ABA Workshop

18th June 2020, 12.00 pm (EST)

Quotes and apostrophes
Word and DBT
Additional Notes

Kathy Riessen, June 2020

The workshop to be held on Thursday, 18 June is designed to be hands on as much as possible. You can either just watch the demonstration OR if you have access to a second screen or another computer running Word you can try out the processes demonstrated for yourself. You will need to ensure that you have Smart Quotes switched ON in Word.

File [alt-f]

Options [t]

Proofing [p]

Auto-correct options [alt-a]

Auto format as you type [ctrl-tab to correct option]

Replace "straight quotes" with "smart quotes" [tab to option then ensure checkbox is ticked]

OK [enter]

Background

In October last year, Section 7.6 of the Rulebook was updated and approved by the International Council on English Braille covering the topic of quotes and apostrophes. This can be downloaded from ICEB.org. The concept of non-specific

quotation marks was removed and replaced with specific symbols for single and double quotes. Rule 7.6.4 allows for the assignment of double and single quotation marks to be exchanged so that a single cell sign is used for the dominant quote.

The apostrophe remains unchanged as dot 3.

The challenge for transcribers using the Duxbury Braille Translator (DBT) or other translation methods, is to ensure that clear distinction is made between single quotes and apostrophes in such a way that the software gets it right.

Smart Quotes

By default, Word uses a feature called Smart Quotes where, as you type, quotation marks and apostrophes are automatically converted to their directional opening and closing form.

In the past it was recommended that transcribers switch off this feature, and use the apostrophe key (to the right of semi colon) for the apostrophe and the grave (left of numeral 1) as a single quote. However, these days transcribers rarely sit and type documents from scratch. Files are obtained from a variety of sources which more often than not contain directional quotes. It makes sense to work with smart quotes as the default setting in Word, rather than changing every document to straight quotes.

Theory

The following are the Unicode and ASCII numbers for each of the characters used for quotes. These numbers are important when using Search and Replace to ensure the correct character.

	Unicode	ASCII
Opening double	201C	0147
Closing double	201D	0148
Straight double	0022	0034
Opening single	2018	0145
Closing single	2019	0146
Straight single	0037	0039

The straight quote is is always translated as an apostrophe.

Overriding Smart Quotes in Word

Smart quotes can be overridden as you type by pressing ctrl-z immediately after typing the quote to cancel the smart quotes. This can be used to manually ensure the straight apostrophe.

Simbraille or Braille fonts

When using the Simbraille or Braille fonts in Word, dot 3 (apostrophe) and dot 5 (double quote) do not display correctly when Smart Quotes are on. Pressing ctrl-z immediately after typing the symbol corrects this.

DBT with quotes and apostrophes

The Duxbury Braille Translator (DBT)

- Always translates the straight apostrophe character as the dot 3 apostrophe. This feature can be used to ensure correct translation of apostrophes.

- Generally, with a few minor exceptions translates directional quotes at the beginning and end of words as quotation marks.

Putting it together

The following algorithm describes my thinking process for ensuring correct quotes. We will be manually going through these steps in the workshop, however they can be consolidated into macros to automate the process as much as possible.

The main object is to eliminate any discrepancies between single quotes and apostrophes. To minimise the number of single quotes, I always use the double quote as the dominant quote. This is easily swapped back later if required.

My algorithm when receiving a file from an external source:

- Convert as many apostrophes as possible to the straight apostrophe

  * Search and Replace using wildcards all instances of a closing single quote (ASCII 0146) followed by a letter with the straight apostrophe (ASCII 39).

  * Search and replace all instances of the letter s followed by a single quote with the letter s followed by the straight apostrophe (ASCII 39)

- If single quotes are used predominantly in the document, swap the assignment of single and double quotes. [These steps can be repeated once the document has been proofread if you wish to swap back to the single quote being the dominant quote.]

  * Search and replace all instances of opening single quote (ASCII 0145) with placeholder %%%%

* Search and replace all instances of closing single quote (ASCII 0146) with placeholder @@@@

* Search and replace all instances of double quotes with single quotes. No need to be specific.

* Search and replace all instance of placeholder text %%%% with double quotes. No need to be specific with replace.

- For sighted transcribers, adding a highlight colour to the quote and apostrophe characters aids in proofreading and double checking. The colours listed below are my choice and could be any preference.

  * Search and replace all instances of double quotes with yellow highlight

  * Search and replace all instances of single quotes with turquoise

  * Search and replace all instances of straight quotes with bright green

- Manually search through the document for the letter s followed by an apostrophe and replace with a closing single quote if this is the context.

- Manually search through document for all instances of what should be an apostrophe at the beginning of a word and replace with straight apostrophe.

The Word document is now ready for proofreading, where any other incorrect quotes should be picked up. For sighted transcribers the use of colour aids this.

Special cases

There hasn't been a new release of DBT since the new rules for Quotes and Apostrophes. The next release may fix up some of the following.

- An open single quote following a hyphen translates as an apostrophe. Use the grave character instead for correct translation

- When a quote appears in a position other than at the beginning of a word, DBT translates this with the 2-cell opening quote as is correct. However DBT doesn't use the 2-cell corresponding closing quote as per 7.6.7. This needs to be manually sorted. An option is to put the code [q~^] before the closing quote.

- A stand alone closing single quote will translate as an opening quote. This need to be manually changed.

Non-directional quotes

There are some contexts where the UEB signs for non-directional quotes are required. This may be appropriate for computer notation where actual keystrokes are important rather than punctuation meaning.

- The non-directional single quote or apostrophe: The straight apostrophe U0027 will always translate as dot 3. Press Ctrl+z immediately after typing a single quote/apostrophe to undo Smart Quotes.

- The non-directional double quote: This translates in DBT as an open or closing quote depending on position. [ucl1~"] sets DBT to translate the keyboard double quote as the non-directional double quote. [ucl0~"] reverts to the default position.

Useful DBT Codes

When DBT translates a file, it determines that the first open quote encountered to be translated as the double quote single-cell form, whether the print is single or double. There is provision to manually control the predominant quote.

[uoq] will reset the predominant quote to the next open quote found.

[uoq~"] sets the predominant quote to the double quote.

[uoq~'] sets the predominant quote to the single quote.

With the new rules, always putting the code [uoq~"] at the beginning of a document will ensure that regardless of whether the first quote encountered is single or double, quotes will be translated correctly.