
ICANN81 | AGM – UA Strategy: Capacity Building Initiatives
Monday, November 11, 2024 – 10:45 to 12:00 TRT

SEDA AKBULUT:

Hello, and welcome to the Universal Acceptance Strategy Capacity Building Initiative Session. Welcome to Istanbul, Marhaba. My name is Seda Akbulut, and I am a participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior and ICANN community anti-harassment policy.

During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. Interpretation for this session will include English, French, Spanish. If you'd like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom, and on-site participants will use the physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English, and speak at a reasonable pace.

Today's session is divided into three sections. First, Sarmad Hussain, the Senior Director of the IDN and UA Programs team, will provide a brief overview of ICANN Org's UA strategy for fiscal year 2025 till '27. Then we will have two panel discussions. My colleague Geraldo Ferreira, the UA Technical Manager, will be moderating the first panel on the UA curriculum. Then I will be moderating the second panel on UA Day. We will also have time for questions and answers after each section.

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And with that, I will hand the floor over to Sarmad Hussain. Over to you, Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you, Seda. And we'll start with sharing an overview of ICANN Org's IDN UA strategy. Of course, universal acceptance basically helps promote multilingual Internet and it is a requirement for having digital inclusion across the globe. For that reason, ICANN has kept a focus on both internationalized domain names and universal acceptance in its strategic plans and its strategy. So if you look at ICANN's strategy for FY26-30, it talks about promoting the advancement of IDNs and UA, proactively collaborating with relevant external parties for promoting UA, which obviously results in cultivating consumer choice, competition, inclusivity and innovation.

IDNs and UA are a big part of the New gTLD Program for the next round, and for these reasons, IDNs and UA continue to be a focus also of the ICANN organization through ICANN's CEO goals. For this, to implement or realize the focus which is on IDNs and UA at the strategy level for ICANN and also by ICANN CEO's goals, ICANN Org has developed an implementation strategy to realize those goals and strategy at the ICANN Org level for FY25 to '27, and we are going to just present some highlights of what is actually being planned.

The strategy organizes ICANN Org's work into nine objectives. For each objective, ICANN Org has identified the stakeholders, the outcome for those stakeholders, the activities it wants to undertake and projects it want to conduct over FY25 to FY27 to try to realize those outcomes

which are planned. And we also, based on that shortlist, [have] projects which we have to take up and do within this next coming year.

Basically, this strategy spans over all the different relevant ICANN functions and is actually taken up at the organization level. To go through this in a little more detail, ICANN Org intends to focus on nine different objectives in these areas. The first one is to strengthen the messaging to support IDNs and UA and of course appropriately tying it to the next new gTLD round and digital inclusion. We would want to engage with the big tech organizations and also the open source organizations to encourage them to update their applications and services to support IDNs and UA. We want to also conduct outreach to technical developers, technology developers as well as system administrators so that they know how to support IDNs and UA in the systems they deploy. We of course want to lead by example to make sure that ICANN Org's own systems are UA-ready. We would also want to work with the broader DNS industry to support IDNs and UA, including of course the gTLD and ccTLD registries, registrars, registry service providers, but also resellers, hosting providers and Internet service providers who provide more direct support to registrants in this capacity.

We also want to strengthen and broaden ICANN community collaboration to promote the adoption of IDNs and UA and bring IDNs and UA into the Internet governance policy discussions for international organizations and governments for supporting digital inclusion.

As the eighth objective, we want to identify and pursue additional opportunities to achieve IDN implementation and UA adoption, which

includes supporting the policy development work which has been going on at ICANN by ccNSO and GNSO and also following up on that for implementation of that policy.

And then last but not least, we want to develop and [inaudible] to gauge our progress as well as then use those [inaudible] to gather data to share how we're progressing and use that data to obviously improve our strategy as well.

So that's an overview of how we are translating the overall ICANN strategy which has been shared with the community as well for their input for F&26 to 30 into more concrete activities and projects to be done by ICANN Org to implement that strategy.

Let's stop here to see if there are any questions. Again, this is just a high-level overview of how ICANN is planning to take forward the work on IDNs and UA. Let's see if there are any questions.

SEDA AKBULUT:

No questions in the chat.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Okay. So we'll have a chance to have questions later on as well. If there are no questions at this time, what we wanted to do is—yeah, sorry, please go ahead.

MOURAD MELLITI: First of all, I would like to thank you for this presentation. It was very, very well understood. And excuse me, I would like to switch to French language in order to be—

SEDA AKBULUT: Excuse me, could you please speak a little bit louder and state your name? Thank you.

