

Foreigner

Version 1.11

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Suppose you want to use the copyright symbol that appears above in a word processing document. One way to get it is to press and hold the Alt key while typing the number 0169 (don't forget the leading zero). Of course, who can remember the numbers for all the possible "special" characters. An alternative, one that I used for a while, is to make a table that you keep next to your keyboard. Of course, this still requires you to look up the number then type it in. There must be a better (and cheap) way!

There is. Foreigner© is a Windows utility I wrote to simplify the use of the characters that do not appear on standard American keyboards. And it works with virtually all program windows that accept text, including those used for entering filenames in file-open and file-save dialog boxes. Rather than remembering the 4-digit numbers for all the characters you need, simply run Foreigner. It will display a keypad of buttons with all the available characters in the high-ANSI and symbol character sets. Press the button with the character you want and that character will be copied to the Windows clipboard. Then, shift back to your application and paste the character in from the clipboard (using either the program's Paste command or the Shift-Insert key sequence). That's it!

Note: The current version of Foreigner does work without a mouse but you must use the Tab and Space-Tab keys to select the character you want. It is much easier (and faster) to use a mouse to select the desired button. If this proves to be a problem for anyone, let me know and I will add support for the keyboard arrow keys. But my advice: BUY A MOUSE!

Program Installation

To install Foreigner, simply copy the FOREIGN.EXE file into your Windows directory (or some other directory, if you prefer) and, optionally, create an icon in a Program Manager group (see the Windows documentation if you don't know how to do this). If you want Foreigner to execute every time you enter Windows, edit the LOAD= line of your WIN.INI file to include LOAD=FOREIGN.EXE. The options that you set in Foreigner's system menu will be saved in your WIN.INI under the section entitled [Foreigner] so they will remain in effect next time Foreigner is run.

If you use Foreigner with a word processor that supports user-defined macros (such as Microsoft Word for Windows or Lotus Amí Professional), you may wish to write a macro to execute Foreigner directly from within the program using a menu command or keystroke. For example, the following macro (named InsertForeignCharacter) works with Word version 1.1:

```
Sub MAIN
Shell "C:\WIN3\FORIGN.EXE", 1
End Sub
```

You will need to change the directory in the Shell command above to the one in which you install FOREIGN.EXE, unless it is in a directory included in your DOS PATH environment variable. I installed this macro so it appears at the bottom of the Insert menu (as "Foreign Character...") of my copy of Word but, of course, this is up to

you. If you are unsure how to use macros, read the documentation that accompanies your word processor (or whatever program you are using).

Program Options

There are two options that are set in Foreigner's system menu in the upper left corner of its main window. When an option is set, a checkmark will appear to the left of the menu command and the current setting of the option (on or off) will be saved in WIN.INI when Foreigner is closed (so that the same option settings will be in effect when you run Foreigner next). The options are:

1. Action on press When a button is pressed to copy a character to the clipboard (or paste directly to an app, depending on the setting of option #2) and this option is set, Foreigner will either be reduced to an icon on the Windows desktop or will be closed. Which of these two events occurs depends on which item in the submenu of this option (Minimize or Close) you chose.
2. Paste direct to app After pressing a button in Foreigner, the mouse cursor will change to a crosshair. You then point with the mouse to a window visible on the Windows desktop that you want to receive the character, click the left button, and the character will be pasted into that window (assuming it is a window that accepts character input). The mouse cursor will change back to its former type and the window receiving the character will get the input focus.

If you are using Foreigner with a word processor and you write a macro to run Foreigner in response to a menu command (such as described above), a convenient setup would be to turn on options #1 and #2. Then you could type in the word processor, pop up the Foreigner window, and two mouse clicks later, continue typing where you left off.

Since selection of the window to receive the character requires a mouse, option #2 is only available if you have a mouse installed. No mouse - no direct paste. When this option is selected, the character bypasses the Windows clipboard (thereby saving its present contents from destruction, as occurs when the character is copied to the clipboard). Be aware, however, that not all windows that may receive the character from Foreigner will recognize it (e.g., graphics applications). Most of these will simply ignore it. If you find one that doesn't play nicely with Foreigner when direct pasting, let me know. Some windows may disallow some characters. For example, some filename input boxes do not allow entry of characters that would make an illegal DOS name.

