Documentos en Español? Sí Sí Sí!
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By John J. Pint

Since 1988, WordPerfect's popularity in Mexico has grown by leaps and bounds and I found myself busy designing an adequate training program for the Guadalajara area. One of the most obvious needs was a solution to the problem of typing accented letters with the least amount of trouble. This I did by using 5.1's Keyboard feature and mapping commonly used Spanish characters to Alt keys.

Spanish characters

Although Spanish doesn't have as many types of written accents as, for example, French, it does use them for á, é, í, ó, ú, ñ and, on a few occasions, ü. Spanish also has extra or different punctuation for exclamation marks, question marks and quotations. If you happened to have bought your computer in Spain, you would have a specialized keyboard that can produce all of these characters. Most Mexicans, however, own keyboards like those sold in the United States, leaving them with the same problem as their norteamericano counterparts when they sit down to type a letter in Spanish.

As usual, WordPerfect has more than one solution to the problem. First, you could produce a Spanish character like ¿ by pressing Compose (Ctrl-V) or (Ctrl-2) and then typing ??. An alternative would be to press Alt while typing 168 on the numeric keypad. Another method is to press Compose (Ctrl-V) or (Ctrl-2), type 4,8 and press (Enter). All of these methods are fine if you have a great memory and you're only interested in writing ¿Cómo estás?. However, if you're going to type an entire page in Castilian, you'll appreciate the speed and convenience of an alternative keyboard created within WordPerfect.

Switching keyboards is easy and you can even make a simple macro which will do the job for you, while at the same time "switching languages." More about that later.

Creating your Spanish keyboard

To create your Spanish keyboard press Setup (Shift-F1) and (5) Keyboard Layout. Now press (4) Create, type "Spanish" and press (Enter). Next press (8) Map and you'll find the cursor conveniently located in the "Alt Action" row under "A." Here you need to replace the bold "C" (meaning command) with the Spanish character. See Figure 1 for a listing of the characters, what to map them to and their corresponding numbers. For example, to map the Spanish á to the "A," press (1) Key, then Compose (Ctrl-V) or (Ctrl-2), type 1,27 and press (Enter). Now move the cursor beneath the other characters you want to map and follow the same steps above, substituting the correct numbers found in Figure 1 (see below) under Character number.

When you're finished designing your keyboard, press Exit (F7), then (1) Select to switch to this keyboard. Press Exit (F7) to return to the document screen.

Using your Spanish keyboard

You've just selected your Spanish keyboard. To use it, simply begin typing your document. When you're ready for a Spanish character, press the corresponding key.

One of the advantages to using your newly created keyboard is that all the letters or characters are created using the Alt key, which is easily reachable without taking your eyes off your document. It's also

easy to switch on and off. To return to your original keyboard, simply press (Ctrl-6). To switch back to your Spanish keyboard, press (Ctrl-6) twice.

One thing to remember, any macros you have with Alt names – (Alt-A), (Alt-X), etc. – will no longer operate while you're using your Spanish keyboard. However, they'll all be available again the moment you switch back to your normal setup using (Ctrl-6).

Macro for switching keyboards and languages

The included LANG.WPM macro will allow you to switch to your Spanish keyboard or back to your original one. It'll also insert the Spanish or English language code into your document. The advantage to using the language code is that WordPerfect's Date feature – Date/Outline (Shift-F5), (1) Date Text or (2) Date Code – will appear in whatever language you've chosen. The program will also search for hyphenation, speller and thesaurus files in that language. *Note: These files for a foreign language must be purchased separately.*

To invoke the macro, place your cursor at the spot where you want to begin typing in Spanish/English and press Macro (Alt-F10), type "lang" and press (Enter). You'll be asked if you want English or Spanish. If you press (S) for Spanish, your Spanish keyboard will be selected, the language code [Lang:ES] will appear in Reveal Codes (Alt-F3) and you'll be able to type Spanish characters. If you choose (E) for English, you'll be returned to the original keyboard and the language code [Lang:US] will appear in Reveal Codes (Alt-F3).

Figure 1. ✖

Map to	Character number	Resulting character	Key to press with SPANISH keyboard selected
A	1,27	á	Alt-a
D	1,71	ü	Alt-d (for Dieresis)
E	1,41	é	Alt-e
I	1,49	í	Alt-i
N	1,57	ñ	Alt-n
O	1,59	ó	Alt-o
P	4,8	¿	Alt-p (for Pregunta)
U	1,67	ú	Alt-u
X	4,7	¡	Alt-x (for Exclamativo)

Figure 1. Map each Spanish character to the above keys to complete your Spanish keyboard.