
MARRAKECH – Policies Around Universal Acceptance

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ICANN65 | Marrakech, Morocco

AJAY DATA:

Welcome, and thank you for joining the Cross Community High Interest Topic Session that is on Universal Acceptance. So I will let you guys sit in for the next 10 seconds and we will move further.

Next slide. Universal acceptance has its vision, has its mission, and has an impact. In the last few years, a great foundation work was done which was not only led by Ram Mohan and also by the team which was associated with him to create a strong foundation. This vision looks very simple - all domain names and all email addresses working in all applications. I don't think anybody can have a doubt that is this really a problem. Can this be really a vision? Is it not obvious? But actually it is not. And to solve that problem, you also have a mission and that mission is to mobilize software application developers to get their products all ready by providing encouragement, documentation, case studies, tools, and measures to deliver equal experience to all users. And obviously it has an impact. There's the reason this group exists, to promote consumer choice and unique identities, improve competition and provide more inclusive access to end users.

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Next slide please. It has simply five words. If you can remember these five words and go back and see in your own organization that are you following these five words, you are probably UA already. So let us take an example of entering an email address, which is in any language other than ASCII, and if you have a newsletter, subscription, or a registration on your website, can I accept that email address on that inquiry form on your website? Accept means, can I type it in, does this webpage validate it well? Then validation is also important. Does it validate it as a valid email address or considers an invalid email address? That's what validation is. Obviously, it should also store it, so that you can process this later or maybe contact me back on my Hindi address. So the storing process also becomes a very important aspect and then if I re-log into their website, can you show me that email address back correctly, perfectly. This entire cycle from input to displaying back to me is part of the Universal Acceptance readiness.

Next slide please. We have a strategic action plan and in that we are targeting these five target [inaudible] technology enablers. Those people who are building tools, who are building libraries, who are building software programming languages and frameworks and expecting that they are capable for processing the long top level domain names, the IDNs and the EAs and their framework. Technology developers, the people who are using

these tools and frameworks and building software for organizations, enterprises and for self and they can process EAI and IDN and long top level domains easily without any problem.

Then, a very important part is email software and service providers. These are the people who are going to accept IDNs and long top level domains and email that does interpretations in their software. I can proudly say that Google Gmail infrastructure is ready partially, they can receive email. Microsoft also announced in 2018 their readiness, and so all the global leaders in email are getting ready for that platform. Influencing individuals and organizations, we are trying to partner, we are trying to meet and see those people who can influence and bring changes in the society, in the government and organizations and see that UA is accepted. And we had a session at 1:30 with GAC. There we also presented this requirement of global connectivity, of connecting with the unconnected people who are not - who are deprived to get connected because of the language barrier because of non-UA readiness, so that government can support and in the policymaking they can bring in the UA readiness requirement and be ready and this is what UA is trying to pursue in this year.

Next slide, please. We have these working groups, and I would also take this opportunity to encourage you to go to usag.tech

website, and at the bottom you will find the Joined the Working Group section. If you are interested to join any working group and any one of them which is listed in front of you, you can join them easily. It is open and it is not exclusive to anybody. Everybody is welcome to participate. Technology Working Group, EAI Working Group, Measurement Working Group, Communication Working Group, Local Initiative Working Group and UN Ambassadors Working Group.

Next slide please. This is my base for Universal Acceptance. Being a moderator, I am not going to speak much. So these are my panelists. We have Mark joining us very soon. He has a schedule clash. And with that I'm going to start asking questions from panelists which we have kind of decided, and we are going to share what is the vision of the board from Akinori on UA and IDN.

AKINORI MAEMURA:

Thank you very much, Ajay. My name is Akinori Maemura, for the record. I am a board member of the ICANN and then I am serving as the chair of the board working group for the international domain names and the Universal Acceptance. Then I'm really grateful to enjoy the UASG's tremendous effort to advance a Universal Acceptance, particularly the leadership by Mr. Ajay Data. He really has the spirit and the enthusiasm to

advance this important aspect of the domain names. So first of all, yes, the question I got is what is the ICANN Board's vision on the priority around the Universal Acceptance? So as Ajay has already explained what he's doing at UASG, then my talk is a little bit backward, going back to the more fundamental point. But I'll go ahead with that.

So I can we certainly set and set up the strategic objectives and then it has the several points and Universal Acceptance is listed in strategic objective number three, which is reading, evolve unique identifier systems to contribute to serve needs. So a unique identifier systems need to be evolved to serve more and more for the Internet users. And then so it is now for the domain names point, we want to have the expansion of the domain space. We have the two aspects of them. One is the allowing the new TLDs. It is done by the so-called new gTLD programs and the other part is the expansion of the domain name space by allowing the various scripts other than conventional ASCII characters which is, as you know and needless to say, the international domain names.

