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ICANN73 | Virtual Community Forum – Achieving Universal Acceptance: The Way Forward  
Tuesday, March 8, 2022 – 09:00 to 10:00 AST

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you, all, for joining. This is the ICANN73 session on Achieving Universal Acceptance: The Way Forward. It will be hosted by Dr. Ajay Data who is the Chair of the Universal Acceptance Steering Group, so let me hand it over to Dr. Ajay Data to take it from here. Thank you.

DR. AJAY DATA: Thank you, Sarmad. Good evening, good morning, good afternoon. This is a very important issue we all know. Achieving universal acceptance is the only way forward for breaking the language barrier and bringing billions of people online and we are going to discuss some very, very important and pertinent issues here and seek support from very important part of the ICANN Organization. Next slide, please.

So, I am going to take a little bit of time to set the context and tell this is what we're going to do today. I'm going to do a little bit of introduction about the UASG working groups, the people involved, and then we are going to invite our important panelists who come with a very rich experience in their own ways, in their own field, Satish Babu, Nigel, and Christian are going to discuss with all of us where we will see how universal acceptance becomes a reality in the world. Next slide, please.

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So this is the current elected leadership here. Of course, we have two vice chairs here, Abdalmenem and Pavanaja. We all approve the processes, do a lot of admin work together, along with the help of Sarmad and Seda, to see that universal acceptance remains vibrant and do whatever we have to achieve. Next slide, please.

This is an important slide. We must [inaudible] focus here. This is working groups and people involved. And I wanted this slide here so that people are aware—so many people are actively working to see what you see from UASG.tech. This is not just these three people who are elected. Everybody involved and available on screen as their names worked the working groups, whether it's technology working group, where Satish Babu chairs it along with support from Rajiv and Abhishek, and measurement, [inaudible] e-mail, Mark and Abdalmonem who is also the vice chair, he goes into EAI working group. Communication, Anil Kumar Jain is recently appointed chair, very passionate about UA and language. Raymond Mamattah is vice chair. Local initiative is driven by VP Maria, Sarika and Potchanan, and ambassador working group, again led by Abdalmonem. So you can see there's a lot of people who get involved and try to achieve what we need to achieve. Next slide, please.

And it's an important slide again, because we started as a leadership, go back to talk within the ICANN ecosystem and reach out to SOs and ACs. Those people who are already involved are very active also in the SOs and ACs within the ICANN and Maria who is our chair for local initiative in CIS is also a member of EURALO, is working there and in UASG and EURALO. You can see so on and so forth all the names here.

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Those who are working in other organizations within the ICANN and also devoting their time to UA. It takes a lot of time of course to drive and deliver into organizations. But we are glad that there are some very passionate volunteers who devote this time and make UASG what it is today. Next slide please.

And that's where the discussion comes. And we will need to start. So I would like to welcome the first panelist, Satish Babu. Satish Babu needs no introduction, very well known [inaudible]. He wears many hats, and of course also chairs part of the UASG and also a recently appointed liaison from ALAC. So just before Satish takes over, I just want to tell we started to connect with SOs and ACs and asked for the liaison officers so that we have a very continuous kind of dialogue between these SOs and ACs. And that's where we are trying to achieve this liaison mission. And we successfully got nominated Satish Babu from ALAC, for the perspective. So welcome Satish and another role while you are within UASG and also part of ALAC now to become the real official voice here. So thank you. We would like to hear—questions are already in front of you. But we would like to hear from you what—and we would keep it conversational. And anybody wants to speak, please raise hand, I would invite you and Sarah will help me to cue it. And over to you, Satish. And let's hear from you. What is ALAC doing to promote UA and how do you want to address this? Thank you.

SATISH BABU:

Thanks very much, Ajay. And I think there is eight minutes for me to speak. So if I exceed that, please stop me. First of all, thank you for the

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opportunity to speak at this session, and my congratulations to the leadership for organizing the session. Now, while I've been part of many UA sessions, as Ajay points out, this is the first time I'm participating as the ALAC liaison to the UASG. Therefore I start from there. And as again, as Ajay mentioned, the fact that ALAC and not just ALAC has appointed a liaison to the UASG is an important development, and is a reflection of how important UA is from an end user perspective.

The At-Large community is a large community and we are very eager to contribute to universal acceptance. However, there needs to be coordinated efforts, and the appointment of a liaison would be very useful for this. I look forward to further cooperation and collaboration between UASG and ALAC in the days to come.

Now, what I'm stating here is, I mean, the ALAC policy process is guided by the Consolidated Policy Working Group of ALAC. So whatever I'm sharing here are currently my thoughts and I'll be sharing it with CPWG later for further guidance.

