Belgians, Flemings: Demand your Swiss Keyboard!

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Belgian AZERTY keyboard

Three variants: French, Belgian and Tamazight (Berber). The *AZERTY layout is used in France, Belgium and some African countries.* It differs from the QWERTY layout in this:

- The location of the `[A]` and `[Q]` keys are interchanged.
- The location of the `[Z]` and `[W]` keys are interchanged.
- `[M]` is moved to the right of `[L]` (where `[; :]` is on a US keyboard),
- The digits `[0]` to `[9]` are on the same keys, but to be typed the *shift key must be pressed.* The unshifted positions are used for accented characters,
- `[Caps lock]` is replaced by `[Shift lock]`, thus *affecting non-letter keys as well.* However, there is an ongoing evolution towards a `[Caps lock]` key instead of a `[Shift lock]`.

It is used by most French speakers based in Europe, though France and Belgium each have their own national variations on the layout. Luxemburg and the French-speaking part of Switzerland use the Swiss QWERTZ keyboard. Most of the residents of Quebec, the mainly French-speaking province of Canada, use a QWERTY keyboard that has been adapted to the French language, although the government of Quebec and the Canadian federal government stipulate and use the Multilingual Standard keyboard CAN/CSA Z243.200-92.[1][2][3]

Het is de meest gebruikelijke indeling in België en in Frankrijk. Het toetsenbord is ontworpen om gemakkelijk Franstalige teksten te kunnen invoeren, doch wordt niet alleen in Franstalige gebieden gebruikt: in heel België, waaronder het Nederlandstalige Vlaanderen, is AZERTY de norm.

Er zijn twee varianten van het AZERTY-toetsenbord: de Franse en de Belgische. De letters staan op dezelfde plaats, maar een aantal symbolen staat anders, bijvoorbeeld het gelijkheidsteken (=) en het uitroepteken (!).

AZERTY-toetsenborden zijn speciaal geschikt voor het Frans: de accentletters die in die taal het vaakst worden gebruikt, namelijk à, ç, é, è en ù, hebben elk een eigen toets. Dit betekent echter niet dat de AZERTY-indeling een noodzaak is om Frans te typen. Ook Canadese toetsenborden (QWERTY) en Zwitserse toetsenborden (QWERTZ) hebben aparte toetsen voor Franse accentletters.

Kenmerkend voor AZERTY-toetsenborden is dat ze geen caps lock-toets hebben, maar net zoals oude schrijfmachines een shift lock-toets.

The Belgian AZERTY keyboard was developed from the French AZERTY keyboard, but some adaptations were made in the 1980s. All letters remain in the same positions as on the French keyboard, but there are:

- additional symbols (³, ´, `)
- other symbols in different locations (!, @, -, _, +, =, §)

Apple uses a slightly different layout for its Belgian AZERTY keyboards. Most notable are the different locations for the @-sign and €-sign, among others. This makes it more difficult to use a non-Apple keyboard on a Mac, since *OSX does not provide native support for the standard Belgian AZERTY layout.* Third party support is available however. [7]

Historical grounds

IBM 5150

IBM 5150 — Le fameux ordinateur PC d'IBM - 1981 (disponible en France à partir de 1983 seulement1). le responsable de conception du clavier français, Marcel Boulogne, refusa de donner son aval tant que le clavier de disposerait pas d'une touche µ pour le système métrique (µm, µA, µV, µF, etc.). Il eut finalement gain de cause et cette touche est toujours présente sur les claviers actuels

The underlying historical reason is much darker, as is usual with Belgian's history.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flemish_movement

Flemish repression

Upon Belgium becoming an independent state from the Netherlands, there was an (administrative) reaction against the Dutch and their language. In an attempt to remove Dutch from the new country, Belgian officials declared that the only official language in Belgium now was French. The Administration,

Justice System, and higher education (apart from elementary schools in Flanders) all functioned in the French language.[2] Even Brussels, the capital where more than 95% of the population spoke Dutch, lacked a formal, state sanctioned Flemish school of higher education.[3] The consequence was that every contact with the government and justice was conducted in French. This led to a number of erroneous legal judgements where innocent people received the death penalty because they were not able to verbally defend themselves at trials.[4]

The French-speaking Belgian government succeeded in removing the Dutch language from all levels of government more quickly in Brussels than in any other part of Flanders.[5] Because the administration was centred in Brussels, more and more French-speaking officials took up residency there. Education in Brussels was only in French which led to a surplus of young, unskilled and uneducated Flemish men. Dutch was hardly taught in the French schools.[6] For example: Dutch was worth 10 points in French schools, but drawing earned 15 points.[2] Today 16% of Brussels is Dutch-speaking, whereas in 1830 it was over 95%.[7]

The French-speaking bourgeoisie showed very little respect for the Flemish portion of the population.

