
ICANN76 | CF – Promoting UA through Local Engagement
Tuesday, March 14, 2023 – 15:00 to 16:00 CUN

SEDA AKBULUT:

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don't sign in using your full name. So with that, I will hand the floor over to the chair of the Universal Acceptance Steering Group, Dr. Ajay Data.

AJAY DATA:

Thank you very much, Seda. Next slide, please. Good morning, good evening, good afternoon. This is Ajay Data from India. Right now, it's midnight, 1:30 AM. And this is a very important session because it's where we talk about how Universal Acceptance is getting promoted through our local engagement process. We are also going to share the updates from the leaders from various regions. And this brings the update to the community where we also request people to join this awareness program, which we are up to. Next slide, please.

We are going to cover many leaders here. You can see the list on the screen. Mahesh, Satish, Nabil, Anawin, Abdalmonem, Luis, and I'm going to moderate the session and to the conclusion. Next slide, please. This is the Universal Acceptance, as you know, and there are many people who joined first time. So we have to go through the process of introducing Universal Acceptance. The vision to have all valid domain names and all valid email addresses to be accepted in all soft applications. That's the vision. That's a very simple vision. Accept all domain names, all email addresses in all software applications.

The impact is to provide the gateway to the next billion people and users, and also provide consumer choice, improve competition so that people can have domain names according to their need, according to their accessibility and take to the end user.

Universal Acceptance Steering Group was formed in 2015. It remains a community initiative. To my understanding, we are almost 700 people as a member, and we try to contribute for the global impact. Next slide, please.

Universal Acceptance Day is going to be celebrated 28th of March, 2023. That date was selected with a consultation of almost all the SOs and ACs and global organizations, and including the ICANN itself. And this day is likely to be celebrated every year, 28th of March, as a UA Day. That's where we talk about the awareness of Universal Acceptance globally. The first event is happening on 28th of March. Almost 40 countries are participating to have 50 event on that particular day.

This is going to be one of the mega awareness plan from UASG, along with the support of many countries and organizations to celebrate Universal Acceptance and bring people online. Thank you everyone who is participating, who is joining, who is taking the mission further, and trying to celebrate UA Day together. Next slide, please.

That's the reason we celebrate the UA Day, to share the UA challenges and current gaps in Universal Acceptance, drive UA adoption in all software applications, and drive development by local region and global technical organizations. This is a very important one where we try to engage with the global organizations, and also bring in local and regional organizations together.

We also bring technical and government decision makers to adapt to UA by adopting procurement terms, to include UA readiness, etc. Create UA awareness in the technical community, especially around the UA challenges and solutions. Rally language communities to enable

policies to promote UA adoption and celebrate the achievement of UA and recognize success stories. That's where UASG create case studies and talk about the success and impact in the region. Next slide, please.

So as I was talking about, we have received these many proposals. So this is around 85, 88 proposals, if I'm not wrong. We received, when we called for the 89 proposals, when we called for the UA Day proposals, and we could accommodate 50 proposals, which were shortlisted by the UASG community. And these are all listed on the UASG.tech website. And you all can see there is a dedicated domain name, universalacceptance.day. And these covers all the events, if you are interested to look at the entire list, and also find out what is the nearest one near you.

Around 40 local and national proposals are going to be done. One regional proposal from each region is minimum we have ensured is there. Another UA Day event to be held in India on 28th of March. And that's a very important one because that's the single global UASG event, which is happening in India, that is hosted by NIXI. NIXI is an official host for this event, led by [Shri Anil Jianji,] that event. In this, the government is supporting us very, very strongly. Our Honorable Minister of India of IT, and the State Minister of IT, and the Secretary of IT, all are supporting the universal acceptance in India through this event. So we hope that this is going to be a landmark event as a global event, which will not only raise the bar of awareness in India, but also will lead and pave the way for all the global governments to understand the importance of universal acceptance globally. Next slide, please.

So now we are going to have a discussion on local initiatives, local efforts, which are being done. Seda, since I am sitting out, you will please run the session. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you, Dr. Data. And we will start with some questions for each panelist. We will start first with Mahesh. Mahesh, welcome. We would like to know how can the private sector support UA. You have conducted an analysis on 2,000 websites, and tested their UA readiness, and then started to work on reaching out to those website developers and companies and support all relevant UA materials along with your capabilities to make those websites UA ready. So please share your experience with us. How can the private sector support UA, and what are the main obstacles that you have faced during this remediation process?

MAKESH KULKARNI:

Thank you, Seda, and thank you, Dr. Data, for giving this opportunity. May I request to switch to the next slide, please? Actually, we did the work as a part of the SOW from USAG, and prior to going to the response of what the private players are supposed to do in this regard, I would like to just put across that we have conducted almost like five email campaigns for 1,758 non-UA compliant websites. We tried to reach out to them so that we can help them out to become UA ready.

Further to this, what we have done is that we have put up almost like 54 local websites from the government, academia, and industry for pilot study on the UA remediation strategy. These 54 websites, basically, we

were in touch with them, one-to-one discussions we had with them, and we found that they were inclined to actually do the UA remediation, basically.

Towards this, basically, we have conducted almost 23 training workshops and outreach activities, which were organized for the developers as well, from almost like August 22 to January 23. And it also included online coding sessions covering different libraries like .NET, PHP, Java, and other stuff, basically.

So we were fortunate enough that out of 54 websites, 20 websites became UA ready after the remediation and the outreach efforts. So that is something very heartening to know that 20 websites have become UA ready after the remediation and outreach efforts.