Now, At-Large is acutely aware that from an end user perspective, UA is key to digital inclusion, and noting that most of the next billion Internet users will be using a number of non-Latin scripts. We also considered that UA and IDNs constitute a very fundamental building block towards the multilingual Internet of the future.

ALAC has been actually through our RALOs, regional At-Large organizations, we've been carrying out a number of programs on universal acceptance. In 2021, the LACRALO, That's Latin American and

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Caribbean Regional At-Large Organization, organized the UA training program as a joint effort between LACRALO, ICANN and the UASG.

This program had about 150 participants from 14 countries in Latin America and Caribbean who came together to learn about universal acceptance, and also to interact with the technical stakeholders directly. This year in 2022, NARALO, that's North American Regional At-Large Organization, partnered with ICANN organ UASG to host a four-part training series on universal acceptance. These sessions were held from 20 January to 10 February, and there were about 225 participants joined this program from all over the North American continent and beyond. Again, they learned about what UA was, what is its strategic implication and importance and the technical aspects of UA and e-mail address internationalization, EAI. The sessions were very positively received. And this provides us with a model for the rest of the regional At-Large organizations.

The next question is what are the ALAC's plans for the future in the context of UA. This year, AFRALO—that's African Regional At-Large Organization—is launching the AFRALO UA project. This is again a joint effort of AFRALO, ICANN GSC and UASG designed to increase UA awareness across the African region and also to engage with technical stakeholders directly. Again, this is going to be a webinar series and it will start very shortly in Spring 2022.

All these programs have been organized at the regional level. We are also doing an ALAC-level activity this year later this year, as a part of our ongoing efforts to gain knowledge of issues of interest to individual end

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users, which is our primary constituency. ALAC is seeking to collect the perspectives of selected users in the topics of EAI, UA and IDNs, internationalized domain names. They are closely related.

Now this is being done through an end user survey and it is currently focused on the Hindi language community of India. And this survey will allow us to gather more information and insights on how linguistic script communities view universal acceptance. And we are expecting that there'll be many more initiatives from other regions as well, particularly Europe and Asia Pacific, which are significantly diverse linguistically.

Would ALAC be able to join UASG in holding the UA/EAI day? Again, while I need to consult CPWG with specifics, such as the activities and the dates, I am sure that ALAC will be an enthusiastic supporter of this initiative. And we'll be happy to kind of pick it up and go to our regions and countries.

Could ALAC promote UA ambassador and local initiative programs to garner more interest? Yes, and we are already supporting this program. For example, in January this year, we had invited Rajiv, one of the ambassadors to address the monthly meeting of the APRALO, the Asia Pacific Regional At-Large Organization, and talk to us about the UA-related activities. And we will continue to support these programs. We also support any additional programs that involves end users and their perspectives.

How can UASG support ALAC in these efforts? And how can we increase collaboration to help promote and achieve UA? Now, this is a question

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for the long haul. We cannot decide everything at this point. But certainly for the next year, for example, we might want to start with a priority of UASG.

What are the priorities for next year for the UASG? And given these priorities, we can create a calendar of possible initiatives for the rest of the next year. And we can share the calendar with ALAC, in which case ALAC and regions can then update this. We look at the calendar and plan programs. We may request some funding, but funding is not certainly the most central issue. We would like to see how this system will work. So we have to start with the UASG priorities and then work our way from there. So I'll stop here. And I'll be happy to answer any questions. And back to you, Ajay.

AJAY DATA:

Yeah, thank you, Satish. Very quick update. I can see Jonathan here, Jonathan from ALAC, would you like to add something on ALAC's side from Satish Babu point of view?

JONATHAN ZUCK:

Thanks. Yeah, I just wanted to expound a little bit on the idea of the survey. We made a request to ICANN to allow us to do an end user survey to really get at the interests and challenges associated with the issue of IDNs in particular and what is affecting the take up of IDNs. And so we're hoping that we've put in, we put out a request for proposals, we're now evaluating the firms and expect this spring to have some results that will feed into the IDN program within ICANN and hopefully

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make some progress in the area of universal acceptance as well. That's historically been a very important issue for the ALAC and the At-Large community, universal acceptance.

And so we're always excited to work alongside the Universal Acceptance Steering Group on these issues. And I think there's more that we can be doing with our networks to try and get this information out. So that remains one of our objectives as well. So thanks for the opportunity to speak. But the At-Large survey should be getting information back that will hopefully be useful to both the IDN program and the universal acceptance program in the in the near future. Thanks a lot.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Jonathan. This is very encouraging, because coming from you and Satish Babu makes a lot of confidence and commitment. I actually lost your voice, Satish, over the answer for the UA or EAI day. What did you say? I just missed that audio.

SATISH BABU:

Yeah. So I was saying, well, we need some more specifics. Maybe, for instance, what kind of activities what are the dates, etc. And I have to take it back to the CPWG. I was saying that I believe ALAC will be a very enthusiastic supporter of the proposal.



