

Macfast Malayalam Keyboard Interface.

This application provides an interface, which enables Windows/GNU-Linux users to type Malayalam in a comfortable way. It would enable users to switch between English and Malayalam keyboard layout and make the tedious task of typing Malayalam using normal US keyboard, much easier by providing fewer keystrokes for all letters including mixed characters and Phonemes.

The MCA students of MACFAST had come across the need for an easier way to use the keyboard for malayalam users and had taken up this project successfully. This product can be downloaded free of cost from the Macfast website for anyone wanting to use the same thereby uploading the highest principles of learning by contributing to the society and community at large by finding a solution to a problem faced by Malayalam keyboard users.

We provide three versions.

1. Windows (UNICODE version).
2. Windows (ASCII version).
3. GNU-Linux.

Windows versions

You can download all three versions of “Macfast Malayalam” from our website www.macfast.org, free of cost. For windows versions download the zip files from the site and unzip it. Execute the file ‘Setup.exe’ by doubleclicking on it. This will take you through an installation wizard. On first screen you may click the “Next” button and then on the next screen you may click the “Finish” button. Now you have finished with the installation and you can start using Macfast Malayalam by doubleclicking on the icon on the desktop or in the start menu.

1. UNICODE version.

The unicode version uses any unicode fonts to type Malayalam very easily on all applications of MS-Office and other applications like MSN messenger or any application with unicode support.

Requirements.

Windows XP

Office XP

How to use.

Run the application by clicking on the shortcuts either on desktop or in start menu. Select the font of your application as any font provided by us (Fonts will be automatically installed). Now its ready to use Macfast Malayalam keyboard. You can type malayalam by turning “Scroll Lock” ON. You can also toggle between Malayalam and English by toggling “Scroll Lock” ON or OFF. You can Start, Stop or Exit from this application by ‘Right clicking’ on the system tray icon.

Strength and weakness.

Strengths.

1. This version can be used with application with unicode support. We are not binding you to any editor given by us & the user is free to use any editor supporting UNICODE. The applications we have tested are

1. MS-Word XP
2. MS-Excel XP
3. MS-Powerpoint XP
4. MS-Frontpage XP
5. MS-Outlook XP
6. Outlook Express 6
7. MSN Messenger 6.2
8. Internet Explorer 6
9. Opera 7.51

2. Easy switching between Malayalam and English without changing fonts.

1. Easy Hand movement, hence maximum productivity.
2. Phonetically coupled letters.
3. No extra hardware required.
4. No key combinations are used.
5. Malayalam numbers can be used.
6. GNU/GPL.

Weaknesses.

1. There is no backward compatability with other versions of windows.
2. These can be used only with applications having UNICODE support.
3. Cannot be used to type directly into ‘Wordart’ editing window or any other child windows of MS Word. This will be overcome in next release.
4. Very Fast typing may introduce alien characters. This will also be overcome in next release.

5. Automatic font switching may cause error in MS Word. Disable that option in MS Word.
6. Other components like Excel sheet in MS Word can not use this software.

2. ASCII version.

The ASCII version uses font 'Karthika (CDAC)' to type Malayalam very easily on all applications of MS-Office, Windows paint, Notepad.

Requirements.

Windows 98

Office 98

How to use.

Run the application by clicking on the shortcuts either on desktop or in start menu. Now its ready to use Macfast Malayalam keyboard. You can type malayalam by selecting font 'ML-TTKarthika'. You can also toggle between Malayalam and English by changing fonts. You can Start, Stop or Exit from this application by 'Right clicking' on the system tray icon.

Strength and weakness.

Strengths.

1. This version can be used with applications MS-Word, Notepad and Windows paint.
2. Can be used with any available windows version(98 or above) regardless of UNICODE support.
3. Easy Hand movement, hence maximum productivity.
4. Phonetically coupled letters.
5. No extra hardware required.
6. No key combinations are used.
7. GNU/GPL.

Weaknesses.

1. Can not be used with other applications in MS Office, MSN etc..
2. Cannot be used to type directly into 'Wordart' editing window or any other child windows of MS Word.
3. The spell check in MS-Word may cause malformatting of words.
4. Other components like Excel sheet in MS Word can not use this software.

3. GNU Linux version

Installation HOWTO

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Getting Packages

In order to run Macfast Malayalam Keyboard Interface in its complete mode you need

1. GNOME Desktop (above 2)
2. GTK
3. Perl
4. Perl-GTK

If you are using Redhat complete installation, all these packages will be automatically installed.

The Macfast Malayalam Keyboard Interface can be downloaded from '<http://www.macfast.org/malayalam>'.

Download the latest RPM. Currently version is 0.1

1. Installation & Starting

Step 1: Installation

Login as root, change to the directory where you have the packages in your filesystem then install 'MacfastMalayalam' using following command

```
# rpm -ivh MacfastMalayalam-rh9-0.1-1.i386.rpm
```

Step 2: Starting

Login to your graphical display as a normal user, then in a bash shell type the following command

```
$ SetupMalayalam
```

or
\$ /usr/bin/SetupMalayalam

This will create a short cut in your Desktop. Using this short cut you can start and stop Macfast Malayalam Keyboard Interface.

OR

You can directly run the program as

\$ /usr/bin/MacMalStatus.pl

2. Usage

In Redhat 9, you can use OpenOffice to type Malayalam. If you are using Fedora Core 2, OpenOffice is not a stable version so use AbiWord.

Step 1:

Select Unicode Malayalam font.

Macfast Malayalam will install font 'malayalam' so select it. Some discarded fonts are also available along with this distribution.

Step 2:

You can switch between Malayalam keyboard and English using **Any Lock key** such as **Num Lock, Scroll Lock, Caps Lock**.

If all the locks are Off it is Malayalam Keyboard; in all other case it is English Keyboard.

To know the layout of Malayalam Keyboard use Manual given with Macfast Malayalam Package.