These two expansions have their own inherent problem, which is that domain names are not known at the beginning. Old timers may still have the notion that the three gTLDs feature .com, .net and.org, and the country codes. It is not true these days. New

gTLDs are less likely to be recognized as domain names, and more over the scripts, other than the ASCII characters, are much less likely to be a domain name. They may think like this. We need to have all internet users be able to use all domain names which are able to be registered. It is not only about eyeballs of the users, but the applications, services which the users may use. And the all potential domain names need to be accepted universally by all applications and services. This is what Universal Acceptance means. USAG was formed in February 2015 which is not a body within the GDD or ICANN organization, but it is the community initiative.

And for my understanding, Universal Acceptance needs the engagement of the vast base of the application vendors and service providers, Internet users which is denoted as the community stakeholders in Ajay's presentation. That is the very reason why UASG was formed as the community initiative. I am truly grateful for the UASG members, passion and enthusiasm, contribution, and the spirit to advance this initiative until now. So as this point is listed as the strategic objectives, the ICANN board of directors has determined to have it as one of the main activities at the board level. So that is why the Board ICANN Working Group was renamed and the rechartered, renamed to the Board IDN and Universal Acceptance Working Group, and rechartered to guide the ICANN organization and the community

in terms of the Universal Acceptance. But the ICANN board has a nothing particular so far to a guide or topic top down principal, a top down strategy to the universality acceptance.

Now the ICANN vote at the board IDN Working Group just started the [inaudible] for the Universal Acceptance after we had some historic achievement of the TLD variant management recommendation, implementation recommendation, and then the revision of the second level IDN guidelines. So now we think ourselves come to the point to get down to how we can help the advancement of Universal Acceptance at the board level. So I am expecting to spend more time with the UASG members to learn what is the point of their own activity and their own promotion of Universal Acceptance, and to consider how the board can help advance and encourage the further promotion of Universal Acceptance, which has been beautifully advanced by our community initiative of UASG. Thank you very much.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Akinori, for a well detailed vision. And it also not only helps all of us to understand the board has a real focus on UA, but also willing to work together to advance this very important and hard and very, very important topic for the whole world. May I go to Raedene now and ask how UASG can help for the registries to tap into this opportunity and how do the

registries and the registrars look for this opportunity to advance this Universal Acceptance practice?

RAEDENE MCGARY:

Thank you. My name is Raedene McGary for the record. I'm here on behalf of CentralNic Group. We are part of the ecosystem, being we represent registries, as a registry service provider. We are also in our group ICANN accredited. We have, I think, at least three ICANN accredited registrars. So we are part of the ecosystem of supporting the IDN initiatives and UA because we have to support our clients. As Ajay is asking, you know, how do we do this?

In fact, often we have the clients who have the interest to use their IDNs. We have a number of clients who are on the registry level, who applied for and who have IDNs at the top level. We have clients who wish to enter into markets at the second level and our systems need to be able to support them. So as a registry we, one, want to expand the global reach. So we have a client and they want to enter into the Chinese market, and they want to implement all the Chinese IDNs, then we have to be able to support those initiatives, because otherwise we can't support our clients. So it's driven in part by our clients or partly that we have also introduced these IDNs to our clients and say, you

know, "Do you know, you can as a registry or as a CC apply for fast track IDN and then have an IDN at the top level."

And so, we work on both sides on the second level and at the top level to support clients on the registry level, and then as a registrars who need to be able to enter into different markets. And that includes being able to use the IDNs and be able to implement IDN variants, and do so in a structured and secure way. And this way we benefit from the work of the community in terms of identifying the potential issues in these areas, and we're there as their technical support to help develop these initiatives.

AJAY DATA:

So as a follow up, would you like to share one or two practices which the registries and the registrars can take up, or how does helping you or how UASG practices if you have adopted some, or are planning to add some, is going to help all of us to spread this word.

RAEDENE MCGARY:

If we're successful, say in implementing IDN variance, which allows our clients to say enter into new markets and sell more domain names in China and people can see this out in the world, then we are helping the mission. If we are working with clients

who now get a top level for their country and for their language and they're able to implement their scripts, then this is the way that we can help this initiative.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Raedene. And let me now move some little bit of business here to Martaan to present the business side of it. Martaan, can we hear what are the business opportunities you take with UA and some lessons which you would like to let us know?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Yes. Thank you very much for that. From the board's perspective, Akinori's had a great introduction also, explaining how it fits in the strategic plan - I think the strategic plan that will guide us towards the future for the years to come. If you haven't read it yet, it's really worthwhile. We always talk about the mission and the bylaws. I think this will help us to actually determine our agenda for the years to come. With everything said, I also would like to focus on one specific aspect of this, which is the IDNs, which is the next billion users that are to be served by the Internet.