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AJAY DATA:

Great, thank you. Because the proposal which we have is to February next year, and mother tongue days, their international mother tongue days there in February. So could we link in with that? The momentum is there, PR is being done on that time. So we could look at one day before and select that. Of course you can come back later. Of course, there is no problem. But we would request that now as a liaison, if you can come back with a definite answer, or a definite proposal for a day, because UA would like to have this worldwide with all SOs and ACs on that day, so that we have a very mammoth impact of the UA on that particular day and everybody's talking about that day, just like we celebrate something on the language side, we celebrate around the universal acceptance side all of us together. That's the objective here.

SATISH BABU:

Absolutely. We'll get back to the UASG.

AJAY DATA:

Great. Thank you. Great, Jonathan, for your intervention here. And we really appreciate your words and commitment towards UA. We will definitely take it further from that perspective. I think we are going to take the questions at the end of the session here. Next slide, please.

So we will, we will have Nigel, very solid supporter of universal acceptance since the early days. Nigel, over to you.

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NIGEL HICKSON:

Yes, thank you very much, Dr. Ajay. And it's absolute pleasure to take part in this session. So I'm Nigel Hickson, I work for the UK government. When people ask you what people are passionate about, I always have an issue. But universal acceptance, I think, is one of those issues which I and other people can be passionate about. It seems to me that it's such a [inaudible], as we might say, it's something that we need to strive for. It's something that is in the public good. It is something that is worthwhile promoting, it is something that's worthwhile achieving. Because we are all concerned in one way or another about multilingualism on the Internet, we all want the Internet to be enjoyed by as many people as possible. And this comes through ICANN, through the organization, through the passion that the chief executive officer shows in this garden terms of ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to connect to content and services. So I think that's where I come from. And it is so encouraging to see that so many community members are involved in this task and the work that Dr. Ajay and others have taken forward, I think has been so worthwhile.

So you might ask, what's all this got to do with Government Advisory Committee? Well, I suppose I would start by saying that governments have not done that well. And I don't have the figures in front of me. And I don't have the details. But clearly, there is a lot more that governments have to do in this context. And in this context, there is a lot more that the Government Advisory Committee can do as well.

Because as our former speaker from ALAC showed us, getting people together, getting people to understand what this all is about, whether it's through a mother tongue day, or some other initiatives, is just so

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important. Because until people really understand the problems of people trying to access the Internet through international domain names and non-Latin scripts, until people really understand that, then we are not going to make the progress that we need to make.

And governments have a key role in this. And the GAC should have a key role in this. I'll be honest, I don't think the Government Advisory Committee have done enough on this to really promote universal acceptance. No excuses, whatever. But the GAC representatives are not necessarily representative of the parts of government that really need to act in this area. But we have a responsibility. We have a responsibility in the Government Advisory Committee to go back to our governments, to question them about how far they have gone in terms of procurement, in terms of the provision of public services, or in other services that they provide online, how far have they gone to ensure that universal acceptance is really embedded?

So I think these questions really are important. And certainly, we will be having a discussion in the Government Advisory Committee later this week in terms of our priorities. And I will be reporting back on this session, and on the need for us to be able to do more.

Now, what more can we do? Well, there's one thing in talking to our governments. But there's another thing in terms of the governments really taking action to ensure, as I said, that their public services or their procurement initiatives really take account of universal acceptance.

And so I think that we ought to think about having some sort of index, having some sort of table. And if people told me this is already

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available, then then fine, because I have just come from some discussions at the ITU last week, and here, there were some discussions around their global cyber index. And this is an index of countries that have put in place cyber trading, cyber policies, and other, if you like, being prepared for cyber issues.

And here, having this index, having this table of countries is an incentive for countries to do more in this area. And I'm wondering whether this can be the same in terms of universal acceptance. I'm going to stop there, but I welcome the discussion that will take place. Thank you.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Nigel. I think we will look forward for your continued support. And as you rightly picked up two points related to the procurement and implementation. I feel like sharing something very important which happened in India by government. Government of India constituted a workshop. And that could be an actionable number one here, created a workshop with the stakeholders from industry, academia, and technology companies, who would like to participate into universal acceptance or language-based issues.

And workshop landed into another committee under the Ministry of Information Technology that was called stakeholder group to achieve multilingual Internet in India. And that stakeholder was given a task to create a policy [inaudible] policy for government. And that team took almost 45 days to give a draft policy for achieving multilingual Internet and universal acceptance in India.

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And that policy was given, that policy is with the government. And that is soon actually, in fact, after this meeting, there is a discussion around that. And soon it is going to be a real document, which is available to the public at large as a policy and of course, we'll be very, very happy to share with you too, and the GAC.