> Belgium's co-founder, Charles Rogier, wrote in 1832 to Jean-Joseph Raikem, the minister of justice: "The first principles of a good administration are based upon the exclusive use of one language, and it is evident that the only language of the Belgians should be French. In order to achieve this result, it is necessary that all civil and military functions are entrusted to Walloons and Luxemburgers; this way, the Flemish, temporarily deprived of the advantages of these offices, will be constrained to learn French, and we will hence destroy bit by bit the Germanic element in Belgium."[7]

Roman numerals

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Numerals Still today, French count on their hand and feet. quatre-vingts Swiss huitante la Vallée d'Aoste (Italie) Catalan , Spanish Louis 14 but Louis XIV XVième arrondissement A remaining battle for Flemish emancipation

East Cantons

At the beginning of the 1920s, the municipalities composing these territories were regrouped into three districts: Eupen, Malmedy, and Sankt Vith. The linguistic situation of the wider area is complex since it lies on the border between the Romance and Germanic languages and on an isogloss dividing several German dialects. Eupen-Malmedy, or the East Cantons (in German, die Ostkantone; in French, les Cantons de l'Est; in Dutch, de Oostkantons), is a group of cantons in Belgium, composed of the former Prussian districts (Kreise in German) of Malmedy and Eupen, together with the Neutral Moresnet. French-speaking Belgians also once called them the Redeemed Cantons. These territories were annexed to Belgium in 1920 by the Versailles Treaty.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Cantons

Shift lock impracticalities

- Shift: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 ¨ .
- no Shift: é è ç à ^ ù
- AltGr: ^ ´ `

Intermezzo

Robert Cailliau (born 26 January 1947) is a Flemish informatics engineer and computer scientist who, together with Tim Berners-Lee, >developed the World Wide Web. Cailliau was born in Tongeren, Belgium.

Multilingualism

language-neutral.

US international keyboard

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QWERTY#US-International

Dutch keyboard

The Dutch layout is seldom used. It has additions for the € sign, the diaresis ¨ and more, whereas braces { } and other symbols are differently located. Most computers in The Netherlands use the US international layout. The Dutch keyboard layout is QWERTY. However, in Flanders (the Dutch-speaking region and community of Belgium), AZERTY keyboards are used instead, due to influence from the French-speaking part of Belgium.

Canadian French keyboard

This keyboard layout is commonly used in Canada by French-speaking Canadians. It is the most common layout for laptops and stand-alone keyboards targeting French speakers. Unlike the French layout used in Europe, the Canadian French layout is a true QWERTY and as such is also relatively commonly used by English speakers in the US and Canada (using standard QWERTY keyboards) for easy access to accented letters found in some of the French words commonly used in English. It can be used to type all accented French characters, as well as some from other languages. It also serves all English functions as well. It is popular mainly because of its close similarity to the basic US keyboard commonly used by English-speaking Canadians and Americans, historical use of US-made typewriters by French-Canadians, and is the standard for keyboards in Quebec. Use of the European French layout in Quebec is practically unheard of.

Canadian Multilingual Standard keyboard

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QWERTY#Canadian_Multilingual_Standard
The Canadian Multilingual Standard keyboard layout is used by some Canadians. Though this keyboard lacks the caret (^) character, this is easily accomplished by typing the circumflex accent followed by a space.

Swiss keyboard

Switzerland (German, French, Italian, Romansh), Liechtenstein, Luxembourg

The layout of the Swiss keyboard is designed to allow easy access to frequently used accents of the French, German and Italian languages. The difference between the Swiss German (sg) and the Swiss French (sf) layout is that the German variety has the German umlauts (ä, ö, ü) accessible without dead keys, while the French version has the French accented characters (é, à, è) accessible in the unshifted state. The actual keyboards have the keys engraved for both variations; the difference is only in the driver setting. In the latest versions of Windows there are also separately listed driver settings for Swiss Italian and Swiss Romansh, but they correspond to the Swiss French and Swiss German layout, respectively. In Mac OS X 10.6 only Swiss French and Swiss German is available.

On Windows, Swiss German does not include the esszett (ß) ligature, which is only used in Germany and Austria, and so that letter is not found on the keyboard. Linux typically assigns ß to AltGr-s.

While the German keyboard uses German-language abbreviations (e.g. Strg for German Steuerung instead of Ctrl for Control), Swiss keyboards use the English abbreviations as a "neutral" solution, as they are used for all the national languages of Switzerland.

Luxembourg does not have a keyboard layout of its own. Public education uses the Swiss-French keyboard, while the banking sector prefers the Belgian layout[citation needed]. Other places use either or the US layout. Liechtenstein, which also has no keyboard layout of its own, uses the Swiss German keyboard.

AltGr + ü # References