These will be people that are locally acting. This will be people that will have entirely different uses than the first wave of users

in the Internet. If you want the Internet to be useful for those people to, to provide them with access to information, to ensure they can communicate, they can do business together, this really needs to work well. And we can start and make sure that this happens by the Universal Acceptance, that will teach our systems from mail browsers to routers to deal with nontypical addresses in the traditional sense of the word.

So that means that we really need to prepare for that, because when the new users come online, it just needs to work. This means that you need to prepare for readiness in some ways that maybe it'll feel like what we've done with IPv6. We've been preparing for being ready for that for many, many years. And as various preparedness went up, it really lost it until not too long ago, before the IPv6 take off had really begun, and it's deep now. So for business this is often the difficulty of how do I just divide the investments already piloting, making sure you're ready. And the business plans depend on how many users you expect. Uses itself will be driven by content, by applications, by the ability to truly use those IDNs in the local markets, to know when your shop is open, to know what's some stock, to know what the local news is, etc.

So thinking out loud, it's really time to start preparing for it and make sure that we worked together in a multi-stakeholder

fashion, to get people to be able to use it, to get people to find content online and the applications to deal with it. The Internet is [inaudible], not only those that are used to it already, there's many others out there that can benefit from this and we think it's important to help them. I would like to leave it with that.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Martaan. And thank you for addressing this IDN part of it. But just for clarification, we all know UA is not just IDN. UA is about long top level domains, long top level domains and IDNs. And I want to have a follow-up question, Martaan, with you; is how could technology companies contribute to advance the UA readiness?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Well, it starts with the Universal Acceptance of also audience. And in this, the next or complication is that IDN is sometimes different scripts that look like each other; that could maybe confusing. So extra measures need to be taken that computer stability is not a major problem. But really ensuring that also in considering preparedness to be ready to deal with IDN is what I think will make the company's products much more universal towards the future. And there may be people in the room or

know much more about this and they're very welcome to contribute and add to this.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Martaan. And now I would like to go to Manal, which is not only GAC chair, but also very passionate about UA whenever I talked to her. And the question to you is how you UASG has been identified as a public sector and impact and how come government and public sector undertakings can help this advance this mission and how can you as you work with UA to take this mission further?

MANAL ISMAIL:

Thank you, Dr. Ajay. So, Universal Acceptance is one of three components critical to allowing a full end-to-end multi-lingual experience on the Internet, the other two being IDNs and local content. So now that we have IDNs up and running, we need to focus more on Universal Acceptance and maybe at a national level on local content as well. With everything moving online and all services moving online, I think it's only fair that no one is left behind, and everyone is able to accomplish their day to day activities online in their mother tongue language. And to bring online those who are not yet connected. We should address

their real needs that are obviously different from those who are already connected.

And as Martaan mentioned, the next billion or billions are expected to come from developing countries or the developing world where a second language is not that common. And frankly speaking, I see a win-win to all in Universal Acceptance. So for business it's a growing market and better customer satisfaction for end users. It's definitely a better user experience if not a current pressing need. And for governments, there are surely strategic reasons, I'll get to this afterwards, but even globally we'll be catering for the needs to the next billion, and also bridging the digital divide and achieving better indicators for government.

As I said, there are several strategic reasons even. So it's again, only obvious that governments should be communicating using the official language of the country whether officially or even providing e-government services to their citizens. So it only makes sense that they do this in the mother tongue and not in a foreign language, in the official language of the country. This also ultimately increases Internet penetration and again, bridges the digital divide, and ensures that everything in place is a future proof. And I mean, IPV6 comes to mind when I start talking about Universal Acceptance and how governments

should maybe include this as a requirement in their tenders, in the procurement orders.

And again, there are lessons learned that we went through during discussions on IPV6 as well. So I believe again, there is a crucial role for governments at least within the e government services and the services they provide to their citizens, but also tenders and procurement orders and things like that. Again, it's a bit difficult to know whom exactly to contact. I mean the right authority, the right ministry, the right people, the right level. Sometimes if you target a senior management, they are not -- they don't have the time. They don't understand the topic, while they feel it's but technical. And if you reach out to the deep technical people, they don't have the authority to make decisions. So again, it's a bit challenging on that side.