This is one major, major thing which has happened in India from the government perspective. Another thing government have done is issued a directive internally. I don't have the order. But I know that all the government departments are supposed to have IDNs while the content is in the language of the user's choice. So this is another action which has happened.

But I think my question again comes to you is what we could do to work more closely with GAC members and use your experience and your connect as a liaison officer to take this message more engaging and actively to the GAC members and maybe having a session chaired by you and GAC itself, talking about it, we can come there and ensuring that the day to have UA and EAI takes place, some of the thoughts, and we were just like we would wait for ALAC to come back with a February date, we would be very happy to hear the date confirmation from GAC itself so we all on the same page, at least that—and I have made the life easy from the UA perspective that the date for international mother tongue day is fixed and one day before. So we need not to deliberate much on that date from the date perspective. It does not clash something very big happening all day in GAC from their perspective. So these are some thoughts here and there are some questions related to

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you Nigel in the chat. But we will take this at the end. And thank you for your intervention. Would you like to add something, Nigel?

NIGEL HICKSON:

Well, no, I would just end by saying thank you for that proposal. And I should have come to that as well. I will certainly go back and talk to the GAC, as I've said, and hopefully at the next ICANN meeting, even intersessionally we can have such a session. So thank you for that offer.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you very much. Next slide, please. So now, we have our third panelist. This is where we are going to discuss from Christian about GNSO. And Christian is not new for UASG, Christian Dawson. He had been a leader into UA itself and had been contributing quite a bit into this area. Christian, great to see you, my friend, here, and look forward to hear from you. We are very happy to see you back in action for UA.

CHRISTIAN DAWSON:

Yes. Thank you so much. Yes, I am actually proud to have drafted the first charter for the UASG and stood before the Board to carry the message from the people who had envisioned that UASG should exist in the world to ask the Board to fund this initiative. So I am very proud to be back in this new role. And I believe that it is very wise for the UASG leadership to have created this new role where a liaison to the GNSO is created to ensure that the important work that the UASG is doing is connected to the policy work of the GNSO.

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We have just heard reports from two very important advisory committees within the GNSO process. The GNSO is the policymaking component to the ICANN community, and indeed, creating policies for how the DNS can continue to grow is one of the—if not the most important role of the ICANN community.

So, one of the reasons that it was so important to create the UASG is that a lot of what this group needs to do stands outside of the policy process. And what I mean by that is the DNS itself is far ahead on universal acceptance than indeed most of the communities that we need to influence. We need to be able to influence people to update their systems so that they can end up in compliance with the way that the DNS has evolved over time.

Therefore, the work of the GNSO in helping to evolve the DNS and to ensure that the proper TLD labels etc. are in place has been done and has often been done years ago. Therefore, first of all, I want to say that there are things that are relevant to UA that are happening in the GNSO policy process. Right now, universal acceptance is a main component of discussions that are happening within the subsequent procedures process. The ICANN Board has made it clear that they want to make IDNs a focus of the next round of new gTLDs and so having discussions around how we will do that effectively and how there can be new support for UA in that next round is a main component of SubPro discussions. In addition, there is a policy process on IDN variant TLD labels. I am in that working group and they're working on ensuring that those are brought up to date.

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But in general, the policy process stands aside from the work of the UA, of the universal acceptance. Now, what we need to do within the entire community and all of the diverse supporting organizations and advisory committees is to ensure that people understand that the work that we do here does need to be brought home, that universal acceptance needs to be something that is brought back to the systems of the world that are empowered by the work that we do on the DNS.

My hope is that through collaboration, I can not only keep this group informed of the policy process when it impacts UA, but we can also ensure that the regular updates that this community provides to the SOs and ACs continues in a way that it's going to make it very effective to bring this message home to people's networks where it needs to flourish.

And I think that the UA EAI and mother tongue day in February, and the promotion ideas that are on the slide here, are excellent ideas that will help drive that forward.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Christian. So Christian, you are obviously I would say the veteran of UA who gave the life to UA, what we are discussing here. And the initiative, which you are seeing here right now, of course, too. And we got you back in action again because of this initiative. So I see from that perspective a little bit success already here. And this is what we have been discussing, how do we get every leader who had been working in UA get into action again, get into some role again here and see that this—because it's a mammoth task on hand right now. And



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that's the reason we reached out to SOs and ACs to become part with us and let us join this together. It is not just one chair or two vice chairs to achieve this. It is impossible, right? It is not possible, hundreds of volunteers have to work here.

So GNSO is a very, very powerful organization, very solid volunteers globally. Straightforward, knows the subject, knows the technologies, and knows the business opportunity around there. And this is where the universal acceptance plays an important role, because it is directly hitting the business. So I think it should be very important for all of us, not just the professionals to get better jobs and salaries if you are UA understanding, but also software and services, registrars, registries, everybody, is UA ready. So we have, I think, mammoth task on GNSO hand here from that perspective. We may have delayed but I think we are now starting it faster. So we need to probably speed up and do a lot more things and cover the gap, what has been there since few years now. Your take on it, Christian?

