You Write Tomato, I Write Tōmātō…

Nick Wallingford

Bay of Plenty Polytechnic

Tauranga, New Zealand

nick.wallingford@boppoly.ac.nz

ABSTRACT

The poster describes the process of investigation and selection for macron software for Māori language students at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic.

It presents the alternatives that were identified and discusses potential advantages and disadvantages in each.

The poster has a dual emphasis of technology and the use of standards, but also on the degree of respect accorded language through the appropriate provision of the requisite tools for students.

1   POSTER OVERVIEW

The poster reports on a 'work in progress', a project to provide macronising ability for students at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic. The author identifieds and investigates a range of approaches to macron provision for Māori language students and presents (in this preliminary work) the various methods encountered in the literature.

The work to date has involved identification, and the development of a selection methodology. The poster reports on the project to that stage only.

The Bay of Plenty Polytechnic has, at this stage, chosen to implement a full UNICODE-based macron provision, based on ideas and utilities provided by Durdin (2002) and Taiuru (2001). The poster describes the issues that were considered in the selection. Future research into the issue will attempt to quantify user uptake and attitudes to the utility provided.

2   RANGE OF USER REQUIREMENTS TO CONSIDER

2.1   Word Processing and Other Office Applications

Students have expressed the need to use macrons in their written work, particularly in word processing. The project attempted to identify a method that as easy for a student to use, but provided as technically 'sound' a solution as possible.

2.2   WWW documents

The project also considers the presentation of student work on the World Wide Web, and the impact of the standards employed for presentation.

3   CONSIDERATION OF APPROACHES

The poster presents the range of methods of provision identified, commenting on each and attempting to develop a sound decision-making framework for the provision of macrons for student use.

3.1   Ignore the Issue

There is no obligation to do anything. We could simply let students attempt whatever 'solutions' to the non-provision of facility that they choose. Some might choose to do nothing, others may choose (in some cases) to double vowels in writing, such as in "Maaori".

3.2   Ignore the Issue, But Explain Why

Provide students with an explanation for non-provision, indicating that in the face of no widely accepted standards, it is felt best to do nothing.

3.3   Use of Umlaut

Explain the creation of ASCII based umlauts, as in "Mäori". Describe the advantages and potential disadvantages inherent in this approach.

3.4   UTF-8 Macron Use:

Described by some writers as a provisional measure only (Ryniker, 2000), deliver macrons through the use of ASCII character encoding advertised as UTF-8 in the HTTP header.

3.5   UNICODE Macron Use

Use of true UNICODE macrons for students. Suitable for all applications, but not (historically) universally supported by browsers and other software.

4   REFERENCES

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TAIURU, K. (2001): *Te Ngutu Kura online unicode macroniser.* [On-line] Retrieved 1 April 2003 from the WWW: http://www.maorispellchecker.net.nz/resources/unicoder.html