And also, I mean, Universal Acceptance by definition needs to be deployed on a very wide scale in order to be beneficial to everyone and bear its fruits. If I'm Universal Acceptance ready, but it's only me, then it's useless. So again, the challenge of doing this on a wider scale and having everyone ready. And I thank you for your efforts reaching out to the GAC almost every meeting, because I think the GAC is a good vehicle to reach out to governments. We have one 78 DEC members member

countries but also 37 observers from Intel governmental organizations.

So even though they don't attend physically all of them at each meeting, everything and all the material is circulated on the mailing lists. And I'm sure at some point in time we will be able to do well on the outreach thing. And in fact, you started even creating some interest and triggering the discussion. It's an immersion topic on our GAC agenda, and I've already been approached by some colleagues who are interested to lead the GAC discussions on this topic. So I hope we can also continue to coordinate this intercessionally, and not only at the face to face meetings.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you very much, Manal, and thank you for the reciprocal support on Universal Acceptance. This is indeed obviously very, very appreciated by us. And we know that with the government and making the policies it can be a big impact. And I have a follow-up question on a simple thing. Being a very important government officer in Egypt and policy maker. What are the hurdles you feel, apart from you don't, obviously you have told already, that you really don't know whom to go home to approach? But let us say if we have to go and implement UA, how can you help in governments and everybody can listen with

the government or anybody else and our local initiative people, our ambassadors can learn from. And how do we approach, how do you solve a problem and how can you help in this mission to take your design steps?

MANAL ISMAIL:

First of all, I'm not that important my government. But anyway, there is an awareness issue, awareness of the problem. Because I mean if there isn't a pressing need, there wouldn't have been a problem. But trying to bring to the attention of everyone that this could be done better and there is a better way. And even you can use your native language. Sometimes is not that obvious. And frankly speaking, whenever we talk about IDNs, the first thing everyone asks for is does the email work? So it's been old. So a challenge. So awareness, and awareness at different levels with the right messages. So it depends on the level you're talking to.

And also, I mean maybe a necessary - not training - but at least people should know how to deal with this new thing, that they should be confident that if a problem happens, they will be able to deal with it. Otherwise it's working. We don't want to disrupt anything, and we have a good setup. So, if they are at the technical level, if they are technically confident than this makes things -- or at least they can assure their higher management or

higher officials that don't worry, it's working, and we are on top of the issue at least. So, I'll stop here.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you for such a nice response, a very positive response. And I must bring one experience of ICANN and other organizations which are trying to adopt the UA in one particular aspect. So there are two things. One is modifying the legacy software and legacy websites, and one is procuring a new software. So if you are procuring a new software, if you have to, then if we can have a policy of that software is you already that already adopt long-term long top level domains, IDNs] long top level domains, IDNs and EIAS already supporting it. Now there are old software of course, it is not easy. I also heard in GAC that it is not easy to just overnight replace a software. It costs money. It costs a lot of things. So how do we put a change there?

So there is software which keep upgrading. So what we request is, and ICANN has followed this process and some time you might like to listen Ashwin how ICANN is going through becoming UA already, is whenever a code comes out for a change, then it is also looked at making UA readiness in this code. So we are not a specifically going and changing that code right now. Just keep this in mind that in whenever we do a

change in the code, whenever we upgrade a software, whenever you buy a new software, we keep that compact in our mind so that it is not that we are willing to do it on 31st of December, we are going to be ready. That is not what is expected and that is not, not just feasible.

We have understood that what we are saying is, let us put it in a frame that let us put it in a pot. Let us put it that in our future vision we are going to be UA ready. I think this is one lesson which we have seen and learned that if we put it for old perspective, put it whenever there's an upgrade and change is, are going to be UA ready code and whatever we of course buy new, with a policy we are going to buy UA ready software. I think with that, thank you everyone for contributing here. And yes ma'am, please go ahead.