MOURAD MELLITI: Yes, my name is Mourad Melliti, and I come from Tunisia. I'm very interested in the UA program supported by ICANN. But before that, I would like to switch to French language in order for me to be more comfortable in explaining my point of view. I'd like to thank you for your presentation. I did observe all these objectives that ICANN has when it comes to UA for '25 to '27. If you allow me, I would like to have more detail on the second bullet point, the engagement to open source, to organization, to all big tech. What are the measures that were key measures? What is being planned in order to engage the technical community, especially the organization who works with open sources? How can they more engage or be included more in this approach, in this UA approach? That is my question. How you're going to engage these organizations?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. Thank you for your question. So just to summarize, you're asking a question about the second objective which is to engage with

big tech and open source organizations, specifically how we plan to engage with the open source organizations.

So there's actually a lot of good work which has been done by the community and Universal Acceptance Steering Group who have identified in some ways what are the gaps in various technologies and also in some ways are prioritizing which of those issues are more significant than others. That provides us a somewhat of a roadmap on how to take next steps.

Given that context, in the context of open source communities and given the priority on who we want to engage with, we do a couple of things. First is that we identify the problem and actually report the problem through the open source process, which is reporting a feature request or a bug fix or something within that open source community so that it can go to the maintainers of that particular software. Then, as a second step, actually, we don't stop there but in many cases what we're doing is we're actually developing the code, which would address the UA gap. And we are actually submitting that code to the maintainers for them to pick up and test, and then it requires a bit of a dialogue with the maintainers once the code is submitted because sometimes they would want the code to be changed in certain ways or they would want a certain kind of documentation with the code. So there's a back and forth, of course, an engagement, a longer-term engagement, with the maintainers of that particular open-source software.

But eventually what we try to achieve is that the code fix is integrated into the open-source distribution of that particular product to make that UA-ready.

If you look at the presentation which was made during the Prep Week of ICANN 81, we actually presented some of the details of which particular technologies we've actually been working on. Currently we are working or looking at three or four different areas. One includes automatic linkification of domain names and email addresses, looking at different libraries which do that and update those libraries to linkify all the different kinds of domain names and email addresses. We are also looking at some core email tools to support email address internationalization. We are also looking at content management systems to make them UA-ready. And finally we are also actually looking at hosting software which are used to provide hosting services.

So those are some of the areas which we are currently working on. Of course we keep engaging with the UASG and community to help us prioritize what else we obviously need to engage with. But that's an example of what's actually happening or we're doing at the ICANN Org level to address engagement with open-source organizations. I hope that answers your question.

MOURAD MELLITI:

Excuse me, did you share these materials? Did you share with us this kind of materials, this kind of documentations/presentation you did last week? You have just said that you already did many things about materials, UA-supporting, by operating systems, maybe hosting materials, hosting services and presentations and so many other materials. Could you please share with us this documentation and these links?

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Sure. So we shared an update on this work during the ICANN Prep Week session. There was a presentation by [AUNT] which actually summarized this work, listing the specific open source tools. So we can share the link with you afterwards. You can take a look at that presentation.

Also I think, in the UA readiness report which we publish, we also include the specific links to the code submissions which were done, for example, and we can share a link for that as well. But we're more than happy to share more details if you need them on those aspects. More than happy to provide that afterwards. If you can connect afterwards, we can share those details.

Are there any more questions? Okay, then let's move on to the next section. So basically as part of this strategy, as you can see, we are focusing on many different areas. We wanted to share with you two specific examples of some of the work which is being done by ICANN and the ICANN community on capacity building and outreach for UA. It includes the UA curriculum work as well as the UA Day. And we'll. I'll hand it over to my colleague Geraldo who will give you a very brief overview of the UA curriculum, outreach work we have started recently, and also invite some of the people who are involved from the community to share their experiences. So over to Geraldo.

GERALDO FERREIRA:

Hello. Good morning, my name is Geraldo, I'm part of Sarmad's team and I will talk about the UA curriculum. Well, the UA curriculum is

publicly available material and it consists of a series of 12 learning modules about internationalization, IGN, and also Unicode. It serves to raise awareness among the developers about the significance of UA. And we believe that a strong understanding of UA is an essential skill that every developer should have in their skill set. And developers who create online systems and applications with UA in mind are much better prepared for the future. And finally, businesses that are UA-ready are best positioned to reach a global growing audience.

So get involved in the process for universities so ICANN and the universities can work together to implement the UA curriculum. And this collaboration works as follows. From the ICANN side we can provide the UA curriculum materials. We can also conduct a faculty training during two or three days. We also provide technical support during the integration, which can take up to two years. And we can promote this collaboration on the UA curriculum through social media or other channels.

