
NasKeysDesktop – Unicode Naskapi Syllabics Keyboarding

NasKeysDesktop is a set of program and font files which permit adding Naskapi Syllabics word-processing capabilities to existing Windows applications.

In Windows (and, in 1996, in Macintosh systems) NasKeys replaced the stand-alone DOS Naskapi Word processing systems in use since 1988. NasKeys takes advantage of all the powerful word processing capabilities built into programs like Microsoft Word, Paintbrush or Excel or even other programs like Firefox and Windows Messenger: In fact, any programs that use Unicode TrueType fonts. Contact the author if you need support for Macintosh.

The system is possible because of the development of a keyboard utility program called **Keyman Desktop**, by **Tavultesoft**. This program provides the capability to switch in and out of a mode which re-defines the keyboard. This keyboarding program, coupled with the locally designed syllabic font, form the basis for the NasKeys system.

Taking into account that a growing number of Naskapi have had some education in one of the majority languages, and more and more are becoming computer literate, and the standard QWERTY keyboard is familiar to them. This is also the generation of Naskapi who have a desire to be able to read and write in their own language and the syllabic orthography. The syllabic orthography has a high traditional value to them, but for many it seemed out of reach. We have found, for the Naskapi we have trained, that this system that combines what they *already know* (the English alphabet and a standard computer keyboard) with what they *want to know* (how to read syllabics) has a very high success rate and a manageable learning curve.

The system is essentially this: the user types in roman letters on a standard keyboard the way the word “sounds” in Naskapi. What he sees on the screen as he types is the word written in syllabics. Using scaleable TrueType fonts and current word processors, anyone can now produce clear, publication quality Naskapi syllabic documents with a minimum of training.

A benefit inherent in this system is that the hardware (the keyboard) does not need to be modified in any way with special key-caps or stickers, a new keyboard does not have to be learned and memorized, and that syllabics and non-syllabics (roman) words can be mixed in at any time in any place in the document.

Unicode

Unicode font encoding was developed in the 1990s in order to address the many requirements for multilingual and multi-platform computing. As of this writing, most programs fully support Unicode word processing, along with many web browser and websites.

Installing and Using NasKeysDesktop in Windows XP/Vista

Installation

The keyboard mapping program used is **Tavultesoft Keyman Desktop Version 7**. You will need to choose whether to install **Keyman Desktop Professional** or **Keyman Desktop Light**.

The main difference between the two versions is that **Keyman Desktop Professional** allows an unlimited number of keybaords to be installed and used concurrently, while **Keyman Desktop Light** only permits two keyboards to be installed and used. Since the Naskapi keyboard/font package includes only two keyboards, **Keyman Desktop Light** will be adequate unless you also plan to use other languages that need keyboard mapping.

The **NasKeysDesktop** keyboard installer is available (from the Tavultesoft download site) in three versions:

- (a) keyboards, fonts and documentation packaged with **Keyman Desktop Professional**;
- (b) keyboards, fonts and documentation packaged with **Keyman Desktop Light**;
- (c) keyboards, fonts and documentation only, for installation on computers which already have **Keyman Desktop Version 7** installed.

To install any version simply double click the downloaded installation file. This will install the **Tavultesoft Keyman Version 7** program (if included in the downloaded package), the keyboards, fonts and supporting documents. You will need to be logged on as a computer administrator (on Windows XP), or be able to enter a user name and password with administrative privileges (on Windows Vista) to install the package. The suggested (default) installation folder and settings will usually be most appropriate.

For all versions, a **NasKeysDesktop** menu will be installed to the **START** menu, and all documentation will be accessible from that menu.

Using the Keyboard and Font(s)

It should work in virtually any windows application. Here is how to use it:

- A. Launch Keyman Desktop (the Keyboarding program) by clicking **START PROGRAMS**

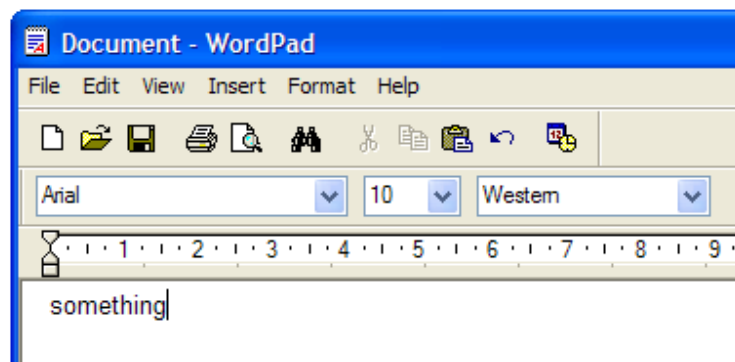
Tavultesoft Keyman Desktop Edition
Keyman Desktop Edition

where *Edition* will be either **Professional** or **Light** and the Version number (e.g. **7.1**).