MANAL ISMAIL:

Just to add the thing that I was -- I know I missed it. So I think a best practice, or a proof of concept also would be beneficial to governments. I mean if we present something that's up, running and working and they see emails in different languages, that is really working. I think this is also good to have.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you for pointing this out. So, as in my presentation I shared a Gmail is now you can exchange with any mail address on your own Gmail address and even case studies are there on the UASG website where the government, state governments have provided a linguistic email address to the entire citizen of the state, which is not small, around 70 million people. So it's a large number. So it is not as simple a hundred, 200 pilot. It's large working email addresses which are active, which are working, which are live, and companies like Microsoft and Gmail or Google are already supporting that, announcing it. So there is no problem on technology side, it's a matter of adoption. There's enough content available on uasg.tech website for all of us. So that this can be referred to and this can be used in a -- wherever there is a concept is acquired. You want to say something, Martaan?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Yes, just that - and before we go in a room and I would invite a room as well - it's of course to accelerate all this, for you know, it will happen. If you look some years from now, it will be there. How can we accelerate this? And then I think what a monologist said about cases that will help, show how it's been used to the benefit, show where it makes a difference. And apparently, according to my friend Ram Mohan, also in the room, there's

already some research regarding economic value already existing. So these kind of references are also very useful. So looking forward to that because this gives businesses the incentive to really start investing locally as well.

AJAY DATA:

With this, we are going to on the floor number two.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA:

Thank you very much for this session. First of all, I would like to compliment what Manal mentioned. She mentioned the e-government, I would like to add to add e-learning, e-education, e-agriculture, e-health, and many other e's that are important for the people that these [inaudible]. And now how to do that. I think I suggest two ways to do that. The first way would be that to have some public document issued by GAC with the covering letter addressing to the member of the GAC asking them, please distribute that to the concerned authorities in your country dealing with this issue. This is the first immediate.

Then there are four events within a year from now. The first event is ITU telecom in Budapest, many countries comes and that is a good way to have session on this important issue. The second event would be the IGA of Berlin. That is another event. You could also popularize that. The third event would be in

Vietnam Telecom 2020. Last but not least would be WTSA World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly in Hyderabad, India. So the four events are within a year from now and I think you have sufficient audience.

The only thing should be better prepared and should be accompanied by a, I would say simplified, two or three page tutorial document, not going to the code, language and so on and so forth, so many acronyms and so on and so forth to confuse the people, in the simple language. This is the facility. I'm sure that many, many people in developing country would be very happy to receive this sort of information and take necessary actions. There are other events, but I just mentioned four within the next 11 or 12 months.

And I think that will be -- In each of these reasons, in WTSA there are some 110, 120 country attending that and in Telecom also many people, they come all stages of that. And in addition, IGF, you know that there are two thousand, three thousand people, and then they have one or two session among all of those 100 workshops repeating something which may not have any impact, but this must have the impact. So I just put it for your attention as a possible example. Thank you.

AJAY DATA: Thank you very much. Wonderful. I must say fantastic ideas and for your knowledge, Universal Acceptance is going to Berlin and Manal is also joining that panel. Number five, please introduce for the record.

JOHN LAPRISE: Hi, my name is John Laprise and I'm with ALAC. There are few things that are more important to the At-large community than Universal Acceptance. And because of that, at this ICANN, we kicked off a communications program in coordination and support of UASG, where they're going to be acting as subject matter experts and where you're going to leverage the global At-Large community to push out information to our members across the world. And we've got a whole communications plan. We had a long meeting, it was very full and we're looking forward to working with UASG to roll this out.

AJAY DATA: Thank you John for inviting us. Akinori?

AKINORI MAEMURA: Thank you very much, John. This this week I attended the sessions of the Universal Acceptance in the ALAC and the GAC and I was so impressed with a quite high interest from the both

advisory committees. And then Universal Acceptance Steering Group itself is a community initiative, which is meant to be collaborating with other parts of the community. We will be multiplying the promotion power to the much more bigger ones. So I appreciate such effort and then I'm looking forward to seeing the future development. Thanks.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you very much. Number four.

MARK DATYSGELD:

Hello everyone. I'm Mark Datysgeld. I'm the Latin American ambassador for Universal Acceptance and I would like to make more of an announcement. It's a good one. We have just finished the 2019 Global Report for Universal Acceptance. It was sponsored by the UASG. It was overseen by the Brazilian Software Association, and it actually has what I think is a very positive thing, at least I'd like to think so. We used community resources in an interesting way, because we brought alumni from the NextGen program to work together with us in the practical part of it, thus [inaudible] the different layers of the community in it. As and it will be available very soon.

We hope that everybody who is here and therefore enthusiastic about Universal Acceptance, will help us spread the word. It

contains very interesting data about the current rates of acceptance in the 1000 top websites in the world. So we get a close look at how are the new shorts doing, how are the new longs doing, how are the internationalized, how are the Arabic domains doing. So, it's very interesting stuff. It will be coming very soon, in the next couple of weeks and I invite you all to help us share, spread, and comment on it, because it's an important community resource. So thank you for your attention.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Mark. And this report has reached to UASG. We are also viewing that. May I bring number four and then bring to Manal. Number four please. Okay. Shift to number two, number four.

