
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – Guiding ICANN's Work on Universal Acceptance
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SEDA AKBULUT

Hello and welcome, everyone. Welcome to the Guiding ICANN's Work on Universal Acceptance session. My name is Seda and I'm the participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

Please observe the following guidelines to participate in this session. I will also post them in the chat for your reference. During this session, questions only will be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod or in the chat. Interpretation for this session will include French and 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. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Only questions posted in the Q&A pod will be read aloud during the session as time permits and when directed by the chair of the session.

Please state your name for the record, the language you will speak, if speaking a language other than English, and speak clearly at a moderate pace. This session will include two topics. At first, Guilherme Canela will be with us, Director for Division for Digital

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Inclusion and Policies and Digital Transformation at UNESCO. Welcome, Guilherme. And he will provide us an overview of the work that they are doing to promote UA in collaboration with ICANN.

And then Edmon Chung, as the co-chair of the UA Expert Working Group, will walk us through the extensive work that the UA Expert Working Group conducted over the last six months of time and the guidelines that they prepared for guiding ICANN's future work on Universal Acceptance.

With that, let's kick off the session, and I will leave the floor to Guilherme Canela. Over to you.

GUILHERME CANELA

Thank you, Seda. Good afternoon, everyone, and good morning and good evening for those connecting online. Happy Women's Day for the women in the room. It's a pleasure to be with you, and apologies in advance for those who have listened to me yesterday speaking on the same topic, because though I try to be creative, I can't be that creative. So, it will be some repetition from what I said yesterday.

Once, someone asked Nelson Mandela how he saw the importance of mother tongue language, and he said, "If you talk to someone in a language he or she understands, that goes to his or her head. If you talk to him or her in his or her own language, that goes to his or her heart." So, Mandela was a firm believer that among other

things, education in modern tongue language had much greater impact than education in an official language, for example.

And this perception is currently corroborated by actual data showing concrete better results for those kids, for example, that are educated in their own native language, rather than an official language of the country. So that's why, since the outset, UNESCO, which is the educational, cultural, scientific, and information organization of the United Nations system, has dedicated such a strong effort since our creation in 1945 to the topic of multilingualism. In the very first paragraph of the UNESCO Constitution, you will read that one of the mandates of UNESCO is to promote the free flow of information and ideas.

This very paragraph was what then stimulated the discussions that later on culminated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where in the Article 19, you can read that every individual, it does not say an individual of a particular age or of a particular gender or of a particular nationality, every individual has the right to not only impart, transmit, but has also the right to seek and receive information, ideas, art, entertainment.

And obviously this principle, the free flow of information or the right to seek, receive, and impart can only be fulfilled in a complete way if we have multilingualism. It's impossible to guarantee the free flow of information or the right to seek and receive, and impart, if people are not allowed to do that in their own languages.

So, it's easy to say, not that easy to implement, because currently we have more than 8,000 languages still spoken in this planet, and I'm not even adding the dialects and so on, which requires significant efforts in terms of public policies, but also the efforts by all the other stakeholders, private companies, academies, civil society, etc., to guarantee that multilingualism is indeed embedded in everything we do to ultimately guarantee the free flow of information or the right to freedom of expression and access to public information.

So, in that sense you can see in this slide that UNESCO has been trying even more recently to do this connection also with what is happening in the digital ecosystem. So, in a in a vanguard manner in 2003, so 22 years ago, all the 194 member states of UNESCO approved this recommendation concerning the promotion and use of multilingualism in the universal access to cyberspace. This is a legal document, it's not a treaty, it's a different, let's say, empowerment and enforcement measure, but it still is a legal document that the government needs to report back every four years on what's going on in this.

Then later on, also related to this, the United Nations General Assembly approved that currently, so since 2022 all the way to 2032, we are living in the decade of indigenous languages with the clear idea of stimulated national, regional, and international policies to promote and protect indigenous languages. And the UN General Assembly asked UNESCO to be the secretariat on behalf of

the entire UN system to this decade, which is done in straight cooperation with indigenous communities all over the world.

