

How to Modify a Keyman Keyboard

This lesson is for dealing with existing keyboards that have not yet been uploaded to keyman.com. If the project already exists on keyman.com, to edit it, you will have to pull it down from GitHub to your local computer before making modifications.

Create a folder for Keyman projects on your hard drive

In the past, Keyman files were stored in \Documents\Keyman\. Check to see if you have that directory and look at what is in there. If you have existing projects, you have two choices:

- Move them elsewhere and use the empty Keyman folder for Keyman 11+ projects
- Create a different data directory for Keyman that will only contain data managed by Keyman 11+

Starting with Keyman Developer 11, the project directory structure is in the format needed for uploading keyboards to the Keyman.com repository. It also includes the source files inside the folder so that they can be modified and updated.

Creating a project to contain it

When opening Keyman Developer, it will open the last project you were working on

1. Select **Create a New Project** from the **Project** menu
2. Choose **Basic**.
(The option to import a Windows keyboard is about importing a Windows system keyboard to use as a starting point, not a Keyman keyboard)
3. Name the keyboard, assign copyright, version, author
4. Targets
The default is "any". Since this includes all the others, we can leave this. Since Keyman 10, a single keyboard package can contain keyboards that will work on all major platforms.
5. Set the Path
At the time of this tutorial, the default path was set to "Documents", which would make every keyboard a subdirectory of Documents. Not a good option! Make sure to select the directory you designated at the beginning of this document.
6. Keyboard ID
The proposed name must be all lowercase. This is important for the Keyman.com directory structure.
7. Languages
 1. Choose Add language...
 2. Select the appropriate BCP47 (or ISO 639-3) code for each language the keyboard will support. You can usually find these codes on ethnologue.com. For Windows keyboards, the language code should also include the script. Keyman already inserts what it thinks the script is for the language you choose, but you can correct this if needed.
8. Select OK

Keyboard tab

1. Click on the Keyboards tab on the bottom of the project window
2. Open the keyboard by clicking on the blue link with the keyboard name.
3. Click on the Layout tab on the left.
You are looking at the visual keyboard. Normally we would start here and then switch to the code view, but since we are importing an existing keyboard, we will start with the code view.
4. Open your existing keyboard file in a text editor, copy the contents and paste them at the bottom of this window.
5. Fix the header by manually merging the header information between the two files.

You can move the old comment fields if any to the top, and remove these lines (near the top) *if your original file already has them*:

□□□□□□

begin Unicode > use(main) group(main) using keys
Save and compile

Jump ahead to the build tab on the bottom left and try to compile the keyboard. If it compiles, great! You are ready to start doing modifications. If it doesn't compile, check the warnings and fix the problems. You may get warnings about header statements being deprecated, or old code in the kmn file that is deprecated:

Messages

□□□□□□

```
ibani.kmn: Compiling &#039;C:\Users\higby\Documents\Keyman\ibani\source\ibani.kmn&#039; for  
Windows, macOS, Linux, Desktop devices... ibani.kmn: Warning: line 22 warning 209D: Header  
statements are deprecated; use instead the equivalent system store ibani.kmn: Error:  
&#039;C:\Users\higby\Documents\Keyman\ibani\source\ibani.kmn&#039; was not compiled  
successfully for Windows, macOS, Linux, Desktop devices.
```

Old style headers in Keyman were written as

Legacy code

□□□□□□

```
HOTKEY &quot;%+I&quot;
```

and the new style of headers is

Current code

□□□□□□

```
store(&amp;hotkey) &quot;[ALT K_I]&quot;
```

Understanding the Keyman Code

Now we are at the point where you will have to study and know something about the Keyman code.

Simple key swapping statements

It could be that your keyboard uses simple swap statements like this:

Simple key swap

□□□□□□

```
&#039;.\&#039; + &#039;i&#039; &gt; &#039;i&#039; U+0300 c i grave
```

This statement says:

If an **i** is typed following ;\ replace everything to the left of the > with the characters on the right. This works, but results in long and inefficient code because the comand needs to be repeated over and over for every character that you want to modify.

Using Variables and indexes

In keyboards that take advantage of the strength of the Keyman language, you will find **store**, **any** and **index** statements. The store statement creates a named variable. With variables, you can issue a single swap command that works on every character stored inside it. Here is a simple example of how these three statements are used:

Your job is finished in so far as your client will be happy! However, we have only done the minimum that was required. Do you want one happy client or do you want a thousand happy clients? For that to happen, we'll have to prepare this file and its documentation for uploading to Keyman.com