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ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING



Roadmap Towards Universal Acceptance (UA) Adoption

27 October 2025

Panel

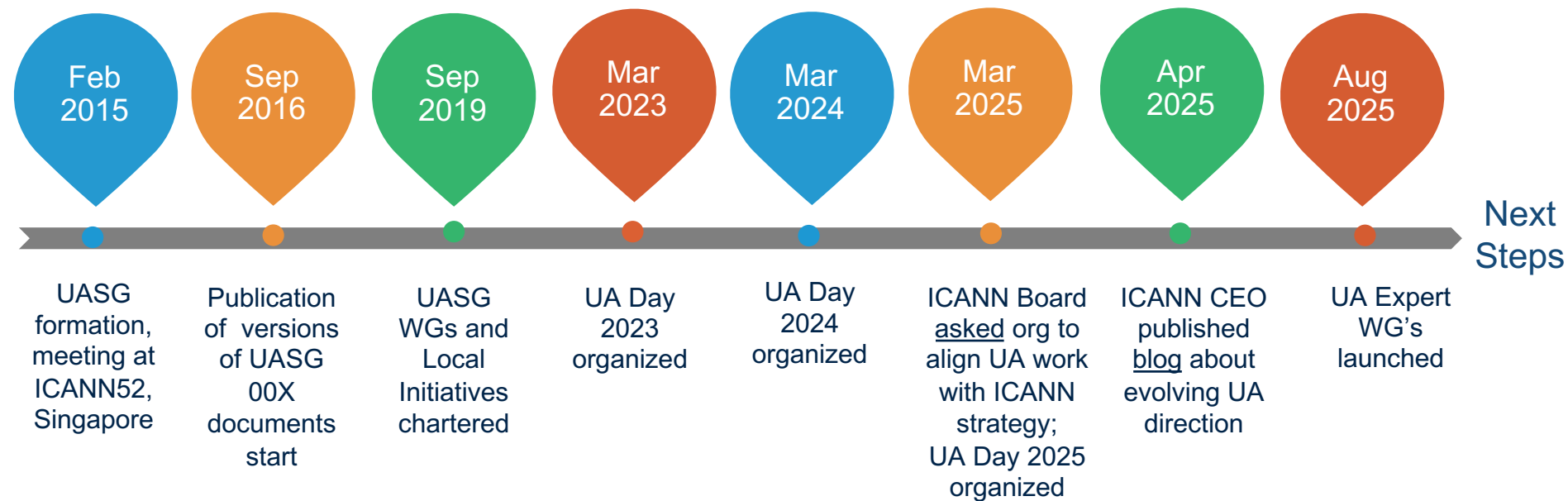
- **Maarten Botterman**, Chair of ICANN's Board IDN-UA WG – Guiding ICANN org's work on UA adoption
- **Edmon Chung**, Co-Chair of UA EWG – Progress by the UA Expert Working Group and its plan of work
- **Sean Bedford**, Meta – Meta's efforts on addressing UA support in its products
- **Tarja Turtia**, UNESCO – UNESCO's efforts to promote multilingual Internet and collaboration with ICANN on UA adoption
- **Sarmad Hussain**, ICANN - Moving from UA awareness to adoption - Updates on UA community efforts by ICANN org

Guiding ICANN org's work on UA adoption

Maarten Botterman

Chair of ICANN's Board IDN-UA Working Group

Timeline for UA Work



Guiding ICANN Org's Work on UA Adoption

- ICANN Board approved resolution on 13 March 2025:
 - The Board recognizes and applauds 10 years of valuable contributions made by the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG).
 - The Board directs ICANN's President and CEO to evaluate and evolve strategies to support UA adoption work by ICANN org and the community in a manner that aligns with ICANN's Strategic Plan.

ICANN Org's FY26–30 Strategic Plan

- UA remains an area of focus in the [FY26–30 Strategic Plan](#) as a key driver for facilitating digital inclusion.

3.1 Facilitate Digital Inclusion

3.1.1 Promote the advancement of UA and Internationalized Domain Names

3.1.2 Proactively collaborate with all relevant external parties to promote UA

- Improvement in ICANN org systems' UA-readiness level.
- Growth in the number of ICANN-accredited registrars and registries that are UA-ready.
- Increase in the adoption and treatment of IDNs and UA by software vendors.