Last year during the World Social Summit, we launched after global consultations with all relevant stakeholder groups this global roadmap for multilingualism in the digital era, advancing the role of language technologies, which is obviously a very connecting element with the discussion of Universal Acceptance. And of course, last but not least, our cooperation with ICANN, which comes from many years now, is really going forward and enhancing and fostering how Universal Acceptance in particular connects with this broader landscape that I just presented to you of the UNESCO's overall work on multilingualism. Next one, please.

So, just diving in on some of these elements, regarding the recommendation for the promotion and use of multilingualism in universal cyberspace, you can see there what are the key parameters of these legal documents, promotion of linguistic diversity online, universal access to cyberspace, policy and institutional support, capacity building and technical development, cultural and educational integration, collaboration and international cooperation, monitoring and reporting, and so on.

And you can say, okay, when we look to these international documents, obviously there is a very long graveyard of resolutions and recommendations that we don't see to be actually implemented. But if you compare where we were in terms of

linguistic diversity online in 2003, and where we are today, indeed we have, and we are experiencing an advancement. I mean, we are much better today than we were in 2003.

Obviously, this is not only the result of the work of UNESCO and this recommendation, but clearly this international instrument set the scene for different stakeholders to work in different levels related to this. So, obviously, we always want more, it's not enough, it's necessary, but we also need to make sure that we are measuring our own victories in this kind of space and demonstrating that actually it's possible to do it better, to go and advance on these different levels, and we can see this clearly on the monitoring exercises related to this recommendation.

So please, here, we are coincidentally starting the new quadrennial cycle of monitoring of the implementation of this recommendation. Please do stimulate your own governments to report back, to tell us what is happening. What are the good practices that are being implemented, but also the challenges, the many, many challenges that still remain to be implemented. And then the other issue is the decade of indigenous languages.

Obviously, this is interconnected, but the good thing is that now there is a global action plan developed together with the indigenous people all over the world. This is of paramount importance. This should be a process governed by them.

So, we are facilitating the conversation, but it's the indigenous people all over the world that are governing this process. So, I

invite each and every one of you to be more connected with the developments under the umbrella of the decade of indigenous languages. Next one, please.

And then as a more recent development to all of these, UNESCO, we saw their partners have been organizing in different moments this global conference on languages and technologies. The last one was February last year in Paris. And out of these, the different stakeholders said, well, but we need to have a more clear roadmap and what is necessary to advance this discussion of languages and technologies, which is obviously very much concerned with the current developments in the AI arena.

So, after global consultations that took place most of last year, we launched in November during the World Social Summit in Doha, this roadmap that you can see there with the basic element that the SDGs' motto of leaving no one behind, it's only achievable if we also make sure that no language is left behind in these different policies, and then the document offers very concrete elements to advance in this global roadmap. Next one, please. I think it's... yeah.

So then in that sense, the Universal Acceptance is more and more embedded in these different previous strategies that I mentioned to you. We have been instructing our field offices all over the world while implementing these other areas of UNESCO multilingualism policies that they should always connect with the discussions related to Universal Acceptance and vice versa. So, you can see there we are in this stronger cooperation with ICANN in this area.

We will soon launch a policy brief on this topic that I will present some key characteristics in a minute. With pleasure, we participated in the expert group that is going to be described also during this session and so on. And during the Universal Acceptance Day, we have been joining forces with ICANN all over the world to raise awareness about this. Next slide, please. So, this offers to you a bit of a timeline, the recent timeline of this cooperation with ICANN. You will see that there are different milestones where we are advancing this conversation, and we hope this will continue.

Next one, please. And then, let me now present some of the key characteristics of this policy brief which is currently under consultation via the GAC group until 20th of March, and we hope to launch it sometime soon, hopefully before the end of May. Next one, please.

So, the basic objective here with when we produce the policy brief is rather to be a short document that we can distribute to our own stakeholders, so all the 194 permanent delegations to UNESCO in Paris, with of course the expectation they will then redistribute to their own governments in capitals and the idea is to facilitate a conversation. This is not a policy brief, it is not a legal document. It has the main purpose of further explaining a topic, stimulating the diplomats in Paris and the relevant stakeholders in capitals to have a more informed conversation on a relevant issue, in this case Universal Acceptance. And so, you can see there some of the objectives of this.

