Leaflet L10

Working with accented text (Windows)

Last revised August 2015

On the Managed Clusters Service (MCS)

The computers running Windows on the MCS all have suitable fonts for displaying documents and web pages containing accented characters.

Customising your MCS Desktop to Read and Write Accented Text

You should only need to do this once and the settings will be retained in your roaming profile. If the profile ever needs to be reset or deleted, simply repeat the steps to install alternative keyboards.

1. Click the Start menu button at the bottom left of the screen and select Control Panel from the menu which pops up.
2. Click on Clock, Language, Region Options.
3. Click on Region and Language.
4. Click the Keyboards and Languages tab.
5. Click the Change Keyboards button.
6. Click Add to add a keyboard.

7. Scroll down until you find the keyboard you want and select it by clicking the checkboxes.
8. Close each window in turn by clicking OK.
9. You should now find that alternative keyboards appear on the pop-up menu which opens when you click on the taskbar keyboard language indicator which appears as the letters EN on the bottom right of the screen when a window into which you can type is open.
Using the Microsoft Language Keyboards

MS Word has pre-set keyboard shortcuts for the most common West European accents. These are probably the most convenient way to enter languages such as French and Italian, and you can find which key combinations produce the accents by doing **Insert > Symbol** then selecting the character you want to insert and making a note of the key combination which Word offers as an alternative way to enter it. You will probably only need to make use of the alternative keyboards if you want to type accents in other programs, or if you need ones for which Word does not have pre-built shortcuts.

1. Click the Keyboard Language indicator on the bottom right of the screen. This appears as the letters **EN** (for **EN**glish) by default.
2. You should see a pop-up menu with the keyboard layouts you installed. For general typing of foreign-language accents the most useful keyboard for English touch-typists is probably US-International with English as the language setting because this doesn't alter the position of the alphabet keys.

Find which keys represent the various characters by looking at the Microsoft Visual keyboard.

1. Double click the MS Visual keyboard in Word and Text Processing.
2. Use the Keyboard Language indicator to change to the correct keyboard.
3. You should see the Visual keyboard change to letters with accents. You can also use the Visual keyboard to enter characters into a document by clicking its keys with your mouse.

Viewing Foreign-Language Pages on the Web

Find a suitable site to test your browser’s ability to display foreign characters. For example **http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/** is a suitable web page to test your browser settings if you want to view Spanish.

Your browser will normally select suitable local fonts and encodings to display the pages without any need for action on your part. However, this sometimes does not happen and you may need to set the encoding manually. Select Encoding from the View menu and try out some of the most likely possibilities.

Email

Hermes Webmail, Thunderbird and MS Outlook can all send and receive text with accents. All three are available on the PWF in the Email folder.

The standard keyboard shortcuts available in MS Word will not work in other programs. To enter accented characters directly into your emails you need to set up a foreign keyboard as described in the first part of this leaflet. If you have been used to using Word’s shortcuts you will probably find that the easiest keyboard is US with International layout as this sets up very similar combinations.

Thunderbird and Outlook are able to send text in a variety of encodings. You may need to exchange some test messages with your colleagues to discover the optimum language settings, which may vary depending on the operating system they are using. Try the default setting first. If this is not successful it is worth trying the two Unicode options, UTF-8 or UTF-7. E-mail is most likely to work if both parties are using the same kind of computer (i.e. both Macs or both PCs).

Hermes Webmail is designed to be simple and straightforward, so is probably the best option if you are not confident about changing your settings. It will transmit email in Unicode, which is the most modern standard.
We have found that **Thunderbird** is generally the best of the three programs if you prefer to be able to customise your email settings.

**Do I need to install an MS Office Language Pack on my own computer?**

Probably not; this is only needed if you want to change the language of your program *menus* or if you want proofing tools (spellcheck etc.) which are not already bundled with the version of Office which you have on your computer.

If you need proofing tools for a particular language the simplest way to check this is to enable the language keyboard as described on the first page of this leaflet. This will automatically enable the associated tools in Office if they are installed. Start up Word, then switch keyboards and type something with a spelling error. If check spelling as you type is turned on Word will flag up the mistake.

**Further Advice**

If you have any problems using the MCS for foreign language work or need any further advice, please contact the University Information Services Literary and Language Support specialist on 35029 or by emailing il-support@uis.cam.ac.uk

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