Minority Orthography Development

An Introduction
An Exercise:

These 3 fine wines came from the best vines
Problems

- Insufficient Consonants
  - Reappropriate existing shapes ฝ
  - Add new shapesCentral
  - Mark existing shapes ว
  - Add new sequences อ

- Applies also to:
  - Vowels
  - Tones
Factors

• Linguistics
  – How do we make the language fit?
  – How do we handle loan words?

• Literacy
  – What is simple to read?
    • One sound per letter
    • Keep It Simple Stupid
  – What do people already know?
    • Thai in school
Factors

• Sociolinguistics
  – Do they want something to make them unique?
  – Will they accept reappropriation of letters?
    • Changing the associated sound of a letter
  – What does the government think?
Approaches Taken for Thai Script

- Reappropriation
  - Mai tai khu as a vowel
    - แต่ง to spread (Bru)
  - Mai trii as a vowel
    - ถิ่น bunch of bamboo (Bru)
  - Nikhahit
    - มู่ย (Northern Khmer)
Approaches Taken for Thai Script

- Reappropriation (concl)
  - Mai Karan as a tone
    - ลึ่ง already (Mien)
  - Phinthu
    - โท  So language (So)
Approaches Taken for Thai Script

• New Sequences
  – Tone marks everywhere!
    •  กิ้ง country (Mien – has 6 written tones)

• Wild Ideas
  – Underlining (aargh!)
    • งง snake (Omkoi Pwo Karen)
Non Approaches in Thai

• Extra levels
  - Upper diacritics, still 2 levels
  - Lower diacritics, still 1 level

• Only 2 upper diacritics change
  - Mai tai khu: vowel or tone
  - Mai trii: vowel or tone