Next one, please. So, we want to go deeper in the policy brief on what are the legal and regulatory frameworks that actually underlines and highlights the conversation about Universal Acceptance in the multilateral system, how this is connected with the promotion of digital inclusion and multilingualism. We want to strengthen the importance and stress the importance of capacity building, education, and multi-stakeholder engagement. And we also want to make sure that there are concrete elements of monitoring and evaluation when we are having this kind of conversation.

Next one, please. And then during the policy brief, the recommendations are related to different and important areas. One is for technological applications and services providers. So, from the obvious, the idea that we need to embed Universal Acceptance in design and development cycles, to how we can go further and look into how this can be demonstrated, for example, in market leadership. Next one, please.

With civil society and language communities, very important the strong cooperation and collaboration with these language communities in further developing this type of policies, but also counting a lot with these groups in raising public awareness and relevant advocacy regarding these types of policies and discussions.

Next one. Recommendations for ourselves, the international and intergovernmental organizations, how we can even further

enhance our own work in this area in everything we do. It's also across cutting perspective, not only in the specific area of multilingualism in UNESCO, but our sector of education, our culture, our sciences, and so on.

Next one. So, just in closing, to say that for us is a privilege to have the conversation with the ICANN community about these issues. We think that without you, it's impossible to advance this agenda, and therefore I remain here and even after this event, at your service to see how we can further collaborate on the promotion of multilingualism in this new digital era. Thank you very much.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you very much, Guilherme, and thanks for the presentation as well as the collaboration with ICANN. Are there any questions to Guilherme about the policy brief or other works on UNESCO sites? I see a hand from Anil Jain. Over to you, Anil. Please unmute yourself.

ANIL KUMAR JAIN

Thank you, Seda. Anil for the record Thank you very much for wonderful presentation from UNESCO, and as part of the ICANN community, I would like to thank UNESCO to be part of this particular moment of Universal Acceptance since 2023/24. Now here, I want to say that the main strength of United Nations and UNESCO is the connect with the governments of those participating countries, 194 which you have mentioned.

ICANN is working on Universal Acceptance for the last several years, almost 10-11 years, and develop capabilities of producing the technical documents, awareness, implementation, and all those things. But what we desire from the ICANN community is that if we are able to generate interest of Universal Acceptance within the governments, and governments prepare their Universal Acceptance implementation plan in their particular countries, then I think the collaboration will be more fruitful and it will be more useful. I suggest to have some words from you right now, and in case not now, you we can go back and then we can discuss. Thank you.

GUILHERME CANELA

Well, thank you. I agree. I think that the challenge here as, I guess, I mentioned yesterday and someone who asked the kind of similar question is to show to the relevant stakeholders, the governments, of course, but also the big private companies, that the promotion of multilingualism in general and Universal Acceptance in particular has two pillars. One is it is a human right. So, regardless of everything else, we need to do it.

But also, there is a business case. Studies show, for example, that 75% of the consumers prefer to buy something in a system that offers the service in their own language. And 40% refuses to do it if they can't find the service in their own language. So, aside of the human rights perspective, there is here a business case to do things

in as many languages as we can. So, I do think we need to work together on those two fronts.

The front that this is a right and we can't forget that, but also demonstrating that multilingualism is not a favor, it's in the interest of the industry of the governments of the development, sustainable and inclusive development to advance with that. And I think in that sense, if we manage to go more and more on that direction, that is a bit of what this work is trying to do, I have no doubt that we will have even better results on the near future. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you. We have a question from the room. Please introduce yourself.

BIBEK SILWAL

Hello. Good afternoon, everyone. This is Bibek from Nepal. So, we have been organizing UA Day in Nepal, and last year, we had hackathon, and we partnered with UNESCO. And this year, also, we're partnering with UNESCO. But since the remit of UNESCO is quite huge in terms of education, internet, so how does UNESCO plan in the days to come to limit, sorry, promote Universal Acceptance, not just specific UA events, or find synergies in the other activities that UNESCO does?

For example, in world hate sites, you have multilingual guides or even in their own system having UA Day systems. How does UNESCO plans to find synergies in those events?