CHRISTIAN DAWSON:

Yes, Dr. Ajay Data. I would agree with you. I wanted to first let you know that though I have not been a part of this community for the past couple of years, my commitment to universal acceptance has certainly not waned in that period. One of the reasons why universal acceptance is so important to me is in my day job, I run an organization called the Internet Infrastructure Coalition. And we're a trade association of the companies that build the infrastructure of the Internet, not just the DNS companies, the registries and registrars, but also cloud companies,

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Internet exchange points, datacenters, the people that rack and stack servers in datacenters to make the Internet function.

And indeed, it's the registries and registrars because they are operating on relatively standard DNS-based platform that are probably further ahead than a lot of people. It's the customers of the cloud providers that really need this education so that they can bring their systems up to compliance. And I work with a lot of those people.

I am also a member of the ISPCP. The ISPs are a large advocate for universal acceptance because we're sort of the helpdesk of the world. And in that capacity when things go wrong because people's systems aren't updated and they don't get the right answer back when they send a query for some UA noncompliant reason, they're the ones that get the call.

That's why it's important for the groups that I'm involved in, the Internet Infrastructure Coalition and the ISPCP, to make sure that we are screaming off the rooftops the benefits of UA compliance, and we'll continue to do so. I think that from our perspective, the benefits are easy. Every single constituency, every single SO, every single AC has their own story as to why universal acceptance is important. And as we unpack what's the really compelling reason they should care, I think we'll succeed more and more.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Christian. Obviously your commitment does not go. Very, very great commitment. So we would also request you to come back

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with the date in February if you are okay to partner. And let's all do together to celebrate this day and observe some activities around it. We have a year long. Once we agree on a date, I think we will be very reasonable to all get together you are realizing now. So you are not away, you will be part of coordination group already. And I am sure you must have been already added in the coordination group, you will see all the emails, activities and everything transparently well, and we would like to hold those activities which we all agree together. So do not worry about commitment on a date that it can be overwhelming or it could be too much of pressure. We are going to take as easy as possible. But let's start from some activities and start observing that day for all of us. That's the objective from the UA perspective. Thank you, Christian. Do you want to add anything before we switch to the questions?

CHRISTIAN DAWSON:

No, simply that—thank you for creating this new liaison position. I think that connecting the work of the UASG to the policy work and the GNSO is a very smart move.

AJAY DATA:

Yeah, thank you very much. Next slide, please. So the idea is basically to have now questions here, and may I have questions, Sarmad or Seda, anybody would like to read the questions and address to somebody?

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SEDA AKBULUT: Hello, Dr. Data. Yes, we have a few questions in the chat. And some of them have been responded already. So I can continue from the ones that have not been responded yet. And then leave time to the other questions. So one of the questions is from Roberto Gaetano, NextGen mentor. And the question is, is there any initiative that UASG plans to hold for the International decade of indigenous languages? And there's a link for this that starts this year. I believe that to treat UA just as a technical issue unrelated to what the people need it for would be reductive. Roberto, is this question to anyone specific in the group? Would anyone be interested in responding?

ROBERTO GAETANO: Well, actually, is not to anybody specifically. It was prompted by the fact that there is an initiative that is related to mother tongue day. And I was thinking that maybe to join also an initiative of the UASG with UNESCO for the indigenous languages decade could be something that will bring people to learn about UASG and also to widen the horizon of the UASG to relate to languages and not only to technical issues, but that's my personal opinion. But the question was, basically to Dr. Ajay Data if there is something in for this, and to anybody, in terms of thinking whether we all as ICANN community can think of initiatives of this type. Thank you.

AJAY DATA: Thank you, Roberto. Wonderful question. And I have two responses here. So UNESCO has been part of UA sessions and last an IGF, they approached us even and they told us about this Internet decade of

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indigenous languages. And I think this is going to be announced in April or sometime in this period. And they are very clearly aware about UA and we are discussing. In fact, I got a message to come and speak in one of the sessions there. So, we are going to address this UA. So what you have said and what you are thinking is absolutely right and aligned with what's happening in real world.

Related to the this question, similar to this initiative is what we are thinking related to the mother tongue day as you can see, that we announce it every year and celebrate universal acceptance or EAI day, every year, all of us together, rather than one of the activity. That is a small response which we are trying to create. We do not have any specific day as such which we go to the community and, and focus our energies to achieve and show something which is coming there.

Of course, we also do our blogs, our articles, our recommendations, our remediation reports, our gap analysis reports. This keep happening regularly. I'm sure you are aware there is a regular task which we do here. I can see Satish Babu's hand. Satish, do you want to add something?