However, while actually there are a lot of learnings what we had in between, while we touched base with the people, that initially we tried to basically contact the owners of the website and the CTOs of the website, though they were very appreciative about the same, but were also apprehensive about the resources allocation and overall impact of the change in their offerings and services. So they were a little bit reluctant in terms of basically getting into the UA implementation part of it.

Also, at times, what has happened, there are very large organization or a mid-size organizations did have a country or region-specific website, basically, and they are being either maintained, controlled by the respective regions. So this was one of the challenges what we faced over there.

So then what we did, we changed our strategy and we tried to basically reach out to the developer community, basically, and arrange for the technical training programs to the developer community so that we take a bottom-up approach so that they can appraise the management about the ease of implementation.

So we tried the top-down approach as well as a bottom-up approach to do that, basically. And we also had online coding sessions for different programming languages. So if you really look at it, basically, from the developer's perspective, UA remediation was less of a technical issue than the administrative issue because of the hierarchy within the organizations and the involvement of multiple teams and parties.

Okay, so if you really look at the role of private sector, it's extremely important. There are a couple of suggestions over here. They may like to integrate UA-related policies and compliance in their existing IT infrastructure, including the website development and email servers-related policies. So every website or every organization do have an IT infrastructure-related policy. So there will be—

SEDA AKBULUT:

Mahesh, could you please speak a bit louder?

MAKESH KULKARNI:

Okay, so actually, the role of private sector is very important over here. They may like to integrate the UA-related policies and the compliances in their existing IT infrastructure, including the website development and email servers-related policies. So every private sector has to have their IT infrastructure policies. So they might like to integrate these

policies inside the IT infrastructure policies. Also, UA can be part of the procurement policy also while evaluating third-party services, because that has become very, very important and critical in terms of if some third-party services are being evaluated, then they should ensure that at least they are UA-ready, and also need to undertake skills upgradation for the developers in our overall support of multilingual and their operations or service or offerings. Okay, so this is what actually private sectors can contribute. Can you switch to the next slide, please, Seda? Yeah, thank you very much.

So the main obstacles as far as the concerns and the challenges we faced in terms of basically implementation, it is observed that most of the non-IT websites, basically, I will talk about websites alone, non-IT websites, and even certain IT organizations rely upon third-party services for hosting, development, and even including the different frameworks what they use for the website development and maintenance of the website. This also includes various services related to digital marketing and customer relationship utilized by the back-end teams.

So it is tightly coupled. So when we talk about email services or when we talk about basically getting information from the customer, then it is tightly linked back to their back-end teams also. Because of this, though, at the first instant, website owners were appreciative of IDNs and EAI. They have not shown further interest in implementing the same. Rather, they were reluctant to make the changes in the existing work site, working site, because of the various reasons cited above.

Websites, as I said, websites make use of third-party frameworks or plugins for various functions. Also, they rely upon third-party email services. In the specific case, what we observed is that around eight to 10 websites were making use of a Contact Us Form 7, which is a WordPress plugin. Okay, so it is a very popular plugin, which has been used by WordPress, for which the developers did not have a control or did not have a knowledge to modify the same. It is just because that they were using the third-party, basically, services. So they were not equipped to modify that, okay?

Web development companies deploy code at a back-end for multiple websites. So this is also one observation that most of the website development is being actually outsourced. And there are third-party website development organizations which are involved into this. And these website companies deploy code at a back-end for multiple websites. And any change at the back-end affects several other onboarded websites. And hence, there is a difficulty to change only for a given particular website. Also, the front-end validation code gets overwritten by the back-end validations. And the team handling at times are different or at different regions. So this also poses a real challenge in terms of getting the UA implementation done, basically.

So as indicated, we tried bottom-up approach. However, the team experiences delay in getting the requisite permission from the respective department. So though the developers are very much convinced that it is to be done or they are equipped to do that, then they generally, they have to actually get approvals from their higher-ups. So sometimes, it gets a delay in getting the approvals from the respective department, basically.

Since the email is initiated or monitored by sales and marketing, as well as a part of a digital reach-out strategy, generally, these departments are reluctant to change, basically. They don't allow changes to happen so easily over there because they feel that it will impact their current services which are going on, okay? So these are some of the challenges. Interdependency between the teams is very high. Teams are sitting at different locations, and hence, coordination within the team is not cohesive. Team is not fully conversant as they are dependent upon third-party frameworks. So as far as the things are concerned, it is mostly depending upon the administrative issues rather than the technical issues. Technically, I think whatever documentation has been provided, whatever libraries have been provided by the UASG, they're absolutely fantastic people. The developers community were able to implement as quickly as possible. But as I said, the administrative issues are a little much more than the technical issues, basically.

So if you really look at looking forward, I think it will be worthwhile to impress upon the web development frameworks, basically, or the organizations who are actually having a very popular web development frameworks which are available into the market, or even the open source web development framework. And if you are able to impress upon them to become UA ready, I think most of the websites will be automatically UA ready, especially the WordPress. So most of the world's websites are being powered or being utilized by the WordPress. So if you are able to actually make UA ready, the WordPress and its associated plugins, then I think the UA implementation will be happening very smoothly. This is what I want to say about. Thank you very much.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you very much, Mahesh. We will actually have the questions at the end of the session, but it is quite late, probably in India, 2:00 AM. So we may have some questions for Mahesh from the floor or online. Yes, Mark.

