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Macintosh: Mapping Russian Cyrillic Letters from PC (3/93)

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TOPIC -----

I run a BBS on FIDO NET at school, and one of the primary uses is to communicate with Russia via E-Mail. All of the systems in Russia are running on IBMs or compatibles. In order to transmit messages in Russian, they have used the High Bit ASCII code and put the Cyrillic alphabet there. I have a clone connecting to Russia, and from it I can read, write, and send messages in Russian.

Most of our students access the BBS from Macintosh computers in our computer center or from home; the Macintosh computers can neither read nor write messages in Russian. That which is High ASCII Russian on the clone, is High ASCII garbage on the Macintosh. Surely there must be a way to access the High Bit code on the Macintosh, place Cyrillic letters there, and then have a simple toggle to switch to and from High ASCII.

DISCUSSION -----

By "High Bit code," we are assuming that the Cyrillic characters are placed in locations 128 to 255 in the ASCII range on the PC. Well, the limiting factor here is really character mapping -- how to get the specific character mapping on the PC translated into a special character mapping on the Macintosh.

One possible solution would be to get the exact character map used on the PC, and then create or modify an existing Macintosh font to have the same characters and mapping. You'd have to verify how those characters map to the keyboard on the Macintosh to write Russian back. (Note: the Option key will most likely be used in conjunction with another key in order to access most of the "High Bit" ASCII characters). Making this all work wouldn't be very easy, and would require use of tools like Fontographer and ResEdit to modify the FONT and KCHR resources.

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