



UASG

Notes from the ICANN64 Meeting in Kobe Japan

2019-03-14



Universal Acceptance (and IDNs) seemed to be everywhere at the ICANN64 meeting in Kobe Japan in March 2019. This stems, at least in part, from the legacy that former Chair Ram Mohan laid by

including Universal Acceptance within one of the five objectives in the ICANN's Board five year plan.

UASG Workshop

The week of meetings started with the UASG Workshop on Friday the 8th of March. The group, including most of the new and old leadership, spent significant time on strategic planning and setting the direction for the next few years.

There were five strategic areas developed, each with specific objectives that were ranked by the group. These are included at the end of this report.

Working Groups

Agreed to expand the number of working groups and to review or create the charters of each. The groups will include:

EAI

An existing group that has been focused on encouraging email software and service providers to include EAI capability. The group has also provided a meeting point for those interested in EAI. The group also oversees the

work done on EAI documentation, training materials and evaluations.

Measurement

Recently reconvened, this group will assist in identifying good measures of general UA and EAI Readiness as well as helping ensure that we have good metrics for measuring the effectiveness of UASG initiatives.

This group is expected to create an annual report on Global UA Readiness.

Community Outreach

This existing group will guide the creation of materials and efforts to get the UA message to our target audiences. It will develop a project to clarify who the target audiences are.

Technology

This group, yet to be formed, will provide advice and direction to the UASG Secretariat on technology issues.

Local Initiatives

Remaining to be better defined, we expect that each of our targeted geographies will have a local group who can provide input and support for local UA efforts.

Regional Community Initiatives

During the meeting the UASG Secretariat met with several regional community groups.

The Russian community is expecting to form a local initiative during the forthcoming Russian



IGF in April.



Figure 1 Meeting of the Russian community: Don Hollander, Natalia Mochu, Dusan Stojicevic, Mikhail Anismov, Andrey Voroyev, Maria Kolesnikova, Irina Danelia, Andrey Kuzmichev

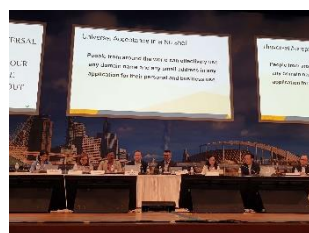
The Latin American community will be expanding their efforts from Brazil, Mexico and Argentina to include Trinidad & Tobago – these because there’s local interest.

Universal Acceptance and the ALAC

During a meeting of the ALAC, they wanted to find a topic that they could use to exercise their network to amplify the objectives. They agreed that Universal Acceptance would be their next topic. Toward that end, individual At Large Structures (ALS) will work with the UASG to identify local individuals and organisations that could benefit from the UASG messages. They will also share UASG document – including newsletter articles and presentations (*an opportunity for UA Ambassadors that already operates well in Egypt*)

High Interest Topic

The community convened a cross-constituency discussion on Universal Acceptance on the



last day of the meeting with participants from across the various constituencies. There was common agreement that UA was an issue that needed to be addressed and there was positive recognition that the UASG was addressing it. In the end, there was a call for people to get their own organisations UA Ready when they return home.

UASG and ICANN’s Teams

While in Japan we met with ICANN’s regional GSE teams, their Government engagement teams and ICANN’s CIO.

There is good activity happening in each of the ICANN regions and we identified additional activities for the next twelve months. There was quite good enthusiasm and fresh ideas identified including a possible case study of UNESCO’s becoming EAI Ready and a possible pilot event in North America that would include ICANN, some local ALSs and other relevant community groups. We all agreed that we would make sure that our respective expectations and intentions were well documented.

ICANN’s IT Group have been interesting to watch as they pursue UA Readiness. They have revised their initial approach of spinning up a project to a revised approach of including UA in their systems architecture requirements and addressing application through their normal maintenance efforts.

The ICANN CIO reported that they have completed phase 1 of their UA Readiness project (the ability to handle all ASCII domain names) and were more than half-way through their phase 2 (the ability to handle all non-ASCII domain names). He also explained the challenges of working with vendors who had not been aware of the issues. A fresh case study on ICANN-IT’s efforts will be started in March.



