

IAU Division I Working Group on
“Nomenclature for Fundamental Astronomy” (NFA)

NFA Working group recommendations and guidelines on terminology

(Draft 6, 08 June 2005)

Introduction

The WG recommendations for new nomenclature associated with the implementation of the IAU 2000 Resolutions are the result of the work of the IAU Working Group on “Nomenclature for Fundamental Astronomy” (NFA) from October 2003 to June 2005 (Newsletters 1 to 6, Questionnaires A and B, WG comments and answers to the questions of the Newsletters and WG detailed e-mail discussion).

A draft Resolution entitled “Supplement to the IAU 2000 Resolutions on reference frames” (including Recommendations 1 and 2) is proposed to be submitted to the IAU 2006 General Assembly in order to approve the proposed terminology.

This draft of the WG Recommendations and Resolution takes into account the discussion that was organized on 21 September 2004 during the “Journées 2004” in Paris.

Separate NFA explanatory documents provide additional information on the terminology and guidelines recommended by the Working Group for supporting the following NFA WG recommendations. Part A of these documents provides the basis for the IAU Resolutions and their implementation and Part B provides detailed explanations of the proposed terminology.

WG Recommendations

1. *Using existing terms (e.g. right ascension) in extended ways for the terminology associated with the new paradigm with a clear specification, rather than introducing new names,*
2. *Using “equinox based” and “CIO based” for referring to the classical and new paradigms, respectively,*

Comment: the “Celestial/Terrestrial Intermediate Origin” with the acronym CIO/TIO is proposed here as the updated terminology to replace the IAU 2000 “Celestial/Terrestrial Ephemeris Origin” with the acronym CEO/TEO (see below items 3. and 4. and the proposed Resolution),

3. *Using “intermediate” to describe (i) the moving geocentric celestial reference system defined in the IAU 2000 Resolutions (i.e. containing the CIP and the CIO), and (ii) the moving terrestrial system containing the CIP and the TIO),*

Comment: the term “intermediate” has been chosen to specify that these systems are intermediary systems between the geocentric celestial system and the terrestrial system, which are realized by using the models, constants and procedures that are conventionally accepted; it conventionally separates the instantaneous celestial orientation of the Earth into components we label polar motion (in the terrestrial system) and precession-nutation (in the celestial system),

4. *Harmonizing the name of the pole and the origin to “intermediate” and therefore changing CEO/TEO to CIO/TIO,*

5. Using “system” in a broad sense rather than “frame” in this context of the intermediary system/frame,
6. Using special designations for particular realizations of the intermediate celestial system,
 Comment: this applies for example to “the IAU 2000A system” to designate the system which is realized by transforming the geocentric celestial system GCRS to the intermediate system using the IAU 2000A precession-nutation and associated frame biases at J2000 (the GCRS being transformed from the BCRS by using the coordinate transformation specified in the IAU 2000 Resolution B1.3),
7. Keeping the classical terminology for “true equator and equinox” (or “true equinox based”) for the classical equatorial system,
8. Choosing “equinox right ascension” and “CIO right ascension”, respectively (or “RA with respect to the equinox/or CIO”), for the azimuthal coordinate along the equator in the classical and new paradigms, respectively (Note that right ascensions and declinations with respect to the ICRS are usually designated by α_{ICRS} , δ_{ICRS}),
 Comment: this is to be specified only once in the presentation of a paper if there is some risk of misunderstanding. Afterwards, “right ascension” alone is sufficient,
9. Giving the name “equation of the origins” to the distance between the CIO and the equinox along the intermediate equator, the sign of this quantity being such that it represents the CIO right ascension of the equinox, or equivalently, the difference between the Earth rotation angle and Greenwich apparent sidereal time,
10. Retaining “apparent places” and “mean places” in the equinox based system,
11. Not introducing “apparent intermediate places” in the CIO based system, but introducing instead “intermediate places”,
12. Using “ITRF zero-meridian” to designate the plane passing through the geocenter, ITRF pole and ITRF x-origin and using, if necessary “TIO meridian” to designate the moving plane passing through the geocenter, the CIP and the TIO.

Additional points

- Considering a terminology associated with other types of apparent places, although it can be required for specific use, has not been considered as being essential for common astronomical use and is therefore not part of the NFA WG terminology recommendations,
- no WG consensus having been reached for having strict rules for using or not using capitals for names for origins, poles and systems, no recommendation on this issue is proposed by the WG.