MARK ELKINS: Good afternoon. This is Mark Elkins, UA ambassador, living in South Africa. How does one test whether a website is UA compliant? Are there particular tests or are you simply looking at the website, checking that things like the mail interface works, that forms, etc., work? Thank you.

MAKESH KULKARNI: Yeah, simplistically, basically, we look at the different forms which are available onto the website. Especially when you visit a website, especially when you visit a website, you will find different forms related to either the feedback form or maybe the registration form or getting feedback from the customer and so on and so forth. So we look forward for that. And USAG has already published a test data set. So we have picked up some specific test data set from there and try to see whether they are getting acceptance, basically those email IDs or the URLs are getting accepted in the form. So that is the first check what we generally try to do. And if that passes, then we basically try to go further, then inspect the basically the code of the website and try to see that what validation methods they have utilized, if any, basically.

So if they have put some regex pattern, if they use something, and then related to that, we try to do the remediation portion. I hope it answers the question.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you, Mahesh. Yes, UASG 004 and 0026 are also relevant materials in testing the UA readiness of websites. We thank you, Mahesh, for your contribution. We have another question from Dennis.

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Seda. Mahesh, just out of curiosity, in the previous slide, the results of the testing, on bullet number four, out of the 54 websites, 20 websites became UA ready. Can you provide a little bit more color as to the other websites that were not able to be remediated? What were the challenges, the problems that prevented to be UA ready? Thank you.

MAKESH KULKARNI: actually, as I said, it was not a major technical issue because what we tried to do, we tried to basically look at it from the top-down approach as well as the bottom-up approach. And we tried to convince the IT managers and the CTO to become UA ready. A similar way, because they didn't have an idea that how much resources are going to be utilized or how much time it is going to take, what impact it is going to bring and so on and so forth, we also tried to actually convince their developer, had a developers round, basically. And then we had a joint meeting with them in terms of basically the implementation. So we showed to them that it is not that difficult. It's a very easy process to do that, unless

otherwise the website is very large and having multiple departments, basically.

So these were some of the 54 websites when we used the word. These are some of the people who were inclined to further UA remediation. But over a period, basically, the rest of the fellows dropped out just for the reason which I cited to you, that either some of the websites were multi-regional websites where they were being controlled by the different authorities over there, as well as the back-end site development, as well as front-end site development was being done by different teams, as well as the basically different frameworks were being used in the sense, as I explained to you, especially in the non-IT, what is called that area, the websites which are there, they were relying upon the third-party, basically frameworks and infrastructure. And these people were not aware of that. And the third-party service provider were not inclined to make changes. So these are some of the challenges we faced in terms of these 54 websites. I hope that this answers the question. Thank you.

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Mahesh. It does.

MAKESH KULKARNI: Okay, thanks.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you, Mahesh and Dennis. So we are now moving on to the end-user perspective. So obviously, domain name system has evolved

significantly over the past decade and giving more choice to the people in terms of selecting their domain names and email addresses that best aligns their interests, business, culture, language, and script. But Internet users today are not unfortunately experiencing the full benefits of the Internet in their own language or choice.

So we would like to ask Satish, how can universal acceptance help to end-users become connected and what are the roles for different stakeholders in achieving the universal acceptance?

SATISH BABU:

Thanks, Seda, Satish. I am speaking currently as the ALAC liaison to UASG. We are taking a step back in the first bullet and not treating universal acceptance just as a technological artifact, but as a foundational step towards an aspirational goal of a multilingual Internet. Now, this is all about inclusion and rights of all script communities to be represented online.

Therefore, speaking from the perspective of end-users, universal acceptance is a necessary step to ensure that every script community is treated the same as every other script community. The second point is about the coordination required. This is really a multi-stakeholder process. If you want to achieve perfect universal acceptance, it requires a kind of collaborative work with different stakeholders, including technology providers, open-source communities, standards bodies, governments, and script communities.

Now, you might be wondering why standards bodies, basically because there are several standards that are implicitly used when you create a

webpage, for example. There are built-in validations for an email, and unless those validations support UA, you'll find that bulk of the websites will not support. So standards are very important as well.

The third is about governments, and governments have a special role because they represent both the communities, citizens, as well as they make policy. So if you want to ensure that the tech providers who actually change the code are incentivized to do that, then we need enabling policy. So governments have several roles. One is in raising awareness among all the relevant stakeholders, but most importantly, creating enabling policy that incentivizes the closure of UA gaps.

Now, the tech sector, which produces these software and services, that consists of both the private sector as well as open-source communities and other groups. And these are the ones that provide, Mahesh had mentioned, for example, WordPress. There is an open-source community that maintains WordPress. If you want a change to be done in WordPress, then you'll need to work with that open-source community. So here is where the tech working group that I chair completely independently from being a liaison to ALAC, that has a challenge of working with different groups. So the way we work with open-source communities may not be the same as we work with, say, big tech or other kind of technology providers.

So it's a case-to-case basis, and we often struggle to find a common strategy to engage with all these different stakeholders. But here is where the actual change in code happens. And therefore, this is where we have to persuade them to change the code. And only when the code is actually changed, do we have the closure of the UA gap?

And finally, academia. Academia has a role in spreading awareness on the vision of UA, why we are trying to do UA, and also in identifying technical solutions and to build capacity, running training programs, and so on. So I'll stop here. Apologies for having to leave at 4:00 for another meeting, but back to you, Seda.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you, Satish. I know you have another meeting after this, so if you have any questions for Satish, who is also the UASG's Technology Working Group Chair, please, floor is yours. Let's see if we have any questions from online. We see none. Okay, now we have our UASG Measurement Working Group Chair, Nabil Benamar, with us. Nabil, you are also from academia, so we'd like to know what are the current gaps in academic curricula, and how is the UASG planning to reach out to academia to address these gaps.

