Publisher Survey of Ethiopic Layout  
& Formatting Practices

A Survey of the   
W3C Ethiopic Layout Requirements Task Force

# Purpose of This Survey

This goal of this survey is to determine the best practices of layout and formatting for literature written in the Ethiopic script. The information gathered from the survey will be used to define an international standard governed by the World Wide Web Consortium. The resulting standard will be free to use by software companies who in turn may then apply the information to correctly format Ethiopian literature in electronic forms such as web pages, eBooks, and by word processors.

Many languages have a long history of writing in Ethiopic script and have developed different conventions and styles of writing. All of these styles can be supported by software provided that the appropriate information is collected. The aim of this survey is to collect the necessary information to support all writing traditions present and past –many of which may be unknown to the survey team. Please feel free to provide any additional information that you feel is important. The questions in the survey primarily attempt to resolve discrepancies in the most commonly observed practices of general literature.

This survey process and the standardization work activity are conducted by volunteers with a deep interest in Ethiopic literature and layout and who do not stand to profit from their involvement. You are also invited to join them to follow the work as well as to participate in its development as you desire.

**References and Points of Contact:**

The Ethiopic Layouts Requirements draft specification:

http://w3c.github.io/elreq/

The W3C Ethiopic Layout Task Force’s mail archive with subscription information:

https://lists.w3.org/Archives/Public/public-i18n-ethiopic/

Respondents Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Company or Institute:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Role at Institute: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Years involved with literature or publishing: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Literature or publishing languages: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Areas of expertise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Instructions:

Please respond to the survey questions to the best of your ability based on practical experience. Survey question cover a very wide range of topics *-please do not guess an answer*. It is preferred that a question is left unanswered when the respondent is uncertain or the topic is outside of one’s experience and expertise.

Please use additional space as needed. Questions on the meaning of survey questions may be addressed to the provider of this survey. You are welcome and encouraged to provide any additional information that you think is relevant.

# **Characters and phrases**

## **Font styles** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 2.3)*

[ address emphasis ]

## **Transforming characters** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 2.6)*

*uppercase, capitalised and lowercase alternatives according to your typographic needs? Do you need to to convert between half-width and full-width presentation forms?*[*See available information*](http://w3c.github.io/typography/index#transforming_characters)*or*[*check for currently needed data*](https://github.com/w3c/i18n-activity/issues?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=is%3Aissue%20is%3Aopen%20label%3Atext-transform%20label%3Atype-info-request)*.*

There should be a way to automatically convert word-space characters to ordinary spaces, and vice versa.

The [layout requirements document](https://w3c.github.io/elreq/#space_wordspace_substitution_rules) has an algorithm that can be used to convert between the two.

## **Numbers & digits** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 2.7)*

The Ge’ez numbers can be found written in two styles where the upper and lower bars (lines) can be either separated or connected.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Isolated style – the numeral bars do not connect. |
| Joining style – the numeral bars are connected. |

**Survey Questions:**

1. Which style should be the default? ☐ No opinion ☐ Isolated ☐ Joined
2. Are both styles desirable? ☐ No opinion ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. If both styles are desired:  
   1. When would the isolated style be used? Please explain:  
      \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
      \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. When would the joined style be used? Please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Text boundaries & selection** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 2.8)*

*When you double- or triple-click on the text, is the expected range of characters highlighted? When you move through the text with the cursor, or backspace, etc. do you see the expected behaviour? Are there issues when applying punctuation than could be fixed by the application?*[*See available information*](http://w3c.github.io/typography/index#graphemes)*or*[*check for currently needed data*](https://github.com/w3c/i18n-activity/issues?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=is%3Aissue%20is%3Aopen%20label%3Aboundaries%20label%3Atype-info-request)*.*

There's a question about whether double-click selection should pick up the wordspace character as well (it does in MS Word, but spaces are not picked up in Firefox for text with normal spaces between words...).

## **Quotations** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 2.9)*

Classical Ethiopic literature applying quotation marks will employ double guillemet (« ») in a primary style and single guillemets (‹ ›) in a secondary style. Single guillemets will be used for inner-quotation and single word quotation. Modern Ethiopic writing will additionally utilize Latin quotation marks similarly (“ ”, ‘ ’). The choice of Latin script quotation may represent either an author preference or a software limitation that made guillemets unavailable or difficult to access.

**Survey Questions:**

1. Which style should be the default for Ethiopic literature: ☐ No opinion ☐ « » ☐ “ ”
2. Are both styles appropriate for Ethiopic literature? ☐ No opinion ☐ No  
   ☐ Yes (Please Explain): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What form is appropriate for outer quotation: ☐ No opinion ☐ Single ☐ Double
4. What form is appropriate for inner quotation: ☐ No opinion ☐ Single ☐ Double
5. What are the preferred quotation marks for modern Ethiopic literature?  
   ☐ No opinion ☐ « » ☐ “ ” ☐ It depends (Please Explain): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Is the single quotation mark usage statement correct?

☐ No opinion ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Other rules (Please Explain):  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do any other rules apply to quotation usage in Ethiopic writing?

☐ No opinion ☐ No ☐ Yes (Please Explain):  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What symbols should be used for inner quotes?  
   ☐ No opinion ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Other Rules (Please Explain):  
   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Are block quotes indented? How much?  
   ☐ No opinion ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Other Rules (Please Explain):  
   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# **Lines and Paragraphs**

## **Line breaking** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 3.1)*

*Does the browser capture the rules about the way text in your script wraps when it hits the end of a line? What characters should not appear at the end or start of a line, and what should be done to prevent that? Does line-breaking wrap whole 'words' at a time, or characters, or something else (such as syllables in Tibetan)?*[*See available information*](http://w3c.github.io/typography/index#line_breaking)*or*[*check for currently needed data*](https://github.com/w3c/i18n-activity/issues?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=is%3Aissue%20is%3Aopen%20label%3Aline-break%20label%3Atype-info-request)*.*

Need to run a test to check whether the ethiopic characters that shouldn't appear at line end/start behave as expected given the [elreq rules](https://w3c.github.io/elreq/" \l "ethiopic_line_breaking).