And from university side, they need to have the faculty members available for the training. They also need to integrate the UA curriculum by updating their relevant course or by creating a new course dedicated to IDN and UA. They also need to seek support from ICANN as needed. And finally, they also need to hold discussion every three months during the program in order to provide feedback.

Okay, next. Integration program. Some weeks ago we had the first pilot with four universities in Bahrain. It was done in collaboration with the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Bahrain. And from this faculty training, from these conversations, we had some takeaways, we

had some actions which were the following: to have a follow up discussion with each of these universities in the following weeks (so we are planning to have these conversations after ICANN81), to explore the development of new teaching tools for UA, identify technical projects for UA adoption, and finally identify new opportunities to engage both the faculty and the students.

And besides Bahrain, additional pilots are being discussed for other regions, for example, for APEC, Africa and LAC, Latin America and the Caribbean.

So that's my part. I don't know if you have any questions.

NEHA NAIK:

Hello, this is Neha from Radix Registry. Thank you for sharing this. Is there plan to share this curriculum with UASG so that then the UASG can share those with tech partners as well? Because from our experiences when we have had UA issues related to our TLDs, we have reached out to tech partners and we have had to do basic education about UA awareness from the start. So is there a way this can be bridged? Thank you.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

So the curriculum obviously was basically developed by the community, by UASG It's published online. There's a link in the chat which is available and of course you know, if you have any questions you can or if you need any support, you're welcome to reach out to us for that. I'm not sure whether that addresses your question or ...

NEHA NAIK: It did. Thank you. I'll check out the link.

LILY EDINAM BOTSYOE: Hi, my name is Lily Edinam Botsyoe, and I am an ICANN81 Fellow and also a PhD candidate in IT at the University of Cincinnati. So thanks for sharing this. Really important. And I love that it's targeted even right now in your presentation towards universities.

One of the things you mentioned aside from the training was if teams on campus or campuses decided to undertake some of these, they could do follow-up for support. I want to know to what extent that support is and what that entails. So what other support comes with facilitation of like a training afterwards? What happens? That's the detail I want together. Thank you.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: So what we are requesting of the universities, once we provide the faculty training, is for that faculty to integrate the small modules, which you'll hear more about in just a minute, into their existing coursework. When they do that, they may actually have additional questions in the process. And in that context, then we would actually make available technical resources at ICANN. And also if there is if we can engage with the community as well, we'll make resources available to those universities to address those technical questions. That's mostly going to be through email or calls, online calls. And for each of the universities

which wants to participate, we are thinking that we will provide that support for up to two years.

SEDA AKBULUT: Thank you. There are some hands in the zoom room. [Yaovi] raised his hand. Please go ahead, [Yaovi]. We cannot hear you if you are speaking. [Yaovi]? We cannot hear you. Are you unmuted? Yes. Yeah, you can type and in the meantime we can move on to Raitme Citterio.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Can you hear me now?

SEDA AKBULUT: Yes. Thank you. Now we can go ahead.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Thank you so much. I'm saying that I'm from the GSE Africa team. Just want to add to what Geraldo and Sarmad said. We have a session today, Africa Space, where we'll mention briefly the Coalition for Digital Africa. Just want to add that we have a lot.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We can't hear you.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Go ahead.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Yeah, I'm saying that we have a special project with the association of African Universities. And many universities from Africa were part of a workshop in Rabat this year. So the topics were discussed. They got a lot of information [on] capacity development. And currently, with what Geraldo mentioned, we have some pilot universities in Africa, and we are currently working with the Association of African Universities which have more than four member universities.

So making a system of universities ready, an email system, web platform and also curricula are part of this project, and we want to just add this to what the team just shared. We'll have a brief report on CDA again during the Africa Space session today. Thank you so much.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Okay, thank you, Yaovi. Any reaction? Okay. And Raitme, please go ahead. And in the interest of time, we can take the questions very quickly. Thank you. Raitme, you can go ahead, please.

RAITME CITTERIO:

Hello, good morning. I'm speaking in Spanish, please. My name is Raitme Citterio I am the co-chair of the working group of LACNOG within the events of LACNIC, and we are working on a small proposal in order to do a capacity building for members who are technicians, technical members of all the LAC region, Latin America and the Caribbean. And we have submitted a proposal for your consideration. Our idea is to present an adapted curriculum based on the material proposed in order to train technical members in the region. Thank you very much.