NABIL BENAMAR:

Thank you, Seda. This is Nabil, for the record. I'm here representing the Measurement Working Group of the UASG. So we have been talking about this issue for a while. And during this morning session with the fellows, we have raised this issue that the chance should come from the university. And we have seen so far that the curricula in relevant technical programs do not cover background in internationalization. So there is the building blocks of the domain name and email system do not find enough space in educational material. So we need to definitely fill this gap.

For example, in some ongoing measures related to computer science, for example, and other different topics like electrical and computing engineering, computer science, computer networks, software engineering, testing, security, information system. So there are a lot of measures. This is just a sample of these options and measures where we don't find enough information about internationalization and that there is a possibility to create a domain name with a non-Latin script and to create an email address with non-Latin scripts and how we can handle this.

So the impact is that the lack of information and training allows students to continue to develop the same thing, to repeat the same thing and to deploy software that is not UA really. They don't care about this because they are not aware of this. Faculty and students are not aware. So faculty and students and staff members. So if you want your student to be UA ready and to start developing something UA ready, you need to recycle, if I might say, the faculty members. So this is why we are planning to handle this issue by doing some programs like Train the Trainers, inviting faculty members in universities and staff members so that they can understand how it works and they can start building this and including this in their curricula.

So your second question is about how we can handle this. So definitely by defining the relevant courses and measures where we can invite faculty members to include relevant material. So the targeted audience for the educational material would be, for example, technical trainers, IT program faculty members and lecturers, university college students and programmers. All these, let's say, stakeholders are responsible for bringing new favor for implementing UA ready and UA related content.

So there is a sample list of programs under which UA could be covered. We have talked about electrical and computer engineering, computer science, computer networks, software engineering, mathematical engineering, information and communication technology, and a lot of other measures. Material that should be developed should cover all stages of UA readiness, including accept, validate, process, store and display in all software applications. For email, it should cover sending, receiving and creating international email addresses. You can go to the next slide, please.

There should be a focus on international domain names and international email addresses. Students should know how to handle this in different categories, not only in courses and measures related to server administration or services administration, but in other courses like programming. Majority of students who are programming nowadays with Python and Java are not aware of the fact that there is the Unicode library. Majority of them, I mean. And that, for example, if you ask your code to, or the user through the code, to do an input, no one can predict if the input from the user is a non-Latin script, will be handled correctly by the program or not, by the script or not. So this is something missing in our educational content and measures and courses.

If we go to the administration or service administration, majority of students and staffers and faculty are not aware of the fact that you can create an email server that can handle non-Latin script and non-Latin email addresses. But for this, we need to go through different steps. We need to build a strong material that will go step by step, that will introduce the Unicode, the basics of Unicode and all normalization

content and concepts, introduce the input methods in keyboard and fonts, talk about regular expression and their limitation, UTF format, recognize script of a label, what does it mean, a label? Internationalization and localization. Then introduction to domain names and international domain names will include definitely basics on IDN, IDN 2008. It's a comparison with the previous one, 2003, showing the gap, mentioning that still some operating systems and platforms are still using the old one, the IDN 2003, and this creates a lot of issues so that other scripts are not well represented in these fields and use cases.

The content should mention and focus on the concept of validating, processing, and storing international domain names, both as U-label and A-label, and here we can see that a lot of new concepts are introduced in these courses so that I think it's a comprehensive, it's a package, it's a bundle, it's a package that should be treated as it is. It should be included in all these measures, and I'm pretty sure that, I'm confident that this is something that will enable, really, to go towards the making these measures UA ready.

So, we have done a study and it's anticipated that the total of 30 hours of course material will be able to cover all these topics. So, we have, really, a roadmap, we have a project statement of work on how we can solve this problem, and I believe, strongly believe, that any change should come from the university first. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you very much, Nabil. I see there is a hand from Adebunmi. We have a question, perhaps we can take one or two questions now.

ADEBUNMI AKINBO:

Just a reaction. Adebunmi Akinbo, CEO of DNS Africa, Media and Communications, for the record. I want to quickly dive into the idea of involving the academia. I do not see anything wrong with that. I also want to look at the topic, which is promoting true local engagement, so to say. I've been active in the ICANN space since 2008. I've been fortunate to make sure that we've used media, especially in Africa, to drive a lot of initiatives. I also understand some years back, the role I've had to play in ensuring to get us to this stage in UASG.

But I'm seeing something that is missing, that we fail to understand, which I know is part of the plan of the UASG, but I do not seem to see the plan coming to life, which is including nonprofit media platforms which engage in research and ensuring that people understand what we're talking about when we're talking about universal acceptance.

The recent list of those that will be observing the UA day actually missed a couple of very strong participants, I think. If I may speak directly to Satish Babu, I believe when there's a conflict of interest, there's a need for the organization, I'm talking to UASG as a community now, to respond or to reply mails to be able to understand why certain things are not going the way it should be when it comes to local engagement.

