SignWriting in Software
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"The Sutton SignWriting Standard of 2017"

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The year 2017 was an important milestone for the Sutton SignWriting script, building upon the 2012 standard of Formal SignWriting in ASCII (FSW).

The new characters of SignWriting in Unicode (SWU) are equivalent with the characters of FSW, with an easy bidirectional conversion. The SWU characters can be used in a wide variety of applications and operating systems.

The new fonts offer several improvements. First, they standardize how signs are written in Scalar Vector Graphics (SVG). Second, they help visualize the SWU characters with a meaningful One-Dimensional display.

The new characters and fonts work together so that a sign can be written as a word. The internal structure of a sign is defined as a two-part word of time and space. This structure is clearly visible with the new characters and fonts, without the mental conversion required when using the 2012 standard of FSW.

For 2018, a two-dimensional font is planned that will use the SWU characters to display signs as two-dimensional clusters, rather than one-dimensional strings. With the two-dimensional font, SVG is no longer required. The two-dimensional font will allow SignWriting to be used as text in many of the same ways that other scripts are usable as text.

The Sutton SignWriting Standard of 2017 will be an enduring standard that allow signs written today to be used in the future. This stability will allow for the creation of standardized spellings for the signs of today and the signs of tomorrow. Outside of a few simple rules and structures, new signs can be written according to the designs of an author. Each sign language will be able to develop its own written tradition, while benefiting from an international community with standardized tools.