SATISH BABU:

Thanks, Ajay, and thanks, Roberto, for the question. I think we have discussed this in the past. So I'm coming from the ICANN At-Large. And while this is technically not in ICANN's remit, certainly from a multilingual Internet perspective, this is an important question. However, UA only applies if your language has a script. If a language does not have a script, then there's very little we can do in terms of UA.

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Of course, in terms of multilingual Internet, we can still do something to preserve these languages, even when there's no script. But for UA, that is actually a restriction.

Secondly, the current prioritization of UA when language is considered is based on certain—there's an index from which we have a cut off. And if there is a sufficient push from the user community of these languages, which have scripts, then there is real possibility of us taking this up as a UA initiative. But until then, it may be difficult. Thank you.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Satish. Roberto, any follow up question?

ROBERTO GAETANO:

No, just a comment, if you allow me. At EuroDIG that is planned in June in Trieste, there's going to be UNESCO talking about multilingualism. And I'm fairly sure that that's going to be a UASG representative commenting like every year at EuroDIG. So that could be a chance for hoping that we have the meeting in person for find you on the plan for the future for collaboration. Thank you.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you very much. I would request Sarmad and Seda to look into and see if we are there or we can send somebody there for physical intervention. Thank you, Roberto, for this important knowledge to us. Thank you very much. Seda, over to you again for the questions. And

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please read the question even if it is answered for the audio purpose. Somebody may not be reading the chat. So it's recorded.

SEDA AKBULUT: Sure. The next question is from Nikolas Fiumarelli. And the question is, “Nicholas Fiumarelli from LACNIC. Last year, ICANN fellow but talking personally at this time. Is there something that the RIRs, the regional Internet registries can do in order to help achieving UA compliance? I'm thinking maybe about reverse DNS name servers also being compliant with UA so the ISPs could also receive the message.”

AJAY DATA: Anybody would like to answer here? Sarmad, I'm not sure if I understood this question correctly.

CHRISTIAN DAWSON: I was going to say the same thing. I was asking if the question could be repeated.

AJAY DATA: Okay, Seda, could you please repeat the question again?

SEDA AKBULUT: Sure. “Nicholas Fiumarelli from LACNIC. Last year, ICANN fellow but talking personally at this time. Is there something that the RIRs, the regional Internet registries can do in order to help achieving UA

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compliance? I'm thinking maybe about reverse DNS name servers also being compliant with UA so the ISPs could also receive the message.”

AJAY DATA:

Okay, so if I understood correctly—Christian, please add if I miss something later—I think DNS, Nicholas, is not about UA problem. DNS gets configured with a Punycode here. Punycode is the ASCII string which gets sent to the DNS. It is the browsers which translates to Punycode and goes to the DNS server. And so it is not about really an issue which UASG discuss at all about the DNS issue or name server issue here.

Just for your knowledge, DNS name server, if there is an IDN, that IDN string or a Unicode string will not go to the DNS, it will be the Punycode of that IDN string will go to the DNS. So it really not a challenge from that perspective. But to answer your question, what RIRs can do, so registries can definitely do to become UA ready. So when you register a domain name, could I use my EAI address into my contact records? Could I use my email ID, which is a non-ASCII character set, could that be used there? So I think there is a lot more into this ecosystem, not just the registries. I think there are a lot more parties will come into play. But this is a very interesting discussion which requires attention. And we have Christian and our liaison officers to take this discussion more actively and give the universal acceptance more readiness there. Christian, do you want to add something? Have I missed something?



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CHRISTIAN DAWSON: No, I had nothing to add, you did a great job of answering the question. That's fantastic. And yes, we will carry forward questions like that [inaudible].

AJAY DATA: Thank you. I love Christian. He represents [inaudible] because this is going to add lots and lots of action to these kind of questions which require a lot of discussion here. Seda, over to you again.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you. Another question is from Pavanaja Bellippady. And the question is, "When will gTLDs in Indic be available?"

AJAY DATA: I wish I knew the answer. Anybody from ICANN would like to come in? I know, I think this is the process which we all will know publicly, public comments will happen, announcements will happen. Sarmad, would you like to add official answer to it from ICANN perspective?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you, Dr. Data. Just that the gTLDs in local scripts have actually been available since the 2012 new gTLD round. And there were multiple gTLDs, which were already applied and have gone through the application process, delegated and are operational. There is of course another opportunity for new gTLDs and local scripture languages through the next new gTLD round. Unfortunately, we don't have a timeline for that round at this time. But the community is working

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towards developing one. So hopefully we should have a timeline for that soon. Thank you.

AJAY DATA: Thank you. Christian, do you want to add something?