SEDA AKBULUT: Okay, thank you. All proposals will be reviewed. So now we can move on to the next question, to Dennis Tan. Go ahead please, Dennis.

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Seda. Can you share key takeaways from the pilot done with these universities in Bahrain? What was the feedback in terms of the curriculum? Was it useful? Not useful? What did we learn from the pilot? I guess that's what I'm asking.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. Thank you, Dennis. If you allow, we have Sami here who organized the training. He's going to be presenting as part of the panel, and he'll share those details. And then if you still have any follow-up questions, is it okay that we come back to that?

DENNIS TAN: Absolutely. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT: Okay, Sami, maybe you can start with this. No?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: [inaudible]

SEDA AKBULUT: Oh, okay. All right. There is one more question from Abdulkarim. Sorry about that. Please?

ABDULKARIM OLOYEDE: Oh, thank you very much. I think what I wanted to mention was mentioned by Yaovi, and I just want to explain that from the African region, we've started implementing some of these curriculum changes. And yes, there are challenges, but I think those challenges has to do with dealing with the curriculum, especially how to integrate the curriculum. It takes time. Sometimes the challenge is it takes about five years for you to actually really integrate a new curriculum. So I think it's something that is doable and it's something we've been doing, especially as Yaovi mentioned, with the African group. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: So let's start with the panelists session. It's starting with Nabil Benamar.

NABIL BENAMAR: Thank you. Thank you very much. So this is Nabil Benamar. I'm the UASG Vice-Chair and Measurement Working Group Chair. Today I will present what we have done for the UA academic curriculum as part of our tasks that we handled in the Measurements Working Group.

So the key objectives of the academic curricula for implementing universal acceptance principles comes from the fact that we believe that [the initiative] should come from the university. We need to prepare the future engineers to be able to implement and first understand what is doable with UA, how they can implement it, how

they can be comfortable with any topic related to UA. It's not only concern of more inclusive and multilingual Internet, but this is something that can offer more than \$9 billion as an opportunity for businesses. So this is something that can, should be, or must be taken seriously by universities to prepare their students for what we are facing and for shaping the future of the Internet.

So the curriculum is based on an introduction of basic internationalization principles including Unicode, IDNs and AI. So here is a focus on the difference between Unicode and ASCII and others. I think that this is something that is not a focus in current curriculum. So the course intends to go through this with Unicode basics with a guide for programming in Java and Python. So as a pilot for this project, we focused only on these two programming languages. They are leading languages nowadays. But more languages can be added to the list, definitely. So we intend to have to implement coding in this, with Unicode in these two languages to see that they are with the libraries, existing libraries, with these two languages. Unicode programming is something that we can do easily.

And definitely [we'll] operationalize UA use cases to understand what it means for a software or an application or a framework to accept non-Latin script UA to store in a database without any breaches, without creating any issues that we might fix later, how to process correctly any non-Latin script, whether it's about IDN or international email address, how to validate and then how to display correctly.

So as a simple example for the display, it's not only about the script being used, but also about the direction or the writing system. For some

script like the Arabic script, it's written from right to left, not from left to right. The majority of, if not all, existing applications will try to display from left to right. So this is a bad thing, for example, for something like Arabic script.

The learners or the students will learn to use built-in libraries for processing Unicode and IDNs, especially in existing programming language libraries and other software. [It will] provide technical knowledge and skills on statistics, standards or RFCs for IDNs and AI. This is a big topic here because we want to introduce the source of information to be taught to the students, to deliver to the students, based on RFCs (what are the main RFCs talking about ?) and stating the fact of the IDN principle and AI. And this is also something that can introduce our students to the world of the IETF and how standards can be produced.

Then [we'll] produce test cases and procedures to verify UA support. This curriculum was designed taking into consideration the fact that it should cover theoretical knowledge, standards and the best practices to develop practical programming competencies. So the learner or the student will become familiar with programming in Unicode in different programming languages and software.

We intended to develop (and this is what we have done) short micro learning models to integrate key concepts into the existing coursework. So the idea here is not to replace existing curricula by something new, but just to, like, patch existing ones, but by adding some extra parts related to Unicode and to internationalization. That's the main thing.

So it's internationalization using Unicode internationalized domain names and email addresses internationalization.

This should be distributed through all the relevant courses in the measures like computer science and computer engineering. And then also we took into account that this should introduce minimal new courses only focused on more advanced topics. One of the advanced topics you will see in the curriculum being published in the ICANN website.

So for more details about the micro modules, you can just go to this link on the slide and you will see all the details. The material, the content, is available for anyone to implement.

