How to create Your own keyboard?

Bestboard reads all information about Your keyboard from human-readable plain text (so called "coat") files. These files should be located inside Bestboard's working directory (??), and each file should use UTF8 encoding.

Let's create a new file with any text-editor! It can have any name, but it is a good idea to give it ".coat" extension. Just name it: "FirstKeyboard.coat"

Every "coat" file starts with the "COAT version" line, so type the first line:

COAT 1000

Boards and layout

You can use Your Android device either in "portrait" or in "landscape" (wide screen) mode. For these two orientations Bestboard can create two different (standard and wide) keyboard layouts. One pair of standard and wide layouts are a board. Each board will change layout automatically if orientation of the device changes. Good to know, that any layout can be used in different boards, and any board can use the same (non-wide) layout for the two orientations.

The easiest way is to define a non-wide layout, which can be used for both orientations on one board:

ADDLAYOUT ( ID keyboard ROWS 5 COLUMNS 10 ASBOARD START )

ADDLAYOUT command will add a new layout. Command parameters are listed inside parentheses. The name (ID) of the new layout is "keyboard", it has 5 rows and 10 columns. The buttons are hexagonal shaped, so eventually there is one "half" column more space.

ASBOARD parameter asks the system to use this layout "as board" – so this non-wide layout will be used for both orientations on the same board. This board gets the same ID (as the layout), and START parameter signs, that Bestboard should start with this board. (Because more boards and layouts can be defined)

How to add buttons to layouts?

Buttons are organized into BLOCKS. This is useful, if we want to use block of buttons on more layouts. Now we will create only one block, which places BUTTONS of numbers – on the "keyboard" layout, starting form the first column of the first row.

Block automatically steps on the "next" button position every time a button is defined. A new block can be defined for the next row, or – more easily – button-cursor position can be moved to the beginning of the next line. Carriage-return (because of the hexagonal shape) can go to the left (use CRL) or to the right (use CRR) of the first button in the previous row.

Let's see the complete coat file:

COAT 1000

ADDLAYOUT ( ID keyboard COLUMNS 10 ROWS 5 ASBOARD START )

BLOCK (

LAYOUT keyboard ROW 1 COLUMN 1

BUTTON ( TEXT "0")

BUTTON ( TEXT "1")

BUTTON ( TEXT "2")

BUTTON ( TEXT "3")

BUTTON ( TEXT "4")

BUTTON ( TEXT "5")

BUTTON ( TEXT "6")

BUTTON ( TEXT "7")

BUTTON ( TEXT "8")

BUTTON ( TEXT "9")

CRR

BUTTON ( TEXT "0")

BUTTON ( TEXT "1")

BUTTON ( TEXT "2")

BUTTON ( TEXT "3")

BUTTON ( TEXT "4")

BUTTON ( TEXT "5")

BUTTON ( TEXT "6")

BUTTON ( TEXT "7")

BUTTON ( TEXT "8")

BUTTON ( TEXT "9")

)

What about special buttons?

Before using our keyboard some other special buttons should be defined.