

Ich habe meinen Computer zu Deutsch gewechselt

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This weekend, I changed my computer's user interface language from Swedish (where it had been since November 2003) to German. Germany is the country I'm most likely to vacation to next, and I figured I should start pseudo-immersing myself. Of course, all it really means is that I'm going to be learning a lot of computer-related German words like Einstellungen and Speicher. The change will also take additional adjustment because I learned German under the old spelling rules, before the controversial spelling reform of 1996 was promulgated. Perhaps the most prominent change is the new rules for the β character, but for me personally, that change is barely noticeable because I learned German from a textbook that uses Swiss spelling! (The Swiss do not use the β character; they use double-s instead.) Learning from a Swiss textbook also means that I learned phrases like "Tschüss" and "Bilder knipsen", my use of which amuses Germans to no end. One of the lesser rules that affects me more is the regularization of rules surrounding noun capitalization, as in "zu Deutsch" above. This completes the switch to German that began in January when I changed my Microsoft Office language to German. For the past few months I had been running a mix of Swedish and German. That sounds confusing, but it wasn't that bad, really. I barely even realized that half of my dialog boxes were in one language and half were in another. (Well, okay, and the third half was in English. The programs that are neither part of Windows nor part of Office remain in English.) The real hard part is learning all the new keyboard shortcuts.

(In marginally related news, the Swedish Academy recently released its latest official Swedish word list, and it changed its longstanding policy and now lists the words beginning with "W" separately from words beginning with "V". Up until now, "W" and "V" had been considered merely typographical variants of one another and had been treated as identical for alphabetization purposes.)

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