Again, I must say, thumbs up, you're doing good, but this would not help the growth of ICANN or the spread of universal acceptance in some parties or in some places, considering if some parties are neglected. I do not want to [shoot off the cuff,] but again, I say this with all sense of sincerity for what I have observed. I [haven't recused myself from decisions in the UA day] activities. I hope we get there. DNS Africa will

always be available to ensure that UASG in Africa is acceptable, universal acceptance is acceptable in Africa as well as beyond Africa. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank. Hadia, please.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you, Nabil, for this extensive presentation. I totally agree, of course, that working with academia and involving academia is very important. My question though is in relation to the development of the material, because usually university professors and lecturers, they develop their own material. And here I am a little bit confused. So yes, I do agree that you need to make them aware that there is this topic and maybe also share with them their material, but usually it doesn't work that way in academia. You do not go in with your own material.

And if we go back to the previous slide where you listed, yes, you are talking about computer science, computer networks, software engineering, and all those departments, they study this, they include many of those topics already mentioned, but maybe they do not address the universal acceptance topic in itself. So that's why I'm a little bit confused. The second slide is a little bit confusing for me because it doesn't show who's developing what.

And then comes the awareness, number three, and I thought the awareness could actually be number one. So if you make the lecturers, the professors aware that there is, if they're not already aware, that there is a problem there and we need to address it, then they start

developing the material. And of course, you could help them with that, developing their material and developing the curriculum. So thank you.

SATISH BABU:

Thank you very much, Hadia, for this clarification and for your comment. I totally agree. I'm now answering you with double hats as a university professor and also as the Measurement Working Group Chair. So if you go to the next slide, please, we have identified steps how we can tackle this issue and how we can address this issue. Definitely, I agree with you, you cannot impose something to a faculty on how to teach something. But if you invite faculty members, staffers—staffers are also important because they are handling and managing and maintaining the web servers, email servers, etc., so also they need to be aware of this maybe before faculty members. So both are important in this roadmap. If you invite them to train the trainer workshop or roadshow, they will be aware of this issue and that this is important and that can be solved, there are solutions, etc.

And then we, in our roadmap, we are building material that will help them to teach this content easily, so they will not start from scratch. Maybe this can be a challenge for some of the faculty members, but if you give them the material and they are free to adapt, to modify, to add, to upgrade, to do anything with the material, but this is a starting point. So the material that we are talking about, it's something that will cover all these aspects.

I have mentioned the main curriculum, the main measures where we have this problem, but for other measures maybe we can do seminars, etc. As a computer scientist, yes, I have seen that in all our courses we

are not teaching this. We are mentioning the concept of internationalization, but we don't go into the details. No one, from my modest experience, has been able to answer me correctly that there is a possibility to create a domain name with non-Latin scripts, or an email address, or to handle an email address, an EAI.

So yes, the curriculum, the material that we want to create, it's a starting point, and by inviting faculty members to attend one of the workshops that we want to do, they will be aware of this and they can implement. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you, Nabil. We have Dennis and then Sarmad, and in the interest of time then we will continue with the other panelists and we will have the question and answer session at the end of the session. Please, Dennis.

DENNIS TAN:

Thank you, Seda. Dennis again, I'll be brief. Nabil, thank you for this. Is there any sense of a timeline here? Because what I'm reading is preparing developing materials for course at the university level. So that might take time, right? We're talking about education for the next generation, basically. So maybe four, six years in time, give or take, because those students, when they land in a work, in a job, that might be the timeline. Is there any consideration as to shorter term solutions, such as, for example, self-publishing in these educational platforms like Coursera or Udemy—and I'm sure there are gonna be others in other parts of the world where the UASG can promote or fund a course that

can be shorter term, because you detect the content instead of trying to work with the university, which might be in parallel, but something to ...

SATISH BABU:

Thank you, Dennis, for your excellent question. I would leave the floor to Sarmad to give him the chance to jump in.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you, this is Sarmad. So just to clarify, we actually have very dedicated training material which covers some of the topics more end-to-end. But what this statement of work or this project is focused or aimed at is not doing one single course end-to-end and add that into university curricula, because that's sort of hard to do. It's possible, but it's still harder to do. And maybe that's not even the right solution for the universities.

What this is intending to do is to build in the relevant components of internationalization, Unicode, IDNs, EAI, in the existing coursework, in programming courses, in data structure courses, operating system courses, networking courses, which actually already exist in the curriculum at this time. And so we're not really changing coursework or asking universities to change coursework. We're just, for example, telling them if you're going to teach basic file input output in a first computer science programming course, sure, talk about ASCII, but it may actually be also a good idea to talk about input output of Unicode data and UTF-8 format and so on.

Similarly, when you're talking about databases or operating systems. So these are, what we're trying to do here is tease out all the courses which are relevant and then develop materials which can be integrated into those courses. So it doesn't really require a significant curricular change. It's just a curricular updation, which is much easier to do in a university context. And as Nabil suggested or shared here, that once we have those updates, what we want to do is test that with some universities as a start, which is number two. And then once we actually have a mature proposal, we take it more broadly. One of the things we've been thinking about is that a lot of universities around the world, normally when they're updating their curricula, they look at IEEE ACM recommendations for computing curricula to update their own curriculum.

So we are actually also thinking of, once we have some solutions, go and talk to the IEEE ACM committee, which develops these curricula. And if we can update it here, it automatically starts getting sort of rolled out into many universities globally. Thank you.

DENNIS TAN:

Just quickly, I think what you're talking about is fantastic. And I think I can summarize what the UASG is trying to achieve in three words, internationalization by design, right? That's good.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

And to close, the timelines for this material is four to six months, it's not four to six years. So that's what we're looking at.