Universal Acceptance

The ICANN Government engagement team (which focus on global inter-governmental organisations) will take the message of UA to their audiences where there it is expected to be well received.

IDN Program

In a different, but related topic, the ICANN IDN Program recognized and celebrated the contributions by the community-based working groups towards achieving significant milestones, including conclusion of proposals for the Root Zone Label Generation Rules (RZ-LGR) for Hebrew, Myanmar, Neo-Brahmi and Sinhala scripts, IDN Guidelines and Recommendations for the Technical Use of RZ-LGR. Further, the ICANN Board approved the Recommendations for Managing the IDN Variant TLDs.

At the reception hosted by ICANN, it was noted that 18 of the 28 script communities have completed RZ-LGR proposals, while work on the remaining is well on its way. (See www.icann.org/idn for specific details on the IDN program work.

The community celebrated with an evening of awards and comradery.



UA Ambassadors



Several of the UASG Ambassadors met informally to share experiences and plans while they waited their turns during our video shoot.

Elections

UASG elections were finalized during the meeting. The new office holders are:

- Chair: Ajay Data
- Vice-Chairs: Dusan Stojicevic, Mark Svancarek, and Dennis Tan Tanaka



Figure 2 Christian Dawson, Ram Mohan, Dusan Stojicevic, Lars Steffen, Ajay Data, Mark Svancarek, Edmon Chung, Rich Merdinger, Dennis Tan Tanaka - new and retiring UASG Coordination Group



UASG Strategic Objectives – 2019-2021

During its workshop on March 8 2019, the UASG developed the following five strategies and associated ranked objectives

Amplify UASG Message to Target Audiences

- 1) Set hypothesis to verify our target audience and use structured research to test the hypothesis with a goal of having a narrow but well-defined target audience.
- 2) Seed instances of institutional changes that incorporate Universal Acceptance and show case those organisations that pursue Universal Acceptance as examples for others to follow.
- 3) Create even better collaboration with allied organisations (eco, i2c, TheDNA, the DC-DNSI, etc¹)
- 4) Organise a UA Day

Develop authoritative resources for Universal Acceptance

- 1) Create a clear definition of UA Ready
- 2) Develop training materials in multiple areas (Domain Names, Email, etc). This material should have multiple editions catering to specific audiences (ie Public Sector officials, developers, IT senior staff, etc)
- 3) Have a toolset of solutions that help software engineers solve the three most common problem cases.
- 4) Foster experts in UA including in commercial advisory firms.

Define and address gaps to UA Readiness

- 1) Get base-line measurement statistics
- 2) Identify at least three high-profile organisations and find qualified experts who can assist them to become UA Ready
- 3) Identify where gaps in technology exist and address them. This can include programming language libraries or very commonly used utilities or services.
- 4) Aim to have all major software to be UA Ready – including EAI and support for IDNs and new gTLDs

Improve Recruitment of active participants within the UASG

- 1) More representatives from very large IT companies
- 2) Be proactive in outreach to very large, high profile, companies

Improve the Administration of the UASG

- 1) Get a dedicated ICANN staff to facilitate the UASG funding issues. (e.g. Bug Bounty program)
- 2) Improve communications between the UASG Ambassadors and the UASG Coordination Group
- 3) Created a shared calendar so that the UASG Ambassadors and the Coordination Group and the Comms Group can see what events are coming up.

¹ Eco is a European Association of Internet infrastructure providers, i2c is the Internet Infrastructure Coalition – a US based association of Internet infrastructure providers, TheDNA is an association of registries and registrars and others focused on the domain name industry, the DC-DNSI is the Dynamic Coalition for DNS Issues – a group operating within the IGF community.



Universal Acceptance

- 4) Have one Face-to-Face meeting not associated with an ICANN meeting or other major distractions.

There were other objectives that were identified but excluded from the above as possibly being beyond the capability during the time frame under review.

- 1) Develop a communications playbook for UA Ambassadors
- 2) Have an automated tool that will provide UA Self-Assessment
- 3) Create a UA Ready certification program (including 'sticker')
- 4) Have a framework that can be used by developers