Note that direct paste works with most main windows but it does not work with many dialog box controls, such as filename entry controls in file-open boxes. However, you can still open the dialog box, switch to Foreigner, copy a character to the clipboard, then switch back to the application and use the Shift-Insert key sequence to paste the character in from the clipboard.

If you change your mind after pressing one of Foreigner's buttons, press either the right button, or if you have a three button mouse, the middle or right button.

Either button will cancel the direct paste. Note, however, that some utilities that capture the mouse (such as Number & Co.'s Whiskers) may interfere with the ability of these buttons to cancel a direct paste. An alternative way to cancel a paste is to left-click on a window you know can't process the character input, such as the Windows desktop or a window caption (or even Foreigner itself).

Important note: Foreigner sends characters to your application but not an associated typeface or font size. This means that if you select a character from, for example, the symbol font in Foreigner then paste it into an application, its appearance once it arrives there will be determined by what typeface and font size are "active" at the time. You may need to manually change the character to the symbol typeface in the application. So don't panic if the character you get doesn't initially look like the one you selected in Foreigner.

Selecting a character set

Originally, Foreigner only supported the 96 visible characters in the high end of the standard ANSI set. However, as a number of users pointed out, there are plenty of useful characters in the Windows symbol set that it would be handy to have ready access to. Also, there are characters in the high ANSI set that serve special purposes in certain applications (such as Alt-0150 and Alt-0151 which provide the em-dash and en-dash in Word for Windows) which are invisible in most applications. Starting in version 1.10, Foreigner supports multiple character sets.

Foreigner comes with three predefined character sets, which are selected using the combo box at the top of its main window. The "High ANSI" set provides the same characters as before, although they are now displayed in a more readable sans-serif typeface rather than the system default. The "Symbol (pt1)" set contains half of the visible characters in the Windows symbol set, while the "Symbol (pt2)" set provides the rest. A fourth option in the combo box is "User defined", which initially provides you with 96 blank buttons that can be set to any character in either the ANSI or symbol set.

To define a character in the User-defined set, press and hold the CONTROL key while clicking the button you want to define. A dialog box will appear in which you enter the following information:

1. the code number for the character you want (you must enter a value between 1 and 255; Foreigner won't let you enter anything else)
2. optionally, the name of the character (normally, you would leave this blank for visible characters but you might want to type something here for invisible characters such as the em-dash or en-dash in Word)
3. the character set (ANSI or symbol) to which the character belongs

As you enter the above information, a sample of the new button's appearance will be displayed. When you have entered valid information, press the Define button, and that character will appear (or will replace whatever was on that button previously). Press the Cancel button, and any changes you have made will be ignored. When you exit Foreigner, the definitions for your user-defined keys will be saved in a file called FOREIGN.CHR in the Windows directory on your hard drive.

Okay, you ask. How do I find out the code number for the character I want? Well,

19	-	←	∞	∫	ℝ	∅	⊗	⊕	∅	∩
20	∪	∪	∩	∉	∩	∩	∈	∉	∠	∇
21	®	©	™	∏	√	·	¬	^	√	↔
22	←	↑	⇒	↓	◇	<	®	©	™	Σ
23	((}	{	
24	•	>	}							
25						•				

An important caveat on the use of symbol characters is that Foreigner sends only the actual character to your application but not an associated typeface or font size. So, once again, don't panic (or worse, swear under your breath at the humble programmer) if the character you get doesn't initially look like the one you selected in Foreigner.

Performance concerns?

