The CIVA championship scoring system

Although there have been no CIVA championships during the Covid-19 pandemic, the ACRO scoring system has been used to provide results at many national competitions during the year where a modest range of new-in-2020 features requested by users, e.g. the import of Excel CSV files to populate the Pilot Registration form, have provided useful operational improvements.

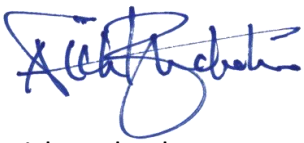
At most events the software has performed well, but there have been some unexpected issues this year, in particular it seems where international characters such as é Æ Ø Å æ ø å in pilots and officials names have caused failures with ACRO's fixed-size data fields – an é for example that in my UK system is stored as a single byte (hex 82 / dec 130) can in computers using other national code pages (the operating system's keyboard interpretation system) be subsequently revised to two bytes (hex 00 e9) even after the initial 1-byte instance has worked satisfactorily for some time, and the software may not then read the file correctly.

As an interim measure a stable 'legacy' v4 version of the software that proved problem-free throughout the 2019 WAC has been made available on the ACRO website, with instructions on how to remove a problematic installation and replace it with this older version. A scorer adopting this solution will be then have the time to seek advice regarding the original fault so it can be identified and overcome in a new build.

ACRO's original contest file map and fixed field-size text handling system has worked well for over a decade, but clearly a more robust solution and wider pre-release testing to identify and chase-out unexpected bugs are required. To meet this need –

- ACRO is changing to a revised data In/Out system unaffected by local character code variations. Opening an earlier contest file will translate it to the new format. This coding change is already well advanced, and will be ready for wider testing early next year.
- Prior to release in 2021 the co-operation of users in various countries will be sought to thoroughly test the software in order to detect any remaining weak points and prove its stability in as many international environments as possible.

I am acutely aware that aerobatic competition scoring is a tough job and that software issues can quickly cause major disruption. The version-5 ACRO development outlined here is intended to resolve all issues identified to date and provide a stable solution for scorers everywhere.



Nick Buckenham
ACRO software author