AJAY DATA: Seda, I think we have other speakers lined up. So could you please look at them to give the opportunity to speak? Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT: Very quickly, it's Abdalmonem. Thank you.

ABDALMONEM GALILA: Yes, thank you, Seda. Actually, let me [inaudible] that adding universal acceptance is a little bit difficult to be among the material for the students, whatever it's computer science, engineer or whatever they are. But actually, there is another way to do so. Actually, while I'm experiencing conducting many training session, meaning webinars with university students, I found that after he graduated, nothing is inside their mind.

But actually, what I have is this knowledge for the graduation project itself. If we could, if we could prepare for a proposal for graduation project, so we could propagate it for the universities. So the graduate students shall complete this project in order to be graduated, considering that they are computer science or engineering or computer science or computer engineering, whatever.

So the return from the idea that is inside the mind of graduate engineers will have a return after a while, after they are graduated and after they are working. This is the best. At the same time, for graduate engineers, there are institutes all over the world related to preparing these graduate students in order to be qualified for the market. Why not going for these institutes and add universal acceptance already for the topic required for these students? This is another idea. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you very much. So now we are moving to the other panelists from Thailand's country called top-level domain ASCII and IDN ccTLD manager, Anawin. So as a UA local initiative in Thailand, you have conducted multiple activities in different ways like technical trainings, outreach, hackathons, social media outreach as such. So amongst these, what activities have been the most impactful in terms of UA adoption and how and why, please?

ANAWIN PONGSABORIPAT: Yes, thanks, Seda. So to answer the question that what activity have been the most impactful, let's just say that we do Thailand, as a Thailand UA local initiative, we do a variety of activity depending on our target groups. But we found that the most impact activity are not outreach, awareness, or technical training, but just a simple workshop or training course that our local have a benefit, such as they create a simple [inaudible] or a simple Google site.

Why I say like this? Because as I work here, as I work as a UA local initiative, this is a second year, I go to talk with many companies, even my friend companies, and I say that, okay, could you please implement or upgrade your system to be UA ready? They always ask me that, why they have to do that? What's the benefit that they have to implement their system to be UA ready? Who are their user?

Yeah, so the answer that we still don't have much user who use the IDN or EI in Thailand. Then I think back that then if we have no user, then we create it. We create the user, and how? How we create the user? So since

IDN and EAI is about the website and email system, so that we try to create a course about building a website, but ask them to use our Thai domain or local domain, not use the English domain, and also use the EIA email.

But we cannot do alone, because as a local initiative, no one know us, no one in Thailand. So that why we try to find the biggest partner, such as the first example, we partner with our biggest local delivery platform named [Lovinghood,] is a food local delivery, so that we gain their user. But again, we cannot go to them and say that, we want to have a course with you, and then could you please set up or find your user to us, so that we give them, we try to tell them that what benefit that they partner with us, so that I told them that they will get more traffic to their application, if the user have a website, and then have the in-app link in the website, so that they can promote more and more in their application, and also, user, when food shop, that they are not still in the one application, they have [Grab,] they have FoodPanda in Thailand, so they have more than one application, but if they partner with us, the food shop will promote their application more frequently than other application. So, that's why we set up this course, we can have this course, and then we can get allow 100 food shop that have a website with IDN domain. Next slide, please.

Again, this is bigger than previous project, this is we partner with our Thailand teacher association to build a website, because of COVID situation, therefore, the government forced the teacher to have a website and upload all their course material online, so that's why all the teacher in Thailand now, they need to have the website. And then we go to the government and say that, okay, we are ready to teach all the

teacher in Thailand to have a website—we just use simple platform that Google website, because the Google website also allow to use a custom domain with IDN already. So, now it's in a trial phase, phase one that we target to have 200 IDN websites. The course still going on. This project will be until the end of the year, I think we can get more website on this. So, next slide, please.

So, to summarize what I try to say that, because we say we cannot do alone, because we can more impact, because we do, we have a partner with our local partner, we try not to do alone, and also before we go to partner with someone or do something, we have to think that, what the benefit that they will get, we will not talk that why they have to use IDN or EAI, but we use IDN or EAI as a part of their benefit. Also, that we try to be at the word of marketing, that, okay, when someone say that, okay, this is a good, IDN is good, it easy to promote, it easy to advertise, then people will more and more use IDN or EAI. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you very much, Anawin. Any questions for Anawin? Now, we are moving to our UASG Vice Chair, Abdalmonem Galila, and also our point of contact from GAC. Abdalmonem, obviously, governments are very important stakeholder for the UA and we should have governments be more involved. How can UA help governments achieve digital transformation and digital inclusion projects? Could you give us some examples to activities in terms of awareness and outreach for the governments that can be done?

ABDALMONEM GALILA:

Yes, thank you, Seda, this is Abdalmonem Galila. Actually, I like the flow of the session slides. Actually, you are starting by end users, then go for academia as a base, and then go to local initiative, and you are ending by the government who are the decision maker for all of this. So, let's go to answer my question at the moment.

Before going to answer this question, I would like to speak a little bit in behalf of GAC perspective related to, regards to universal acceptance and universal acceptance day. Since ICANN 75, GAC meeting last year, GAC members have been actively discussing and exploring opportunities to contribute to UA Day 2023, and to establish more permanent efforts to promote universal acceptance and IDNs in their home countries and regions.