By adding support for the Windows symbol font and user-defined character sets in version 1.10, the complexity of drawing the buttons in Foreigner's main window increased greatly. This, in turn, led to a performance penalty. If you have a fast 386, it is probably not noticeable. However, for those with more meager CPUs, the delay may become intolerable. If so, I offer the following suggestions:

1. Use the user-defined character set for your characters whenever possible. This way, you only display the characters you use regularly (probably less than the maximum 96 per screen that Foreigner allows) so the speed of screen updates is improved. This has the additional benefit that it eliminates hunting through all 96 buttons since you can put the characters you use exactly where you want them. Also, you can include characters in the user-defined character set which do not appear in any of Foreigner's predefined sets.
2. If you do not need characters from the Windows symbol set, continue using version 1.02 of Foreigner, which updates its main window slightly faster. Alternatively, you can add the following line to your WIN.INI file in the section relating to Foreigner's configuration (if you have never modified WIN.INI manually, you may want to consult the Windows manuals before proceeding):

```
[Foreigner]
ShowFonts=0
```

This disables the display of fonts on Foreigner's buttons and speeds up their display. Setting ShowFonts=1 or deleting this line reenables font display. Note that changes to WIN.INI may not take effect immediately so it may be necessary to restart Windows after making these changes.

3. Buy a faster computer.

Program History

Version Comments

- 0.90 This version began life as a part of another Windows program I wrote (Bookworm© - a flat-file database program for bibliographic information - contact me if you're interested) that, on request from a user, I extracted and

made a standalone application so it could be used by other Windows apps.

- 1.00 First distributed version of the program.
- 1.01 Modified code so an attempt to execute a second copy of Foreigner simply brings the existing copy to the top of the desktop. This greatly simplifies the macro needed to bring up Foreigner from Word (and presumably other programs).

Previously, WIN.INI was updated every time Foreigner was closed. Now, that file is updated only if options have been changed during the session.

Changed the crosshair cursor so it is easier to distinguish from one used by other programs (the default Windows-supplied crosshair).
- 1.02 Added ability to close Foreigner altogether as an alternative to minimizing it after a key is pressed. This resulted in a change to the description of the first option in the system menu and the addition of a submenu. A flag in WIN.INI is also renamed.
- 1.10 Major update to the program. Support for the Windows symbol font and user-defined character sets is added.
- 1.11 Fixed a bug that prevented the symbol font from being displayed on systems without an "on-the-fly" screen font generator (e.g., ATM or FaceLift); I guess I just assumed everyone used these things...

Direct Paste Notes

<u>Program</u>	<u>Note</u>
PageMaker 4.0	Direct pasting only works if you don't have the "Minimize on press" option set. I have no idea why not but it's only a minor annoyance. Pasting from the clipboard with minimize option set does work OK.
Ami Professional 1.2	Doesn't support direct pasting. Hopefully, I will correct this problem soon. In the meantime, copy the character to the clipboard and paste from there.
Word for Windows 1.1	Word changes the direct paste cursor (normally a crosshair) back to its normal I-beam when switching from Foreigner to Word if the mouse is not moved during the switch. This does not mean that direct paste has been unsuccessful. When you begin to move the mouse, the cursor will change back to a crosshair. Just click the left mouse button to proceed with the paste.

Other stuff

You may notice when using Foreigner with certain other utility programs that two or more copies of Foreigner's icon appear on the desktop, while the utility's icon is gone. In reality, it has been replaced by Foreigner's; the function of the utility is unaffected by the substitution. This occurs as a result of the way Foreigner (and the

other program) is written and there is presently nothing I can do about it. The alternative would be to disable the ability to iconize Foreigner, which is obviously not desirable. If you encounter this problem with a program, I would appreciate hearing from you. Susceptible programs I have run across include WUNZIP (a shareware file unarchiving utility), WINWHERE (a file search utility.), and POSTMAN (a Windows message dispatching program).

So what's all this cost?

Foreigner is freeware. This means that you can freely copy it, use it, and give copies to all your friends (as long you give them all of the *unmodified* files that you received - FOREIGN.EXE, FOREIGN.WRI and README.TXT). However, this does NOT mean it is in the public domain; I retain the copyright. Do not change, edit, alter, or rename any of the files in any way (this means no fiddling with the executable program's resources either, guys!). Now for the legalese:

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If you do encounter problems with Foreigner, or if you think of a way to improve it, or if you think of another Windows utility that you would find useful but cannot create yourself, feel free to contact me.

Although I don't want cash for Foreigner, I am interested in hearing from people who use it. To this end, please send a postcard (with a picture of your town on front?) to:

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Bon chance!