A startup or welcome screen will be briefly displayed¹, after which one small icon will appear in the taskbar notification area (Tray), normally on the lower right-hand side of the screen. This is the **Keyman Button**.





- B. Launch your favorite word processor or other application. Let's use **WordPad** for now because it comes with Windows, but you can use what you like. You'll probably find it in **Start - Programs - Accessories - WordPad**.
- C. WordPad will start, and you can start typing (in 10 point Arial font) right at the cursor. Go ahead and type something:



¹ The startup and welcome screens can be disabled by the user if desired.


Now, click on the drop-down button for the font name, and select **BJCree UNI** as the font. If you continue typing, the characters will look a lot like Times, except that the spaces are wider. This is a Syllabic Unicode font, but not yet syllabics.

- D. Now click on the Keyman button  in the taskbar notification area (tray). Now click on the  **NaskapiUni (Common)** button. The icon in the tray changes to let you know which keyboard is active.

If you now type, instead of seeing the Roman alphabet letters, you should get the syllabic equivalent displayed. Double vowels have no effect (that is, type “paa” and you still get “pa”). “Ch” is “c”. or “ch” Back vowel is “u”, or “o”.

- E. Now, if you type Naskapi words the way they *sound*, you will be typing in Naskapi syllabics. Type the word “*Naskapi*”. Type “*iyuw*” (person). Type anything else you can think of in Naskapi.
- F. Every enhancement you can do in English, you can do to the Naskapi: Bold, Italic, large, small:

ᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭ

To change back to English, just click on the  button in the “tray” and choose “**Switch Keyman Desktop Off**”. You can keep typing in roman in the Naskapi font to get normal roman characters.

Documentation and Notes




A complete syllabic chart is included in the package and can be displayed or printed by selecting


START

PROGRAMS

NaskeysDesktop

Naskapi Unicode Keyboard Layout

NOTE! While you may type in *either* English or Naskapi using the BJCree UNI font, you cannot do this in most other fonts. The BJCree UNI font contains both English and the Naskapi syllabic characters. So if you have some other font selected (like Times New Roman or Arial) while the  button is active, you will get BOXES instead of English or French text when you type. Either select the BJCree UNI font (if you want syllabics), or click the  button back to  in the “tray” if you are wanting to type English or French.

Another keyboard layout, based on the one-key/one-character layout used by some of the Macintosh computers at the school, is also available. It is named **NaskapiUni (Classic)**, and is represented by this button: 

It is also possible to type in Cree syllabics (slightly different from Naskapi) using this font as well, but you need a different keyboard in your “tray”. See “CreeKeys” on the Tavultesoft website for more information.

It is possible to convert the older NasKeys (non-Unicode, 8-bit) documents to Unicode and back again using a Word template (Naskapi Roman VBA Template.dot). Select:

START

PROGRAMS

NaskeysDesktop

Naskapi 8-bit to Unicode Conversion

from the **START** menu and follow the instructions provided.

The easiest way to share this program with others who would like to try the NasKeysDesktop program is to have them visit the Tavultesoft website:

<http://www.tavultesoft.com/>

Be careful not to confuse this keyboard package with the Naskapi keyboard written by Chris Harvey. Chris Harvey's keyboard is **NOT** the standard keyboard that has been in use at Kawawachikamach since 1994, but is an alternate version. Instead, be sure to download the NasKeysDesktop package, which uses keyboard layout written by Bill Jancewicz. This is the one used by the Naskapi Nation of Quebec, the Naskapi Development Corporation, Naskapi CLSC, Jimmy Sandy Memorial School, and other organizations in the Naskapi community.

After installation, these instructions can be displayed or printed from:

START

PROGRAMS

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