NASSAR HAJI:

Okay. Thank you very much. I'm Nassar Haji. I am professor of the university and I was former Minister of Telecommunications in the past, and I was President of the ITU Conference here in Marrakech in 2002 with my friend Matsumi at this time. Okay. And Vince himself was here. Why I say all that, is that the situation at this time was very different from now. The mobile [inaudible] was not so expanded and the Internet was very -

there was not a lot of persons using intended and especially in Morocco and in Africa.

So the question is to find the good ways to go forward and I think there are three things, rather there are more, but three things. First of all, the millennials, the persons who are now born in year 2000. They are very familiar with all these technologies and they can use it very easily. The second is the strategy of the government. I don't think that the situation can be up only the private the sector. The government has missed strategy on e-education, on the e-government, on the e-commerce on the media and all that. I think the strategy of the government is very important. And it sounds like we have to see what will be the growth of population and where it will be.

For instance, it would be in Africa. I don't say that because I am Moroccan and African, but one billion will come from Africa in the [inaudible]. So we have just to say that we have to go to the very interesting points, what makes the technologies -- I just finished a paradox or something. I am a professor. In 2000 I asked my students who has a mobile phone in his pocket, and now I ask who has not a mobile phone in his pocket. So it can go very quickly. But we have to go to have the good policies and the good ideas.

AJAY DATA: Thank you. And if I do the poll today, how many people are UA ready, I don't think any hand will be up. And probably few years down the line if we ask how many are UA ready, every hand should be up. The similar situation we are trying to achieve. Number two please.

IRINA DANIELIA: Does it work? Okay, good afternoon. My name is Irina Danelia and I'm involved in preparation of two IDNs and TLDs. And thank you very much for your ongoing efforts. My question is to Ajay as a UASG representative probably to [inaudible] and it's a very practical one. Do you know the cases, or probably you even have a list of registries and registrars, which technical systems are, let's say internationalized email friendly, I mean registrars that allow their customers/registrar's to have internationalized email as a part of their contact data and registries that do the same for their registrars? Thank you.

AJAY DATA: I would request anybody to add in panel. I know one registry in Russia, which is EAI ready. I don't know the real number of the whole world, but maybe, Raedene, do you have the numbers or Mark?

RAEDENE MCGARY: No. And it's a very good question and I hope we'll be in a position where we'll be able to say, oh, we know so many. But I think at this stage it's still an ongoing process. You know, we are still introducing, you know, new IDNs. We're still working on all our systems. We have a number of development projects. But you know, hopefully this is the way that will come.

AJAY DATA: Manal.

MANAL ISMAIL: So starting by the last point first, I think it's good to have like we say ICANN-accredit registrars that we also tag somehow UA ready ones. It would be also an incentive for the others to also become ready. But actually the reason I requested the floor was to again, thank you for the UA Ambassadors program. I think it's doing a great job, at least at a national level. We can sense the efforts and not the magnum is doing a great job at the national level, trying to penetrate the awareness thing. And I hope it will bear its fruits soon. But I just wanted to accomplish the UA Ambassador program. So thank you.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you. And Abdalmonem should be here, sitting somewhere. He is one of the dedicated ambassadors. Yeah. You would like to stand up and show yourself as an ambassador? He is there. So doing a good work and as a community.

And this program is open. I just want to take this opportunity to share with everyone, this program is open to take the ambassadorship and represent you and your own region. So on this uasg.tech website, this is where you are. So there are two programs and join a working group and a master program. So both things are available. Any further questions? So can I request, Mark, because you have come at the end; would you like to say something and then we will end.

MARK SVANCAREK:

I apologize for arriving late and for missing everything in the first part. So I hope I don't repeat anything. At Microsoft we see Universal Acceptance as being very important, both for new opportunities opened up by the new gTLDs, but also for the opportunities opened up by IDNs and internationalized email addresses. And we are very aware of the technical challenges that we all face. We certainly have a large portfolio of software that we've had to keep updating and we're getting pretty close to being completely universally acceptant across the product

line. So we understand the challenges that other service providers, software vendors, etc. will be facing here.

As we've no doubt said in this meeting already, it's usually not a difficult thing to fix it very often. It's more like a bug fix. Not always. Sometimes it's like you're adding features. Sometimes it's complicated, sometimes it's not. The difficulties tend to be in resourcing, you know, where does this fit in the priority list? Compatibility testing across the ecosystem, particularly if you're in front of the ecosystem, and making sure that the incentives are right for the people you work with and in place for customers to be aware that you're doing it and want to do it and be able to afford to do it. For online systems it's a little bit easier because you know, you're either consuming this through the browser or you have a client that's being updated all the time.