So here is a summary of what we have. We have published the UA Academic Curriculum which consists of 12 modules covering the important topics of IDN, international email addresses, and universal acceptance. As you can see, for example, module one is Unicode Programming Fundamentals, which lead to a guide for Unicode basics, a guide for programming in Java and a guide for programming in Python.

Module 2 is Unicode Advanced Programming, also some advanced stuff also for programming, Unicode in data structure and algorithms, and Unicode in database management systems. As you can see, it's included and it impacts all existing courses.

Introducing Internationalized Domain Names. So this might be a separate course but can be also added to any course related to DNS, for example.

Programming in Internationalized Domain Names, module number seven, is about email address internationalization. So this is different from the DNS but rather the email server, email application, email software.

Then Advanced Topics in IDNs and then Programming in Email Address Internationalization, module number 10, is processing IDN and UA generally in mobile software. As you know, some applications might work correctly in a desktop environments but can display some issues when it comes to the mobile environment and vice versa.

Then we have IDN Security, a big topic, and then the last one is Unicode IDN AI Support in Operating Systems.

As you can see, this is the courses impacted at universities. These are some existing courses that definitely will be impacted, from operating system theory, computer security, mobile application development, database, data structure programming and advanced programming.

The suggested new course is about advanced topics in IDNS and universal acceptance. The syllabus of this course can also be found on the ICANN website.

Some resources to support curriculum updates Description covering Java and Python programming languages are provided. Draft module (student guide), draft module (instructor guide), and videos. Draft assignment. These are some examples that we have already in the curricula developed by the UASG.

And then these are some references and faculty training program on request and availability by ICANN. So if you need any training or train-the-trainer session, you just email us at uaprogram@ICANN.org, and there will be a feedback definitely.

So thank you, and I'm available for any questions. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you. Let's move to the next panelist, Sami from Bahrain.

SAMI ALI: Hi, everyone. For the record, my name is Sami Mohamed Ali from dot-bh TRA Bahrain, and as my colleague from ICANN, Geraldo, mentioned, we have been lucky enough to be the first one to implement the ICANN universal acceptance curriculum. And we did the session with four universities to begin with, and almost all of them have accepted the curriculum. Not entirely will I go through the details, but it has been a very good, positive response from the universities because it's something new for the students and something new for the faculty itself.

So this is a brief introduction of dot-bh. It's the ccTLD or country code for Bahrain on the digital platform. And dot-Bahrain is the IDN internationalized domain name that represents Bahrain.

And so these are our objectives that were put in place to support the IDN development as well as the cultural aspect of developing Arabic language in the Kingdom of Bahrain: to support in building an environment for the Arabic IDNs and email addresses, involving the

youth in UA community development by deploying technologies that supports the Arabic IDN, to promote Arabic email addresses and IDN, and provide business opportunities. As my colleagues have mentioned, the industries have a lot of potential and opportunity for the IDN. If it is Arabic or any other language, there is still a lot of opportunities.

So the UA adoption plan. We have been working with ICANN for over two years with annual hackathon that we do for the university students. It started with just IDN. Now we added, this year, IDN and AI to entice students with more challenges and give them more opportunity to explore their potential.

So we completed two rounds of training sessions with Dr. Sarmad and Geraldo for the professors of all four universities, and we gave them the curriculum and let them plan out how the curriculum of UA fits in with their existing curriculum. And using that, all the university students and professors mapped out the existing curriculums which fit in with the UA curriculum. And using that approach, they don't need to provide a new additional curriculum or additional program for UA itself. So most of the Python programming, Java programming, Unicode, all of this, is more or less taught in one way or the other in different programs like computer sciences, computer networks and other departments. So each university prepared their own plan and informed us that this is what the current plan, current information, is in their programs and how they can add on universal acceptance curriculum to it.

The only challenge there: if you recall the module 7, 8, 9 and 10 which are specific to the EAI (Email Addresses Internationalizations) and IDN

advancement, that is where they might need to add. And the universities proposed that they will put it as an elective for students.

The encouraging part for the universities to add on to this program was mainly that they are participating with the telecom regulatory authority of Bahrain as well as ICANN as an international body. And the other encouragement that we did provide them was to give them certification and human development that each university professor is always looking for, as well as research opportunity with ICANN and TRA Bahrain for different projects.

So these are some of the approaches that will help in deploying UA curriculum in universities in each region.

And just to give you small brief program specifications, these are the four items that were taken into consideration by each university as a general approach to support universal acceptance curriculum adoption. If you have any questions, you can come to me and we can have a discussion later on after the session as well. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Hello. Thank you, Sami. Let's move to the next panelist, Eunice Alejandra Perez.