CHRISTIAN DAWSON: Only going to add that I have been asked to liaise with this group from the GNSO. And the GNSO is the one who right now is primarily driving that process. And so as updates arise that get us closer to that second new gTLD round, I will let this group now.

AJAY DATA: So Pavanaja, this is the direct benefit of having Christian as an officer from here, we will have a first information as soon as it becomes available from GNSO. So great, Christian, for this comfort here. Thank you very much. Seda, over to you.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you. And the other question is from Indrajeet Ghorpade, and the question is, “Does UASG have any plans to directly influence some of the top Internet platforms such as Facebook, Gmail, WhatsApp etc. as this might lead to a large impact encouraging other platforms to become UA compliant too.”

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AJAY DATA:

Yes. That's a great question, Indrajeet. We worked in the past with Microsoft, Apple, and Google on this. And Gmail is already EAI compliant for that matter. You could send an email from an EAI address to your Gmail ID and it will be accepted well, and it will be replied also.

And from the WhatsApp perspective, WhatsApp also accepts the email addresses and IDNs there. There are some UA related issues, of course, from linkification perspective. So this is work in progress. Facebook do not accept as of now the non-ASCII ID as an identity. This is a work in progress. But we are talking to ICANN leadership and other authorities to reach to them. And I am sure we are going to have this discussion more further. Satish Babu would have more report to say.

SATISH BABU:

Thanks very much, Ajay. Right now I am speaking as the chair of the UA tech working group, because this is something that falls squarely in the ambit of that working group. The question is actually quite correct. We have to work with tech companies, both big and small. Some of these libraries are written by small groups of open source volunteers. There is some of the technologies from big companies.

Now problems are the same. And we have to work with both the sets of people, all people who produce software and maintain software. So we are now in the process of step by step trying to resolve, trying to reach out to these groups and communities and companies and trying to get our problems fixed. It's a long road, but we are pretty much on our way on the road. Thank you.

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AJAY DATA: Thank you, Satish, for an important answer. Seda, please.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you, Dr. Data. The question is from Samik Kharel, and the question is, “Is UA limited to linguistics or it further expands to including emojis and colors into its scope?”

AJAY DATA: So, we worry about the ASCII and non-ASCII characters. Beyond that, there are some best practices and protocols which are supposed to be followed. So, for example, a top-level domain name do not accept numbers. A domain name will not accept certain characters. A mailbox name will allow some characters which are not allowed some domain names. So, there are some rules and protocols which are set here which UA do not decide. UA just ensure that the rules which are decided gets followed, gets implemented from their perspective. Of course, we have some best practices which we guide, so when emoji can be used, which character can be used or not used, what is the right practice, which UA [inaudible] from that perspective.

But this is not the standard guidelines. People choose to follow and make their own decisions here. So for example, in ASCII, Gmail do not worry about the dot in the mailbox name, but outlook and Yahoo will do. And this is implementation. Protocol allows the dot in the mailbox name but differentiation using it or not using it is entirely upon the

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company for support perspective. This is just an example perspective here.

So UA believes in creating best practices and there is a document available on UASG.tech specifically for emojis. And we have been saying this very clearly, that we are not the standard making body. We are ensuring that all domain names, all e-mail addresses created by following the standard which are valid in nature must be accepted well in all software applications. So we are about the acceptance of all domain names and all email addresses in all software applications. That's the core which we have here. And we work about these code points which are allowed in these domain names, whether it is ASCII or non-ASCII. This is where we ensure that it should be allowed and accepted well. that's the fundamental of universal acceptance. I hope this answers your question. Please feel free to unmute or raise your hand, we will invite you to speak. Thank you. Seda, over to you for next question.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you, Dr. Data. The next question is from Lihsuan Liang. And actually, this was answered by Maureen in the chat. But if you have any other comments, please feel free. So the question is, “How will we participate in the end user survey Jonathan mentioned?”

AJAY DATA:

Of course, it will be not be private, I hope. Jonathan, would you like to speak here?

JONATHAN ZUCK:

Sure. Yeah. So this is a survey that is being performed by a professional. I answered in the chat when the question first appeared. But this is a survey that's going to be put in the field with a professional survey firm. So there's not direct participation in the execution of the survey because we want to make sure that it's done professionally with a good statistically significant sample and credible result results. When we get the data back, we'll all be working to interpret the data and to provide inputs to both the subsequent procedures and the Universal Acceptance Steering Group based on the results of that survey, and we'll be thinking about what we should do next. It's just a pilot project right now, that's why it's focused on just a single region of India. We made the choice based on an area where there was a lot of sales of non-Latin character keyboards which seem like a good indicator of an area that would be primed for using IDNs. And so that's part of the motivation for selecting the area that we did. And so once we have the results, I think there'll be a lot of work for all of us in the At-Large to evangelize those results and make sure that they are used in the creation of outreach programs, both for IDNs and universal acceptance. I hope that answers your question.