Guiding ICANN Org's Work on UA Adoption

- **April 2025** - ICANN CEO post's blog noting shift in ICANN org's UA work:
 - The need to focus on UA adoption requiring implementation work.
 - Formation of a UA Expert WG to guide ICANN's work on UA adoption.
- **May 2025** - ICANN published Call for Nominations for UA Expert WG.
- **June 2025** - ICANN Board, org, and community celebrated the 10 years of UASG at ICANN83 and published corresponding report.
- **August 2025** - ICANN announced the UA Expert WG to start its work.

Progress by the UA Expert WG and its plan of work

Edmon Chung
Co-Chair of UA Expert WG

Progress by the UA Expert WG

- Aligns with ICANN's [FY26-30 Strategic Plan](#), by developing guidelines on how to collaborate with external stakeholders to promote UA adoption.
- [Announced](#) in August 2025.
- Objective of the UA Expert WG: To develop guidelines for ICANN about how to encourage and collaborate with the stakeholders towards UA adoption.
- Eleven members, two co-chairs, and one ICANN Board liaison.
- Develop guidelines from August 2025–March 2026.
- More details are at the UA Expert WG [working space](#).

Progress by the UA Expert WG

- As per the [charter](#), the UA EWG will develop strategies to encourage UA adoption for the following:
 - Big tech organizations
 - Open-source communities
 - Software development professionals and system administrators
 - DNS industry, including gTLD and ccTLD registries, registrars, hosting providers
 - Public sector and intergovernmental organizations
 - Academia
- Completed initial discussion on five of the ten topics. The guidelines are being discussed at <https://github.com/icann/ua-ewg/issues>.

Meta's work on Universal Acceptance

ICANN84

Sean Bedford

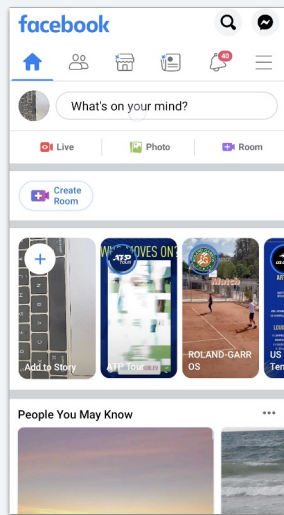
Distinguished Business Engineer



OUR MISSION

Build the future of human connection and
the technology that makes it possible.

Why is this hard?



Meta's apps are complex

- This screenshot encompasses several team ownership areas.
- We often need to agree with all teams to make changes.



Balancing user experience

- In social media, the chances of someone forgetting a space when typing and accidentally creating a link are **high**.

```
# Version 2025020700, Last Updated Fri Feb 7 07:07:02 2025 UTC
AAA
AARP
ABB
ABBOTT
ABBVIE
ABC
ABLE
ABOCADO
ABUDHABI
AC
ACADEMY
ACCENTURE
ACCOUNTANT
ACCOUNTANTS
ACO
ACTOR
AD
ADS
ADULT
AE
AEG
AERO
AETNA
AF
AFL
AFRICA
AG
AGANHAN
AGENCY
AI
AIG
AIRBUS
AIRFORCE
AIRTEL
AION
AL
ALIBABA
ALIPAY
ALLFINANZ
ALLSTATE
ALLY
ALSACE
ALSTOM
AM
AMAZON
AMERICANEXPRESS
AMERICANFAMILY
AMEX
AMFAM
```

Spectrum of IANA domains

- The IANA list has a large list of domains in various languages.
- It isn't easy to keep on top of the fluctuations in this list over time.

Where are we today?

Most ccTLDs now work on web

- We now support most country code domains with a few exceptions to balance our user experience and false positive rate.

gTLD investigation **nearing completion**

- We will enable more gTLDs across web for linkification.

UA Expert working group participation

- Meta is participating in ICANN's expert working group to find means to better incentivise and drive community adoption of UA.

What could be better?

More cohesive mobile OS support

- Meta, and most companies, rely on underlying mobile frameworks to determine what is, or is not, a URL.
- We encourage feedback to the mobile OS vendors to drive stronger platform level support for UA.