In other cases, if you're running your own data center, have a large on-premises IT staff, sometimes there's updates to your IT configuration that are required, which may involve, you know, retraining people or rebuilding machines and stuff like that. And so there's costs involved in that. And so I hope when governments are hearing this, they're thinking about all the different things that they need to do which have been mostly touched on I suspect. Think about your procurement processes.

Think about the software that you use internally. Think about how you promote standards and standards bodies.

But mostly I think, and this is coming from a Microsoft perspective, so you may disagree, but mostly I think you think about how to incentivize the entrepreneurs and software developers in your area. How do you make it attractive for them, for them to make the investments and then make those software investments available in your community, in your economy, so that these benefits are not only going to your citizens, but to your local business people as well, and you can create a virtuous cycle? If you have any questions on this topic, I'm open to that. But I think in summary, that would be our position on Universal Acceptance. We think it's an important thing and we've made a lot of investments in it.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Mark. And you're coming from Microsoft makes a lot of sense. If Microsoft can change the whole piece of software and bring it towards UA readiness, I think these are all small softwares we all use. And there's a question number six, please introduce yourself.

NIGEL HICKSON:

Yes. Thank you, Nigel Hickson, I work for ICANN. Two comments and a question, if I may. First of all, I'm passionate about this as well, and I think it's a really excellent topic and I commend all the work you are doing. The second comment is that it was mentioned that at the Internet Governance Forum in Berlin this year, there's a workshop which ICANN proposed on Universal Acceptance and we'll have an excellent cause for that workshop. At the IGF, there's also a dynamic coalition. A dynamic coalition is an ongoing working group or multi-stakeholder working group that works on the DNS. And this year their focus is on Universal Acceptance and they will also have a session at the IGF on Universal Acceptance. So hopefully will motivate some more questions on that, or more interest in that.

The question, if I may, we recently conducted a sort of a briefing for the subjects that were coming up at to ICANN 65 in Geneva to the various UN missions, etc. And we've got a question from one mission. And the question was basically, this was a lady that was representing her country in Geneva. And she said, if I go back to my home country, how can I persuade my sort of e-government folks and my public website folks to make our public websites you know, a subset about Universal Acceptance, especially on the language. We have national citizens that aren't citizens of countries where they have no Latin script. So what's the impetus for us to do this? And I thought that was a very

good question indeed. And I just wondered if any of the panel members would have a comment on that. Thank you.

AJAY DATA:

So as I shared, UA is not about just scripts and languages. UA's about short top level domains, long top level domains. Just an example. I was in At-Large and we heard a comment that in the website made by somebody for his wife with an extension top level domain like .gary and that email was not accepted by an airline in America. So it's a UA issue. There is no language here. If you have a new top level domain and you have an email address and if it is not accepted by somebody and consider us as invalid, is a UA issue and this is a big issue because now you can see there is a more than a thousand generic top level domains are live and new gTLD down is going to get a flood of domain names.

So if you are not UA ready, your system is not able to receive email from those email addresses and neither can you communicate back. So you are going to lose those people who are going to have these email addresses and domain names which are not accepted, which are long top level domains. Let us consider IDN as a separate part and these top level domains, which are new as a separate part. These are two different parts. Languages is not just the key area here which we need to

consider. And I think if you will connect us at the UASG group with that person, we will be happy to talk more and take it further. Yes, yes, please. Sorry. So there is a remote participant and then we'll go to you, yeah.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a question from Maria Kolesnikova from .RU. The question is to Ajay and UASG. Does UASG plan to make an online dashboard with data on UA readiness of mail services software, browsers, TLDs registries, registrars, websites, etc. including data per regions, it could help to clearly see the current situation and its progress and to be used as UA ready competition tool.

AJAY DATA: So and nutshell answer is yes and a lot of efforts are already going on. I don't know if we will cover the whole spectrum of it, but we will certainly cover a lot of spectrum of it and later to the websites and later to the email service providers, which we consider as a core and this is a work is already ongoing and you will see that result very soon. Thank you. And Mark wants to add something.

MARK SVANCAREK: There's a little bit of this up here now. For instance studies about the compatibility of browsers. I bring this up because Microsoft browsers did the best. But you know, browsers are relatively straightforward to test. You know, you create a bunch of strings. I'd like a new short one. I'd like a long one. I would like these languages, you know, this script, that script left to right, right to left. You can come up with a pretty reasonably small test set and then comprehensively test a moderate number of browsers. So there's not too many browsers that, it's only a dozen test cases. You can do that. And the browser manufacturers are all open to receiving bug requests and they will fix them in other places. You know, it's more complicated looking at the top 1000 websites for instance. How do you represent that on a webpage? It's a little tricky. So it is ongoing, and we always look for feedback on, you know, what sort of information might be useful regarding it driving competition. It's debatable, but we will see.