EUNICE ALEJANDRA PEREZ: Gracias. Thank you. I will speak in Spanish.

SEDA AKBULUT: [inaudible] but we will take questions in the end, in the interesting time.

EUNICE ALEJANDRA PEREZ: Thank you. Gracias. I'm Eunice, as I have already been introduced. I'd like to tell you what encouraged us to carry out this activity. In our country, in Mexico, being a member of the academia with expertise in electronics, IT and others, it's important to be updated. The first time I suggested organizing a webinar on UA as part of an association, which is the Committee for Internet Development for the Internationalization Organization of Universities, well, I was very interested in this. And as members of the academia, we know that in the classroom and outside the classroom, we do research. We analyze and we also think of technologies. We develop them. And therefore, I approached the faculty teaching several subjects at the universities and I invited them to participate.

In 2023, we were part of a remote hub as part of an activity organized in Mexico. And in 2024, we created this workshop for faculty. For the reasons I have already mentioned, it's very important (and we should stress this as faculty members): training. We will always be part of the universities. The students will leave. They will spend, with us, several semesters, but once they graduate, they will become the new professionals in the economy. We stay at the university, so we have to be trained. We need continuous training. This encouraged me to develop the activity.

Before that, we organized a webinar, an awareness creation webinar, which I believe is still important: awareness creation. This attracted the faculty teaching the subjects that were interesting for us but also other

members of the faculty and other communities which we thought were not going to participate earlier on.

I know you cannot read what we have on the screen. The font is very small. But we had 78 attendees coming from several organizations, and the profiles of the participants were very different. This opened the scope of what we had to do when we defined at which subjects this issue was going to be included, whether it was databases, programming, the ones that have already been mentioned by previous speakers.

There was one which we pinpointed, which was humanities. And I will tell you why. We sent out the invitations. We did awareness meetings and we translated the materials into Spanish, our language, so that the faculty members would be able to overcome that barrier because they would be able to work in their own language. In the southeast of Mexico, Yucatan, not having the materials in their language is a barrier as part of these activities.

In all (it was on the first day or one day), we broke them down into smaller groups, and in each group they defined the obstacles, the actions to be carried out to overcome the obstacles. But they looked at three ways of learning: formal education, which is the curriculum at universities, non-formal education or informal education (when people say, “I want to learn this, and I learn it from wherever it is taught”) ... Again, it's a non-formal education where we learn by attending meetings and workshops, but maybe within university.

And the conclusions were very important because all the faculty members together found that in their curriculum they were already teaching some of the modules of interest. And this was module 5, introduction to IDNs, Module 7, email address internationalization, 11, which is IDN security.

When we talk about barriers here, I'd like to mention ... Well, on the screen you can see the conclusions of our work. But we found, in the three breakout groups, there was a lack of technical expertise knowledge and there was not a good knowledge about the relationship with other organizations that worked in the area. There was still a need to create awareness about the importance of globalization. There was no flexibility in the curriculum at some universities. And sometimes the information doesn't make it up to the faculty.

And what I got from or this work as well is that I realized that the faculty was very interested in all this. We saw this was the case because after the training, they implemented some of the lessons learned. They created Unicode libraries, for example. The faculty went teaching to their students. They started including some of our issues. They were interested in learning soft skills such as empathy to understand the needs of other communities, adjusting what they had learned to their teaching. And this is related to the way we communicate in our language. And as the materials were translated, the barriers were sort of taken down. So I hope we will get the right training for the faculty.

And this is all. Thank you very much.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Let's move on to UA Day. All right, so, with the introduction of the new gTLDs today, there are more than 1, 200 TLDs in different scripts and characters and also in length like dot-Istanbul, dot-engineering, or in domain names in native scripts. Nevertheless, the software applications (not all of them) fully support all the diversity of the domain names and email addresses.

And one of the factors behind these limitations is that maybe the stakeholders such as Technical Community or others are not aware yet and maybe they are uncertain about where to start and to how to address this issue. Or in some cases it is maybe not a technical issue, but we need to motivate the decision makers. And there are some other factors like this, but UA Day actually comes at this point and it is a very crucial initiative that aims to address all these factors by raising global awareness and building capacity for UA adoption. And UA empowers the people and organizations to promote the needs and the benefits of UA to a wider audience to build digitally inclusive Internet for all.

The inaugural UA Day was held on 28th of March 2023. And for the last two years, more than 50 UA day events were held annually. These are hosted by the ICANN community, ALAC, RALOs, [LCs], UA ambassadors, all the community members and UNESCO, and all the interested global partners. And UA Day reached over 16,000 participants in two years.