The GAC universal acceptance and IDN work group is working within the GAC to reach out more and more to make universal acceptance a priority topic for governments, especially as they move to contribute their individual digital transformation efforts after COVID-19 to reach out mostly to their citizen and to expand effectively to online government services. This is a message from GAC related to universal acceptance.

Actually, this message has one meaning that is very important. COVID-19 and universal acceptance is one of the priority topic in the list of the priorities for the government. So all the government are going for digital transformation projects. We are all aware of that. So all the services should reach out to all the citizens within their own country. How could the services reach out to the citizen at the time that most of

the citizens couldn't able to read or write English language? And this is the majority of the people, by the way.

So if the government going to make all the service to be digitized and published online and whatever having the services to be published using internationalized domain names or different language domain names besides the English domain name, it will be useless.

At same time, when I am going to have to register for a service online or have a service from the online governmental one, I would like to receive notification from the service, your application is submitted, your application approved. How could I have that at the time I couldn't read or write English?

So let us start from scratch from this. Online services should have internationalized domain names, different internationalized domain names according to the number of languages exists at this country. At same time, the mail server for the government that used to interact with consumers or the citizen should be email address internationalization enabled.

So the time I am going to Arabic content website or Chinese content website, I use Arabic domain name or use the Chinese domain name. Arabic for Arabic content, Chinese domain name for Chinese content website. And also, I will receive notification at my Arabic email address from an Arabic email address for the government, receive notification at my Chinese email address from a Chinese address of the government. So that is complete scenario for what is happening that the government should go through it, go through that.

At same time, government has many roles as a decision maker to encourage greater use of public services through the use of friendly domain names for multilingual applications, which can be remembered by all the citizen. You know that internationalized domain names could be remembered easily by the citizen who speak the same language. If you could market for anything or could publish the service for, could publish something for any service to a large base of the citizen using internationalized domain names.

So communities communicate, government should communicate well with all citizen in their own local languages about what is going for the online services offered by the government. At same time, there are affiliated organization for the government. So government should train the government entities, software developers, analysts, system admins, to make their application to be universally accepted. Next slide, please.

At same time, encourage government entities to start reviewing the internal applications and online services to make it universally accepted. And the government should make universal acceptance as a mandatory requirement for all the software or all alternate enabled applications to be existed for the government.

Encourage software companies to adopt universal acceptance for the future applications and updates all the ones to be universally accepted. Adoption policies for software companies to have a mandatory requirement for UA readiness, I already covered that. Finally, train the mail providers about UA readiness and start being compatible with

email address internationalization and offer email services, AI mail services for the citizens. Next slide, please.

Yes, this is for GAC. Actually, I have one more thing I would like to add regards to ambassador, ambassador work group. Could you go for the next slide? For universal acceptance ambassador. Actually, we are 13 ambassador covering eight countries. Recently, we have our colleague, Sergio, joined us. It is our honor to have him with ambassador work group, especially that he is the only one speaking Spanish. We are lucky to have him, by the way. Actually, he will speak after me about his initiative about universal acceptance ambassadorship.

Actually, we have 13 ambassadors covering eight countries from more than 150 countries with more than 8 billion population. So we need to have more universal acceptance ambassador and how to become universal acceptance ambassador, you could go online for the work group area and you will find documents that have all the details in order to apply to be universal acceptance ambassador. Thank you for that. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you very much, Abdalmonem. Do we have any questions for Abdalmonem from the room or online? Okay, now we will move to the UA ambassador perspective, but I would kindly remind that we may need some translator headset before Sergio starts speaking. Let's allow some time. You can also use interpretation feature in the Zoom for interpretation. All right. So I also would like to welcome Luis Sergio, who is our new UA ambassador from Bolivia. Sergio, please tell us about yourself and about the drivers in UA implementation, awareness in your

region, such as cultural values, linguistic needs, consumer choice, competition, etc. So how are you planning to promote UA in the Latin America and Caribbean region?

LUIS SERGIO VALLE:

Thank you. Initially, I'd like to say thank you for providing me the space. As you know, Bolivia is the few countries in Latin America that still has a lot of problems when it has to do with digital gap, the use of technology, implementing the open source, the electronic part of it, and connectivity. And obviously, the universal acceptance is an important topic, and it's actually a cornerstone of what's something that's very important in the last years for Internet. And we believe that the change starts with oneself. First, one changes, then the family changes, then the town changes, and then the city, the country, and then the world.

And something that's important to understand is the roles within the digital ecosystem, and surely in all the continents of Latin America, including my country, there's a digital ecosystem that is comprised of different instances. They have different roles and different responsibilities. The governments, as one of our colleagues mentioned, the governments have the role to generate a public policy and promote these electronic services to improve the life of the citizens. That way, it's more transparent, more accessible, avoiding silos, bureaucracies, and being more transparent.

On the other side, the companies nowadays need to work on new business models using the Internet, not as an expense, but as an investment, and understand that currently, the markets are no longer

local. They're global, and this will allow to generate this concept, electronic concept, that in many areas, it's already part of their GPD and so forth.

As one of our speakers mentioned previously, the universities have an interesting role, an important one, to establish skills and training, but on the other side, they should create digital skills. That's also very important. On the other side, we have the cooperation, we have the international corporation, excuse me, or corporation. They have the ability to facilitate the use of this through different pilot programs, through digital outreach that will allow the digital transformation, and in this case, will allow us to promote digital inclusion through the universal acceptance.