GUILHERME CANELA

So, first I must say as a parenthesis that you are privileged in Nepal because my previous head of multilingualism is now the head of our Kathmandu office. So, he is embedded in doing more and more things. And I lost a good collaborator, but he now is doing a fantastic job as the head of our Kathmandu office. I think that what I tried to show very quickly is that we are cross-cutting Universal Acceptance in all our other strategies related to multilingualism.

So, for example, we are launching now the new cycle of monitoring for the recommendation of 2003, and we are going to include very concrete questions to member states also related to Universal Acceptance. If you see this global roadmap that was launched in Doha during the World Social Summit last year, there are specific elements of Universal Acceptance there.

And then this policy brief that we are going to launch with ICANN soon is being done under the umbrella as well of our information for all program that is an intergovernmental program. So, still many more things to be done, but the strategy is to make sure that this is not treated as an isolated component of the conversation, but embedded in our wider policies related to promoting

multilingualism as one of the UNESCO's key mandates. Thank you, and thank you for your efforts in Nepal.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you very much. We will have one more question from the room. Om Prakash, over to you.

OM PRAKASH SHARMA

Thank you, Mr. Director, for the presentation. Am I audible?

SEDA AKBULUT

Yes, you are.

OM PRAKASH SHARMA

My name is Om. I'm participating remotely. So, my question is, how much is the implementation of the UA in the policy really important and how does it work in coordination with technical implementation and policy implementation and what challenges do you think is currently a bigger problem? Is it because of policy or it's because of the technical implementation? Well, the UA adoption is progressing, so I would like to hear what's your opinion on this. Thank you.

GUILHERME CANELA

Well, maybe the ICANN colleagues can also chip in here, but I don't think anyone has an evidence-based answer to this question. It's very difficult to measure how much is because of policy problems

or technical issues and so on. But what I can tell you is that I think there is a strong political will towards multilingualism.

When I talk to ministers and regulators, no one says no to these kinds of things, which doesn't necessarily translate in another important component that is budget allocation for this. So, it's not only about saying we like a policy and we even have a national policy related to that. This needs to be translated in money to implement these kinds of policies.

And that's the step that unfortunately is not happening across the border. It's happening a lot, but it's not happening across the border. So, we need also to be conscious in doing the money talk. Sometimes for different reasons, we are a bit refrained to do the money talk.

So, we ask things to be implemented, but we forget to say yes. And to be implemented, please allocate budget for this implementation. So, if I needed to do an educated guess, I think that the missing component in several jurisdictions is the proper allocation of financial resources to walk the talk.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you. Sarmad, would you like to add something on this?

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Thank you, Seda, and thank you for the question. So, on the implementation side, we are seeing a gradual uptake of Universal Acceptance in various technologies. We actually measure at least

a couple of metrics which we report on an annual basis which are available in the UA Readiness Report which we publish annually.

But in addition to that, we are actually also presenting updates on technical implementation based on what ICANN's directly doing in collaboration with the big tech organizations as well as in open-source. So, we actually presented an update earlier in this meeting during the prep week. I would encourage you to go and take a look there as well. But yes, there is a progress in implementation as well.

It is slow, but as Guilherme also indicated, there is interdependence, so the supply and demand actually need to sort of work together, supply increasing demand and demand increasing supply. I guess they both work with each other. We'll share some links in the chat for the UA readiness report, which has some metrics, so you can follow up there. Thank you very much.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thanks very much. Okay, we will have another presentation after this for the UA Expert Working Group, and there is also a few hands in the Zoom room as well. I'll maybe ask you to keep the questions at the end after the UA Expert Working Group. Is that okay? All right then. Over to you, Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG

Thank you. Edmon here. And I guess originally, we were planning to have a walkthrough of the actual document that went out for

public comment. I guess with a lot of people wanting to ask our guest of honor here, I'll just jump through it, and then, if we do have time, come back to the walkthrough.

But just reporting on this work that started a little while back with the, sorry, I had a slide to talk about Universal Acceptance, but I'm sure everyone already knows what it means. But I did want to highlight one thing. The bigger frame of multilingualism and the multilingual Internet is very important, but Universal Acceptance is also about new gTLDs. That is an important topic here at ICANN as well.