Widespread understanding of UA

- “Universal Acceptance” means very little to most.
Understanding this challenge is necessary to address it more holistically and drive progress.
- Within big tech, the incentives for doing UA work need to align with existing company goals.





UNESCO's efforts to promote multilingual Internet and collaboration with ICANN on UA adoption

Tarja Turtia, Chief of Section for Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists, UNESCO

27 October 2025

UNESCO's Commitment to Multilingualism: the 2003 Recommendation

- UNESCO's Recommendation concerning the **Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace** (2003)
- About 90% of online content is produced in just 12 languages, leaving thousands of other languages, including Indigenous and minority languages, underrepresented or entirely absent. (Statista)



International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032)



Global Action Plan
developed to provide a
strategic framework,
outline major
actions: the third output
of the plan is **digital
empowerment.**



1 Learn, teach, and transmit

As a result of actions being taken by all stakeholders during the International Decade, Indigenous Peoples are being empowered to learn, teach, and transmit their languages to the present and future generations in a variety of forms and through any medium or channel, offering an improved quality of life, strengthened participation, leadership and decision-making, increased dignity and respect, and secure self-confident identity, as well as through enhanced abilities and competencies contributing to language fluency, vitality, and a higher number of users resulting from the widened scope of the domains in which these languages are used.



2 Establish as global priority and foster commitment

As a result of actions being taken by all stakeholders during the International Decade, the usage, preservation, revitalization, and promotion of Indigenous languages are by 2030 established as a global priority, and the long-term commitment of all stakeholders is guaranteed towards building peaceful, just, sustainable, inclusive, and resilient societies.



4 Enhance the functional usage

As a result of actions being taken by all stakeholders during the International Decade, an enabling environment is being developed and becoming fully operational to enhance the functional usage of Indigenous languages in socio-cultural, economic, environmental, legal and political domains through the implementation of supportive legal and policy frameworks, strengthening relevant institutions including their coordination and financing mechanisms, the definition of their roles and responsibilities, capacity building among all stakeholders, encouraging social and intercultural dialogue, as well as the participation of all stakeholders, especially Indigenous institutions and organizations.



3 Ensure legal recognition

As a result of actions being taken by all stakeholders during the International Decade, Indigenous languages are recognized by Member States within their legal systems and legislation which in turn are supported with comprehensive language-related laws and policy frameworks and are backed by allocated financial, institutional, and human resources, enabling Indigenous languages to be used fully and functionally in all socio-cultural, economic, environmental, legal, and political domains.

OUTCOMES

UNESCO's Global Roadmap for Multilingualism in the Digital Era

- Outcome of the Language Technology For All Conference 2.0 (February 2025)
- Guiding Member States and stakeholders in harnessing language technologies to support multilingualism and digital inclusion
- **Global consultation** in July 2025
- **100 responses** from **53 countries** across the world
- **Participants:** Community members, academics, government officials, NGOs, and technology experts
- **Launch: November 2025**



UNESCO Working to Advance an Internet for Trust

In line with the Global Digital Compact and the Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms we reaffirm that:

1. Inclusive and Interoperable Infrastructure

Resilient, safe, and inclusive digital public infrastructure can scale services and expand social and economic opportunities for all but can also be key to uphold information integrity.

2. Trust and Human Rights

A trustworthy digital ecosystem depends on transparent, secure systems with human rights safeguards, ensuring plurality and inclusion at every level.