AJAY DATA: Thank you, Mark, for the update. Number two please.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Yes, I would like to ask a question, perhaps a comment. Do you see any abuse risk in this UA? Because the addresses are not known, not accepted. Is there any risk for that?

AJAY DATA: I would take that risk off saying no. And just for the repeating, I would dare to take the risk, saying no. It isn't just like usual internet, rather from my point of view, it brings a little of security element into my infrastructure. And I can take 20 seconds to explain why. If I have an email address, which is in Hindi, pretty much they don't understand it. So they can't send it to me. And once they make their set up, they're UA ready, and something like that. By this time my email address is safe from spammers. This is the element which comes into my network automatically right now as a benefit when I use a UA ready email address. But the comp, that does not bring any new security lapse, which is rather, I think it brings a little more of security layer around it.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Okay. You may want to expand to what has been done to avoid confusability for instance. No mix of scripts.

AJAY DATA:

Okay. So I remember going into this Joan. There is a confusability. So IDNs and EIAs are going into a very big effort sponsored by ICANN through LGRs (Liberal Generation Rules) where the security is ensured, and variant management is ensured between characters and the scripts. So there's a long explanation if you want the expanding more detail, but I can tell you that there are many things which have been taken care of. Mark is saying something,

MARK SVANCAREK:

Yeah. If the concern is the so-called homoglyph attack where certain characters in certain scripts closely resemble other combinations of code points, either within the same script or other scripts, this is something that exists in all the writing systems, even within the old ASCII days there, there were ways to combine characters in a confusing way. Like I'm an R and an n looks a lot like an m, which makes it easy to create a stream that looks like Microsoft for instance. So that, that was a common one in the past.

And as Ajay says, a lot of this stuff is known to the browser manufacturers and the email pro client providers and the like. And we flagged these things, you know, in warning batters and, and test tips and things like that, where we can say this, this email address appears to have a combination of script elements.

You might not want to click on it, you might not want to accept this, I'm sending it to junk. And most users, you know, will learn not to, to accept those things. Since the creation of the LGRs, the expansion of homoglyph attacks, I think that the possibility of them has been reduced.

I don't know that they could ever be eliminated, but as he said, there's a lot of work that's being done and at the receiving end, you know, where the person is actually seeing this stuff. There's a lot of things we can do to make it visibly obvious to the user that this is not what they think it is, from displaying puny code instead of Unicode to putting up warning banners or red x's rather than the green lock screen or stuff like that. So it is a real threat. It was a threat that existed in the past. So that's not especially changed and lots of people are doing lots of things about it. So I think that it is reasonably contained, and we don't have to worry about it anymore than any other threats.

AJAY DATA: Number five, please.

SIVASUBRAMANIAN: My name is Sivasubramanian. To accelerate Universal Acceptance and a lot of good work that ICANN does, it is not just enough to work with the commercial enterprises, but also

required to promote and take initiative and start one or two enterprises like a UA ready browser that has developed on a blank page with code that not only takes care of UA readiness, but also enhances certain aspects like DNS Sec. So if the community and the commercial entities in the ICANN community who are technically aware of the DNS issues, take up one or two sub projects, like develop a new browser, that would also prompt the existing browsers to add the UA and the several other issues that we are trying to address. Thank you.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you for the comment. Any other questions? Number four, please.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA:

Thank you very much. It is not a question about you. It is a recognition of the ex or then minister of telecommunications of Morocco in 2002, Professor Haji. I recognize the person and I remember him when I've attended that plenipotentiary conference that he ran that conference first in Africa. It was one of the successful, a landmark, a telecommunication conference in ITU. And his was assisted by Mr. Abderrazak Berrada, who was the genius and talented chairman of the International Frequency Registration Board. One of the very important, I

called them 'son of Arabs', and the delegation of United States, they said, 'son of Africa' and some ones said 'son of the board.' So we've wanted to remember Mr. Berrada and God bless him and we want to acknowledge Dr. Haji, professor [inaudible], and he did very good. After 17 years, he continued to attend and support. This issue is very good. We have to really encourage the people and that to give us some hope. Thank you.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, sir. And we all acknowledge. Thank you. So three, two, one, no questions. Thank you very much for attending the session. This meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]