So this work, this specific work that we are talking about today, again, the document is out for public comments, started with a Board resolution in March last year, and it's part of the implementation of a strategic plan. In fact, it flows into, there's a particular item in the strategic plan for the next five years on supporting Universal Acceptance work.

And I did want to specifically highlight that this set of guidelines, and I encourage you to take a look at it and give us feedback, is focused on guidance to the ICANN staff team on Universal Acceptance. The wider community work on UA can totally continue and be aligned with the ICANN staff team, but this does not but cover the community works that will happen independently as well.

So, the work started in August last year, and we had weekly meetings that worked through a number of issues. So, the working

group itself is formed in what is called an expert working group fashion. So, there are representatives from the different SOs and ACs, including the GAC, the ALAC, the SSAC, the GNSO, and the ccNSO.

We also had a board liaison to the group, but it also included external experts like Guilherme from UNESCO, we had someone from Unicode Consortium, we had a former IAB member from China, we had the W3C, we had big tech, we had academia, and I'm privileged to be serving as a co-chair together with Sarmad on the group.

But I think, again, back to the scope of the work itself, it's very focused on guidance that runs from the strategic plan for the ICANN staff team in terms of Universal Acceptance. The discussion as well as the report itself is organized around ten questions which were included in the charter of the group essentially looking at how ICANN would interact or prioritize work with big tech organizations, with open-source communities, and to contribute to standards bodies, reaching out to software development professionals, system administrators, hosting providers, and on number six, specifically for the DNS industry, which includes the registries and registrars and across gTLDs and ccTLDs.

And then on to the public sector, of course, including governments and intergovernmental organizations, and reaching out to academia. Sorry, I wanted to mention that we have also an item on measures. We touched on measurement, how do we measure the

development and the adoption of UA readiness and a framework around that. I was going to go into each specifically and run through it.

But instead of that, I was thinking that I would just give a really quick update and go back to the queue. And if we have time at the end, we'll go into the details. So, one of the interesting things that we did identify is overarching priorities, and one of which is very related to what was presented just now. In framing the Universal Acceptance issue within a larger goal of multilingual internet and the broader internationalization of systems.

And that's a very important way to get the attention for people who are outside of the industry and to get them to participate. The other overarching aspect that we identified is that there are different stakeholders. And in the past, we always talk about Universal Acceptance in a way that seems to be the same to everyone. That probably no longer works.

Different stakeholders, whether they're governments, they're big tech, or different people within these organizations, different ministries, different departments in companies, we need different messages to outreach to these different stakeholders. So, this is an overarching goal that we're tasking the ICANN team to come up with so that whether the ICANN team itself or the community reaches out to the different parts of the community, we can use focused materials.

Now, just quickly onto a few of the interesting things that I think I'd like to highlight for each of the items. When we talked about big tech, one of the things that we identified is that there are multiple value propositions that need to be presented.

As Guilherme actually touched on, not just, of course, the business value, but also social value, cultural value, and so on. And then looking at the full technical stack, technology stack of a big tech, because Universal Acceptance is one of those things that touches on each layer through the stack, and that's an important aspect. In terms of reaching out to open-source communities, we identified one interesting thing is about the verticalness as well as the horizontal approach.

What I mean by that is that there are open-source codes that has a particular component that is used across different platforms. For example, email validation or domain validation and so on. And that is important because it's used by multiple platforms. The other is vertical, which is platforms that are more popular like WordPress, for example, more popular ones in terms of vertical.

And then on the third point, which is the specific standards bodies, the group identified that the current RFCs should cover well the basic standards. However, to bring these standards to the different standards bodies, like those who are working on credentials that use domain names or email addresses, bringing it to those forums and standards are important.

And then on number six, which maybe this community would be paying a bit more attention on, specifically on the DNS industry, which is the registries and registrars, we've identified that for the ccTLD side, it's important for the ccTLD to connect with the digital agenda of their local governments, and that's an important aspect.

On the gTLD side, the group is actually suggesting that we look into an issue report. An issue report, for those of you who understand, may drive towards policy development, may not. It's trying to look at whether there are gaps that policy intervention at ICANN might actually help Universal Acceptance.

