DR 16-0014 — WML: RSID Issues

Status: Open

Subject: WML: RSID Issues

Qualifier: Request for clarification

Submitter: Courtenay Inchbald Organization: Ecma

Contact Information: c@inchbald.com

Submitter’s Defect Number: None

Supporting Document(s): None

Date Circulated by Secretariat: 2016-04-18

Deadline for Response from Editor: 2016-06-18

IS 29500 Reference(s): 29500:2016, Part 1, §17.15.1.70–§17.15.1.72, p. 1,060–1,063

Related DR(s): None

Nature of the Defect:

**Issue #1**

§17.15.1.70 and §17.15.1.71 both correctly define an RSID as an ST\_LongHexNumber (defined in §17.18.50), but incorrectly describe this as a four-digit hex number instead of an eight-digit hex number. The examples shown are, correctly, eight-digit hex numbers (although the implementation I use [MS-Word] uses only 6 of the 8 digits).

**Issue #2**

In §17.15.1.72, RSIDroot is defined as “the revision save ID which was associated with the first editing session for this document”.

In §17.15.1.72, RSIDS is defined as “the set of revision save ID values for the current document”.

In §17.15.1.70, RSID is defined as “the revision save ID that was associated with a single editing session for a document”.

The implication of these in combination is that a document's RSIDroot is its first revision save ID and that all the others listed in its RSIDS element postdate it. In fact, in my implementation, the RSIDS element inherits all the revision save IDs from the template from which the document was made.

The note added to the definition of RSID amplifies the implication saying, “the meaning of two revision save IDs is not defined for documents with a different RSIDroot”. I presume it should say "the meaning of a revision save ID shared by two documents with a different RSIDroot is not defined". If so, although it does not say so explicitly, it implies that a shared revision save ID is not meaningful unless the rsidRroot is also shared. In fact, when the rsidRoot is different, although a single shared revision save ID might be coincidental, several shared revision save IDs almost certainly originate from a common template.

I would very much like to know whether ECMA-376/IS 29500 is a bit misleading, or if my implementation is non-compliant in its use of templates (in which case it should be mentioned in its implementer notes).

Solution Proposed by the Submitter:

**2016-10-14 Rex Jaeschke:**

From MS experts: If the RSIDRoot is different then you know NOTHING about the relationship between the two documents.  Even if all the other RSID’s are the same you still know nothing.  It might be that Word copies the RSID list from the template into documents based on the template or it might not.  But it doesn’t matter.  By changing the RSIDRoot, Word is telling you that it would not be fruitful to run a merge between these two documents assuming a common base.

Does this response clarify the question?

**2016-10-26 Courtenay Inchbald:**

The product team's reply is true for the purposes of running a Combine or a Compare (although Word does not object to combining or comparing documents with different rsidRoots). However, I am using RSIDs for a different purpose in which RSIDs inherited from templates are important. If the note's scope is limited to Merge and Compare, it would be helpful to me to say so in ECMA-376.

Word does not follow the rule in the rsid definition, repeated in the note at the end of the definition, that RSIDs are generated from the date. It would be helpful to me to add this exception to MS-OE376.

**2016-11-16 Aarti Nankani:**

It doesn’t seem like updating the documentation to specifically say “rsids are about merges and compares” is the right thing to do- the standard says “this information can be used as desired”. Another app might implement their own merge/compare algorithm, and it might not use rsids at all. It’s just what Word uses them for. Is it right to document that they won’t work for scenarios a, b, or c, as they come up?

The other issue mentioned is already done- we already document that we don’t follow the rules of rsid generation in MS-OI29500, and in section 2.1.424 in MS-OE376.

**2016-11-17 Courtenay Inchbald:**

The problems arise because MS-OI29500's description of RSID generation contain errors. As explained in MS-OE376, Microsoft deals with these errors by generating RSIDs at random, although for an unspecified reason, it uses only 23 of the 32 available bits. As far as I know, every other application using the standard, e.g. Google Docs, deals with the error by replacing all RSIDs with "00000000" or otherwise ignoring them.

The note creates confusion by giving guidance on the basis of assumptions that are not true for either Word documents (because the RSID generation rules quoted in the note are wrong, because Word documents inherit RSIDs from templates creating multiple RSID matches - but not rsidRoot matches - between unrelated documents, and because Word's Merge function allows unrelated documents to be merged giving the merged document the rsidRoot of one of the merged documents creating rsidRoot matches between unrelated documents), or those produced by any other application (because they replace RSIDs with "00000000" or otherwise ignore them).

I think you should correct the errors in the RSID generation rules, and, if you do not want to qualify the confusing note, I think you should remove it. I realise, however, that this is a very complicated thing to do because there are so many interrelated documents.

**2016-12-06 Rex Jaeschke:**

Is there an issue here for WG4?

Schema Change(s) Needed:

No

**Editor’s Response:**

None

Changes to Part 1: N Part 2: N Part 3: N Part 4: N