AJAY DATA:

I think it does very well, Jonathan. It's going to be available for everyone, basically, and participate from here. Yeah, the answer is yes. Seda, over to you, please.

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SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you. And next question is from Nicolas Fiumarelli about regional Internet registries question, this is a follow-up. “Thanks for your responses. in fact I think as Edward clarified, there are some parts of the Reverse DNS translations (browsers, registration info, e-mail, reverse DNS verifications) that could benefitiate if ISPs are also UA-compliant in their nameservers. So maybe the ASO could have some role by disseminating UA-readiness through ISPs, just in case there is something they could do in their own name servers. Specifically what will happen when translating an IP address to a U-Label for the client to ‘see’ the domain in their native language. Maybe I am confusing something, just to be clarified.” Thank you.

AJAY DATA: Christian, would you like to address this now?

CHRISTIAN DAWSON: I'm happy to. I'm happy to say that that is something that as a member of the leadership of the ISPCP, I'm happy to chat with our ISPs about. That group represents some of the largest ISPs on the planet. I will say it's mostly the policy people from the ISPs on the planet, not necessarily the technical people. But they can bring questions like that back. In my experience, the major problems that we see in universal acceptance tend to be closer to the ground, they tend to be more driven by people's scripts on major systems with emails and things like that, and that updates like that to bring things into compliance of the entire DNS are generally covered. But nonetheless, I'll go ahead and see if I can source that question to the ISPs that I'm a part of representing.

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AJAY DATA: I'm sure, Christian, this answers it well. But let me give you an another, Nicolas, chance to answer you more detailed because we, myself and Christian are now part of one same mailing list. So I would give you— Seda could you please write an email address [inaudible] on the chat? So I would request Nicolas to write your question on the email. And also write an example, if you can, to us on info at UASG.tech to us and we will certainly give you a detailed reply. And probably, if we are missing a point, we will learn it from you. So Nicolas, please spend some time to write your exact point of view and an example to explain that will help us to discuss this in much more detailed way. Thank you for your intervention, Nicolas. I really appreciate it. Thank you very much. Seda, over to you, please.

SEDA AKBULUT: So with that, we can move to actually to the Q&A slides. Christian, if it's possible, you can share your screen with that.

AJAY DATA: Sure. Anybody would like to have any answers questions? And may I request all the panelists to be available? Let's discuss this out. If we have to speak to each other something here. Do you have any suggestion to another SOs and ACs? Would you like to say something here? And I think Seda wants to say something. Seda, over to you please.



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SEDA AKBULUT: Yes, we have one more question from Nigel Hickson. “Looking ahead to the next gTLD round, could UA be baked in as a requirement for those applying for a new gTLD?”

AJAY DATA: Wonderful. Christian.

CHRISTIAN DAWSON: Could you repeat the question? I'm sorry.

AJAY DATA: So the question is in the new gTLD round, could the UA be a mandatory condition here?

CHRISTIAN DAWSON: The ICANN Board has already said that they are going to be focused on it ends. And so my expectation is that as the policy process evolves, there is going to be a big focus on ensuring UA compliance throughout the general ecosystem, the DNS ecosystem and ensuring compliance throughout the contractual parties that ICANN influences. So yes, that will be covered. Again, the problem is farther down the line. It is people's individual scripts and people's individual systems that really, ICANN doesn't have the power throughout their policy process to touch.

AJAY DATA: Thank you very much. Happy to hear. Adam, you have raised hand.

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ADAM PEAKE:

Thank you very much. I'm Adam Peake. And I am a member of ICANN staff, but I'm speaking actually as a member of the Internet Governance Forum, MAG, Multistakeholder Advisory Group where I'm not representing ICANN per se but the technical community.

And I suppose in one way, it's an offer, how can we as the IGF, as the multi stakeholder advisory group, help support this work? It's important as a representative of the technical community that I can try and bring that. Sarmad is already a member of an important working group that the IGF and the UN system has developed, a policy network on meaningful access. But as we look forward to UN initiatives focused on information technologies within the UN system and also how the UN Secretary General is promoting information technologies, I think this is an important opportunity. So I hope we can build some relationships with the UASG and the whole tech group. And well, I'm here to do that and I better send you an email to make sure it happens. But let's make sure we can do something here. Thank you.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Adam. And looking forward for your email. We are so excited to have this meeting today and our liaison officers to speak, come back and be part of this group to take this further. Thank you, gentlemen, for becoming part of this discussion. We are few minutes over. I am extremely sorry for taking these minutes away from you. I just [inaudible] into the timelines. So we are three minutes over and we

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would say goodbye, enjoy your ICANN and we will see you soon again.  
Thank you very much. Bye.

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