This is the timeline that we are seeing for this UA Day 2025. We kicked off the UA Day this time two months earlier this year. So we are at this third stage at this moment. All the proposals have been now received, and now we are reviewing the proposals with the Shortlisting Review team. And once all the events are reviewed, we will publish the events

on the Universal Acceptance webpage, and you will have access to that one. And all the materials will be available to the UA Day organizers and anyone who are interested in hosting the UA Day.

So ICANN recently announced the collaboration with UNESCO on UA Day 2025. We are joining the forces, and this collaboration between ICANN and UNESCO will amplify our message to expand the reach within their member states. And we also hope you become a part of the UA Day events. And this can be through participating in the UA Day events in your region, which you can find out about on the website. And you can also spread the word and encourage UA adoption in your organization or in your network. And you may still be able to hold the UA Day event even if you missed the deadline for submitting the proposal but with your own resources and the available materials online that we will publish.

And with that, I will now leave the floor to our panelists from UASG ALAC, and ccNSO to get more insights from how we can collaborate, what will be the process for UA Day, what types of events we are expecting and how these proposals and events will be evaluated. So I will leave the floor now to our UASG Chair, Anil Kumar Jain. Over to you, Anil.

ANIL JAIN:

Thank you, Seda. And I welcome all the UASG community and non-UASG community who are there with us on-site and online for UA. UA Day has become very important for all of us. And in fact this is one of the premium events of ICANN which is mentioned by both the Chair of

ICANN as well as the President and CEO of ICANN in their speech in today's morning at the inaugural session.

Annually we celebrate UA Day over a period of three months starting from 1st of March to 30th of May. And very happy to inform you that in the last two UA days it was celebrated in almost 32 languages which are listed here.

Now, if we see, this year, we have a very encouraging response of 110 proposals received from 62 countries. And if you read this pie chart together, we have received 38 proposals from APEC region and covering 18 countries. Similarly in Africa we received 37 proposals from 21 countries. And this is increasing year after year.

Now if we see the next slide, as Seda has said, the focus on UA Day is on various topics. One is definitely awareness. Then in event of awareness, we are also taking academic curricula, adoption, regional strategies and training. And you see that the response which we have received to cover all of them is listed on the last column which is very increasing.

Now, awareness, which we started previously, has already reached a level, and we are now coming to the adoption, which is the main focus of our UA Day. For the UA Day One Day, which we are saying is going to be celebrated on 28th of March, what we are doing is that we have formed a review committee to review all the 110 applications which we have received. And this review committee consists of all the multistakeholder people in that committee including the UNESCO membership. The main criteria for selection is that there should be a geographical diversity, meaning that all geographies should be

covered. We are also taking the regional events where multiple countries join us in a particular region. So there will be five regional events there, and it will be a high-impact session. And I want to inform you that ICANN is not only providing the financial support for conducting a UA Day but also providing lot of background materials—for example, the PPTs, videos, as well as the faculty in case it is required.

Recently we have got support from various SOs and ACs within ICANN. You will listen to how they are approaching it, so we can go to the next panelist, Satish, who will be covering the ALAC and ICANN At-Large engagement in UA Day. Over to you, Satish.

SATISH BABU:

Thanks very much, Anil. As you may be aware, the ALAC and the At-Large are the boots on the ground as far as ICANN is concerned. We are the community, and the ALAC has been quite active in promoting UA Day and also getting our units to support and organize events.

So we are going to look at what happened in 2024 earlier in March. So this is the regional breakdown of the ALAC-organized events. So basically if you drop EURALO as an outlier, then you're talking about a range of about 20% to 65% of events of the region being organized by At-Large, which is quite a significant proportion. And there is a lot of interest from the At-Large structures to organize UA Day events. And in many cases there is a little bit of frustration that not everybody is able to get an opportunity to kind of present, although the events are actually pretty extensive.

So what is the overall strategy? So At-Large and ALAC are significant stakeholders in the UA Day. We have been from day one in 2023 onwards. Now the events in the table earlier does not include those where the At-Large community members have been involved as supporters, speakers and trainers. If you consider that also, then the numbers would be much higher. And ALAC will continue to support. And this year in the selection process we have three volunteers from At-Large in the scoring team so that there is more participation. So that is about At-Large.

And we will continue to be an overall relevant stakeholder in UA Day as we go forward. Thank you. And over to the next.