3. Interoperability and Multilingualism

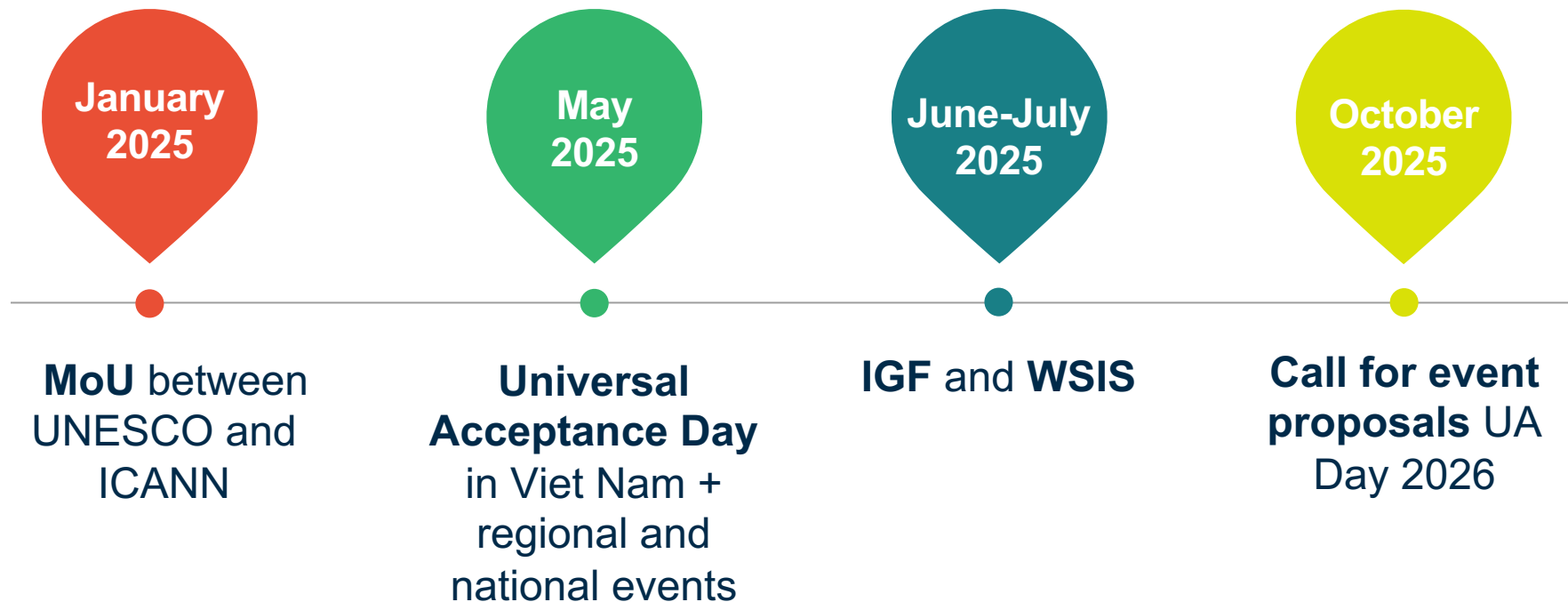
Interoperability and multilingualism enables access to information, freedom of expression, and the promotion and protection of the diversity of cultural expressions.

Multilingualism in UA

- Ensuring the Internet is truly **global and inclusive thanks to UA.**
- Development of a **Policy Brief on Universal Acceptance** fostering a more equitable and accessible internet ecosystem for everyone **aligned with UNESCO's commitments.**



UNESCO and ICANN collaboration 2025-2026



Thank you !

Tarja Turtia,
Chief of Section for Freedom of
Expression and Safety of
Journalists



- **Moving from UA awareness to adoption**
- **Updates on UA community efforts by ICANN org**

Sarmad Hussain
Senior Director IDN and UA Programs, ICANN

Moving from UA Awareness to Adoption

- Aiming to increase focus on UA Day adoption events.
 - Register IDN and deploy UA-ready website and email system.
 - Design a roadmap to integrate UA curriculum in technical coursework.
 - Call for participation for UA Day 2026 at: <https://universalacceptance.day>, last day to apply 9 November 2025.
- Focusing UA Local Initiatives to UA adoption activities.
 - Deploying and making websites UA-ready.
 - Setting up EAI compliant email servers and helping demonstrate their use locally.
 - Test local websites using such email addresses and engage with these organizations to encourage them to address the gaps.

Moving from UA Awareness to Adoption

- Updating Technology:
 - Fix Open-Source Tools.
 - Prioritize issues in standards, libraries, and open-source tools and systems.
 - Submit fixes in the code and work with maintainers to integrate the code.
 - Outreach to big tech organizations.
 - Update ICANN's systems to incorporate UA support.
- Building capacity:
 - Integrate IDN and UA concepts in the technical degree programs at universities through the [UA Curriculum Integration Program](#).

Collaborations with Organizations



**UA Committee
of ccNSO**



**UA-IDN WG
of GAC**



UA Expert WG



**IDN WG of
ALAC**



UNESCO



**Association of
African
Universities**



ALETI



**IGFs/
WSIS+20/ ITU
Forum**

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