By saying this, recently in December, I was named the ambassador of UA for Latin America and the Caribbean, and I would like to tell you that I've presented a work plan where my idea is to present a pilot program in Bolivia where it can then be duplicated throughout all the regions in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the idea is to have an implementation strategy when we're talking about universal acceptance, and for this, it's important to understand that this is not just a technical problem, and it's not going to be resolved in that way. This has to be seen in a strategic scope, in a political scope, because technically, if we see it on the technical side, these changes will not be done. So that's why this is an important element, keeping in mind the goals of ICANN in the different countries to adopt the UA.

We have to first understand the environment, who they are, where they are, their ages, their languages, and then from there, focus on a

determined action, and by doing this, we have to understand where they're coming from, and then we have to also see the institution's capacity, have a structure within each country where they have that universal acceptance and still have the possibility of doing partnerships through different areas that will allow them to do an outreach and do this universal acceptance, and we also have to have a demand. We have to promote this so that the people can be part of this acceptance, universal acceptance, and not part of the problem.

We also have to develop applications and content through manuals through curriculums. There's a lot of work to be done to be able to introduce these concepts within the regions and the states. And the fifth element is to use technology that's scalable, robust, and sustainable throughout time, and something that's very important, according to my point of view, is to generate a legal frame that will promote the UA. If we understand these six elements that form part of this strategy, then we will definitely be able to have a certain development and be able to incorporate UA in these countries, at least the ones in Latin America.

Having said this, I think it's important that we work in multi-work groups. In Bolivia, we've already been using a team in Bolivia. We've done an alliance with the development of information who manages [inaudible] and we are working with the [inaudible], which they're involved with public and private companies.

So then we have a base team that we touched on topics of government, business, the university sector, and we've also added international corporations with this, so it's four important elements, and there's a fifth element, but it's not least important, which is the civil society,

through foundations like foundations that are pro-women and different foundations that they form part of this strategy, to take this UA, which is to include more than 250 languages within the regions and include more than 500 million people that are excluded from the Internet.

In Bolivia, as a side comment, we have 33 original languages that are not in the domain names nor in the email addresses. So one element is to create this team in our country. We're working on those public and private alliances so that we can promote this universal acceptance, and we also have on May 17th, the day of the Internet, which we've started, we've done a part of ALS of LACRALO.

I don't know if you knew, but for 17 years, we've been doing the day of the Internet, and we're the only country in Latin America that has this. And we're doing this event with the agency of development of information. It's with 200 people for a duration of four hours. We are also working on something that's interesting. Based on the legislative side, the presidency, we're developing a decree, a law that promotes, spreads, and does an outreach of the universal acceptance. It's a standard that should be established in the country so that it can be spread. And once we have this law in place, then we'll be able to launch a pact for the universal acceptance. And once this is done, it will allow for the businesses to sign on this pact and be able to accept this universal acceptance, include it in their units and in their platforms. It's the same with the banks, international corporations, government entities, private sectors, academic sectors. And in this way, we'll be able to transcend impact in a much better way, this concept, which from what I've seen in these past days and today, I think it's being seen too much on a technical side.

But the role is way more than that. I think the government has a role to diffuse this in the public and be able to adopt this universal acceptance to create new models in business, new products, and include this in the curriculums and be able to provide these skills so that these young people, this can be provided as a requirement when it has to do with computer science courses. And this gives them an added value.

And international corporations is also an important topic to be able to give priority to this and be able to generate these resources so that we can have these projects at a short and long term. And there will be three impacts. It will be an economic one, a social one, and also a technical one. And that way, we think that from Latin America, we can project this type of model so that other regions can also adopt it based on the results that we could have this year. That was all that I wanted to say for now.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Very impressive from all panelists, very impressive perspectives. Do you have any questions for Sergio from the room or from the online participants? Floor is yours.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

I think Sergio doesn't leave anything to ask about. All the details, he said. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT: This actually concludes the presentation part of our session, and we have about three minutes left. So Dr. Data, would you like to have the floor to have some comments before we close?

AJAY DATA: Yeah, thank you, Seda. Thank you, all the speakers, for this wonderful insight and update, and what importance UA can mean for the whole world. As we all know, only 17% people speak English in the whole world out of 7 billion people. Hence, it becomes very important that we break the language barrier and for almost 80% of the people to make them online and use the power of Internet as good as everybody else who is listening to me uses that.

Universal acceptance, we all know, is an important pillar in that area to break the barrier. And to achieve that, we also have, obviously, Universal Acceptance Day, as you all have heard, and it is an extremely important thing that we all participate in a nearby event. So look at universalacceptance.day as a site and look at nearby event around you, and please participate in that event and raise awareness in your region. If you're an ambassador or a local initiative, or you are just a volunteer for UA, please raise an awareness in your region to take this initiative further. And feel free to join the Universal Ambassadors Program, Local Initiative Program, and become part of any working group you want to. This uasg.tech offers you the various opportunities to become part of this mega mission, which is going to make an impact in the whole world.

Thank you, gentlemen, for joining in. This is Ajay Datta signing off. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you very much. I would like to also leave the floor to our panelists again to add anything else before we close, or if you have any other questions from the participants. Abdalmonem.

ABDALMONEM GALILA: Yes, thank you, Seda, for this. Actually, I would like to say universal acceptance is mandatory requirement for a truly multilingual Internet. So we need to, from the government perspective, I would like to put that as one of the priorities for the government to be achieved for the couple of months, maybe couple of years in order for that. Thank you for this.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you very much. Now we are over time. And thank you all for your participation and your four great inputs and collaboration. We look forward to working with all of you. This meeting has now been adjourned.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]