ABDALMONEM GALILA:

Yes, thank you. Thank you Anil. Actually it is universal acceptance, IDN, AIs and new generic top-level domains. Actually the main source for IDNs are ccTLDs. We have IDN TLDs. We have ASCII ccTLDs that have any other levels to be IDNs. That's why ccNSO, in recognition to the importance of universal acceptance, created a committee called Universal Acceptance Committee. The main purpose of this committee to create a platform for the ccTLD community in order to interact and share information at the global level and with other groups within the ICANN umbrella for the issues that are related to universal acceptance of domain names and IDNs.

And other purpose of the Universal Acceptance Committee is it liaises with other working groups, like with the Universal Acceptance

Technical Group and with the GAC IDN work group and the Board UA IDN work group.

Of course, the third purpose for that is it will be information sharing that we need to have many resources in order to interact with ccTLDs. We created a library in order to have all the information related to universal acceptance and ccTLDs be at one place and for the mailing list in order to interact and exchange information that's related to, for example, Universal Acceptance Day events.

Next slide. And of course we conducted a session for inviting ccTLDs or encouraging them to go for Universal Acceptance Day 2025 for both of two directions. The first direction is to apply for a proposal for UA Day 2025, and the other one is to conduct a local universal acceptance event in the local community. So during this session we explored what are the challenges, what are the best practices, and how to overcome these challenges in order to apply for Universal Acceptance Day and have your application to be on board and to conduct UA Day events. And of course we asked them also for the other direction that they could go, to provide the UA event a local event, and to identify what is the local part, the participants, and identify which category of training you should have for universal acceptance. This is some kind of [inaudible] here for the event for inviting ccTLDs for Universal Acceptance Day 2025. We encourage them through having successful testimonials for ccTLDs who applied for UA Day 2024 for dot-th and dot-cl [inaudible].

Here is a mailing list and the library. You could scan this QR code and interact and share information for ccTLDs for what is going on for the Universal Acceptance Committee. And for this is a link for the library.

You could go there and you will find the target, UASG reports, articles, and tools for universal acceptance that are related to ccTLDs. Of course the membership of Universal Acceptance Committee is open for any ccTLD who is a member of the ccNSO or who is not a member of ccNSO but is working for an organization that operates ccTLDs. Being a member interested in Universal acceptance and Universal Acceptance Committee ... Be a member. If you are eligible for that and join, you could (it is open for the public) go for the library for the UAC. And of course, to stay informed, use our mailing list.

Thank you. That's all for me for today due to the lack of time. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you, Abdalmonem, and all panelists. We appreciate your information and insights. And you can find the UA Day reports on our pages to find out more details about the past UA Day events. So thanks for that.

We can now extend our session five more minutes if you have time to allow more time for the questions.

ANIL JAIN:

As it was informed, UA Day '23 and '24 were some of the most successful events of ICANN. We have fortunately two UASG community members available who are from the same country. So may I request them to just tell us in 30 seconds each how they feel about UA Day? First, Nitin, Vice-

Chair of UASG, how tell us how UA Day India was able to do that, and then to Maria from [inaudible] about the Belgrade UA Day 2024.

NITIN WALIA:

As far as the UA Day is concerned, the first flagship event for the UA Day celebration happened in India way back, two years back, in New Delhi. And NIXI was the partner, which is a dot-in registry with the UASG at that time to host this two-day event out there. And since it was the first event, which the UASG was hosting for the celebration of UA Day, the Board Chair and the ICANN Interim CEO and President both were available along with the other members from ICANN. And it got great attraction, and in fact more than 2,000 people attended this event during those two days of workshops, which was having several workshops and information which was being shared about UASG, UA challenges and future opportunities.

So I think following that, for the next event which happened, Maria will share that for you. Thank you.

MARIA KOLESNIKOVA:

[inaudible] from our region. We try to provide the event not only to discuss strategic questions regarding support and adoption of universal acceptance, but also provide some training. So usually in our region we have awareness sessions, strategy sessions and of course trainings for local attendees. We think it's very important to not only discuss problems but also to train people.

And also from our experience we also try to invite students to participate in these events. And of course the main issue is to gather people, local people and foreign participants, for these events. And that's why it's very important to promote events as early as you can and to give good marketing for them. Thank you.

[ANIL JAIN]:

Thank you, Nitin. Thank you, Maria. Back to Seda.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you, everyone. So unfortunately now we are coming to the end of our session. We thank everyone for your active participation. And for the questions that we are not able to answer today, please feel free to reach out to us offline after this meeting or by sending an email to the uaprogram@ICANN.org address. And we have some UA stickers and flyers about UA Day. Feel free to come and get these goodies. Thank you. This session is now adjourned.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]