And need to test whether lines break between characters. Firefox appears to allow this, but Chrome and Safari wrap whole words (with wordspace) instead. Marking this, therefore, as basic issue. Need to check what the CSS spec says.

## **Hyphenation** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 3.2)*

In traditional Ethiopic writing the wordspace separator symbol, “፡”, negated the need for word hyphenation across a line of text. When wordspace fell out of favor in modern writing the practice of splitting a word across lines of text continued. The reader would know to mentally reconstruct a word by relying on knowledge of lexicon and context.

**Survey Questions:**

1. When wordspace, “፡”, is used, what rules for splitting a word across lines apply?  
   ☐ No opinion ☐ None, a word may be split anywhere ☐ The following rules:  
   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. When space, “ ”, is used, should Ethiopic writing use a hyphen “‐” to split words across lines?  
   ☐ No opinion ☐ Never ☐ Author’s decision ☐ Other (Please Explain):  
   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. When space, “ ”, is used, and if words should be split across lines (with or without a hyphen), are the following rules for word splitting suitable?

* Words are split at a morpheme boundary, for example: ቤተ‐  
  መንግሥት .
* Words are split at a syllable boundary.
* Words of a single syllable are not split over lines.
* Words of two letters are not split over lines.
* Words are split after a prefix.
* Words are split before a suffix.
* Numbers are not split over lines.
* Words are not split at the final letter.

☐ No opinion ☐ Yes ☐ No, a word may be split  
☐ No or Incomplete (Please Explain):  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Justification** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 3.3)*

*When text in a paragraph needs to have flush lines down both sides, does it follow the rules for your script? Does the script need assistance to conform to a grid pattern? Does your script allow punctuation to hang outside the text box at the start or end of a line? Where adjustments are need to make a line flush, how is that done? Do you shrink/stretch space between words and/or letters? Are word baselines stretched, as in Arabic?*[*See available information*](http://w3c.github.io/typography/index#justification)*or*[*check for currently needed data*](https://github.com/w3c/i18n-activity/issues?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=is%3Aissue%20is%3Aopen%20label%3Ajustification%20label%3Atype-info-request)*.*

When text uses ethiopic wordspace the wordspace should expand to assist in justification. Need some tests to check whether than happens. This is a basic issue, so if tests fail, we need to change the status of this section.

However, there need to be some rules about how to position the ink within the wordspace character (with the word, or centred), and a control to allow the preferred style of positioning. I'm classifying that as an advanced control. See [the requirements](https://w3c.github.io/elreq/#ethiopic_justification).

## **Counters, lists, etc.** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 3.4)*

*The CSS Counter Styles specification describes a limited set of simple and complex styles for counters to be used in list numbering, chapter heading numbering, etc. Are the details correct? We have another document that provides over 120 templates for user-defined counter styles in over 30 scripts. Are there more? Are there other aspects related to counters and lists that need to be addressed?*[*See available information*](http://w3c.github.io/typography/index#counters)*or*[*check for currently needed data*](https://github.com/w3c/i18n-activity/issues?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=is%3Aissue%20is%3Aopen%20label%3Acounter-styles%20label%3Atype-info-request)*.*

Ethiopic script text uses local counter styles. While some of these are supported by some browsers, the set of symbols used and their order varies by language. Custom counter styles can be created using Firefox only. The CSS spec needs to become a Rec and more browsers need to support it.

There is also a question (which is probably an advanced issue) about whether counters should align to the left or right.

## **Initial letter styling** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 3.5)*

*Does the browser or ereader correctly handle special styling of the initial letter of a line or paragraph, such as for drop caps or similar?*[*See available information*](http://w3c.github.io/typography/index#initial_letter)*or*[*check for currently needed data*](https://github.com/w3c/i18n-activity/issues?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=is%3Aissue%20is%3Aopen%20label%3Ainitial-letter%20label%3Atype-info-request)*.*

# **Layout & pages**

## **Page numbering, running headers, etc.** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 4.4)*

*Are there special conventions for page numbering, or the way that running headers and the like are handled?*[*See available information*](http://w3c.github.io/typography/index#page_numbering_running_headers)*or*[*check for currently needed data*](https://github.com/w3c/i18n-activity/issues?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=is%3Aissue%20is%3Aopen%20label%3Apage-numbering%20label%3Atype-info-request)*.*

Assumed to be same as for English, in general. However, [elreq proposes](https://w3c.github.io/elreq/" \l "h_page_numbering) that users should be able to toggle between European and Ethiopic numerals for the page numbering.

## **Other page layout & pagination features** *(W3C Ethiopic Layout Gap Analysis 4.5)*

*Some cultures define page areas and page progression direction very differently from those in the West (eg. kihon hanmen in Japanese). Is this an issue for you? Are widows and orphans relevant? In what order do pages progress, RTL or LTR?*[*See available information*](http://w3c.github.io/typography/index#more_page_layout_and_pagination)*or*[*check for currently needed data*](https://github.com/w3c/i18n-activity/issues?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=is%3Aissue%20is%3Aopen%20label%3Apagination%20label%3Atype-info-request)*.*