbols, and formatting. These decisions will in most instances apply to subsequent rules. The suggested changes to the rule will be incorporated into a new draft and circulated as soon as possible.

**Problem Words**

Appendix 2: Word List is comprised only of the words used as examples in the contraction rules of RUEB. James and Frances Mary D'Andrea are comparing notes off-list on how to contract particular words in order to produce a more extensive word list. Since FM brings an American perspective and James brings a British perspective, our procedure is that if the two of them agree on how a word should be contracted, it will be added to the list. The words on which they do not agree become "problem words" and will be set aside for discussion and resolution at a later time by the CMC. One issue that may need to be addressed is whether there is a dictionary (preferably online) which can be used as a standard in determining how to contract words. It would need to show syllable division, not just pronunciation.

**Challenges of Technology**

Technical issues have sometimes caused problems unexpectedly. We had a serious issue with the listserves when the lists reverted to an earlier version, resulting in several people being dropped without notification. This required time-consuming investigation to find out what happened and to correct it. I have also had a problem with brf files sent to me by Lorraine which have resulted in unexplained changes to the braille. We still don't understand why this happens but have, again after much time and fretting, found a work-around. While we couldn't do what we do without the various forms of technology, it can definitely be a serious source of frustration at times.

**Web page, social media**

As soon as an update is approved, I send it to Leona. She has done a fantastic job of keeping our web page current and publicizing the items on social media. We have had a couple of emails alerting us to an error or suggesting improvements (e.g. listing dot numbers). It is gratifying to know that our web page is being used, read so carefully and that people care enough to get in touch when they spot a problem.

**Future Tasks**

In addition to the ongoing projects discussed above, the following items are outstanding (in no particular order):

Symbol for the sharp s (German ess-tset).

Symbols for the letter modifiers: dot above, dot below and circumflex below.

Assigned UEB symbols to be incorporated in revision of GTM: ^[ calculator window, .j "normal", a superscript circle crossed by a horizontal line, and .\* ASCII character, grave accent alone.

Symbol for curly E meaning universal set (from UKAAF).

Symbols for double struck letters (from UKAAF).

Address problem of adding a space before letters following a function (from UKAAF and others).

Clarify use of capital indicators in technical material (from UKAAF and others).

Change the rules on shortforms to include "after" as one of those shortforms included in 10.9.3 (from UKAAF).

Expand provisions covering the use of line continuation indicators (from BANA).

Clarify the effect of a medial capital on "standing alone" (from BANA).

Clarify 10.9.5 (letters-sequences confused with shortforms) and add examples (from BANA).

Revisit 3.9 dealing with crosses (from BANA).

Clarify use of "Rules for List Construction" in Appendix 1: Shortforms (from BANA).

Consider adding "DeafBlind" (with D and B capitalized) to Shortform List (from BANA).

Produce an index.

Production of RUEB and GTM in a print file format that is more accessible than pdf (htm, epub?).

Clarify 10.7.3 dealing with "had" (from discussions on problem words).