Going on to actually some of the number four, five, and seven, which are the software developers and hosting providers and system administrators, one of the interesting things that I think the group identified is that the group of the pool of talent for internationalization of systems is actually quite small worldwide.

And so, one of the things that we tasked ICANN to do is to develop capacity building, train the trainers, get more people to be trained up for internationalization work is one of the things that the report talks about. And then, into the public sector and into governmental organizations, an important note that we wanted to emphasize is the multiple ministries, not just through GAC, of course through GAC members, but there could be other ministries that are relevant, the cultural ministry, the heritage, linguistics, and different ministries is important to be touched upon so that a response could be created more effectively.

And then into the academia part, we identified that besides curriculum integration, so integrate UA into Networking 101, for example, that's important, but we also identified an interesting thing, which is realizing that some of the curriculum that is created by one university could be used by multiple universities. So, in terms of prioritization, to ask ICANN to find those hubs and make an impact more and more effective. So, finally, on number 10, we looked at the measurement framework.

And this is a lot together with UNESCO's work, and a framework of four areas is identified. So, it's not just about the technical implementation. I forgot who asked the question earlier. You see there are four items. The third one is technical implementation, but we are also looking at hoping to measure the awareness level about UA, the policy support that is provided to UA, as well as capacity development that is supporting UA and internationalization work.

So, of course, we want to promote not only the framework, but self-reporting from registries, registrars, and other systems. So, that really is the very quick summary, because I was hoping to leave more time for the interactive discussion. But the next steps is really your part. We're looking for feedback from the public comments.

The public comments will run until middle of April, and the group will hope to finalize the report by May, and so that by the next time we meet here at ICANN, we will have a set of guidelines and

marching orders for this staff team to drive forward for the next strategic plan cycle on Universal Acceptance.

That's what I want to cover. I guess we'll go back to the queue, and please add to the queue on the questions. And if we have time, we can dive deeper into some of the recommendations.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you very much, Edmon, for the clarification and the good summary of the expert working group guidelines. We have a question from the room. We will take it in sequence. Please take the questions for the expert working group first, if it's expert working.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

Hi, just a couple of questions combined. The whole fundamentals of this Universal Acceptance is for the digital inclusion from what we can make out. Now, my question over here is the obvious side effects would be the volumes of data coming into the internet, and across globally, the data would be coming onto the internet with more people joining in, having a digital inclusion.

My question is, when you speak of Universal Acceptance, do you see that most of the now organized countries going for data localization laws or the policies would be some kind of a hindrance for your Universal Acceptance of getting the language and the digital inclusion globally?

EDMON CHUNG

I'm not very clear of what you're asking and how it relates to Universal Acceptance. Yes, the data is increasing.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

When you speak of Universal Acceptance and getting more and more language oriented, obviously one the more of the people would be coming on to the digital inclusion and number of people joining, or some people who are still not having an internet, accessibility would be easily there, considering the language being a good communicator within local language. Obviously, the side effect would be of having much more data coming onto the internet, which would not be previously there.

So, my question is, considering the whole objective of digital inclusion in the language, getting all the more number of languages included, and the side effect being the more number of data coming, volume of data increasing, and the countries now going for a data localization kind of laws, so would such kind of a privacy laws would be kind of a determinant or a reducing factor for your Universal Acceptance aim or objective? That was my question.

EDMON CHUNG

Thank you. I guess I'll have three very quick points. One is short answer is yes. I think with Universal Acceptance of internationalized domain names, it will drive more local content. Number two, I think the driving of the local content is very

beneficial, especially in terms of AI even. The machine learning right now is still majority English, and I think that's not really effective for longer term.

The third item on terms of the privacy, well, I don't think it relates directly to Universal Acceptance, but in terms of the IDN registrations or local language email addresses, I think it speaks to that you're focusing on your particular local community.

And I actually turn around and think it's helpful for security. For example, my dad would be able to distinguish in Chinese an email address that's looking funny than if it is on English only.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

Okay, thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT

Just for the record, may we have your name?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

My name is Amit. I'm a participant.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you. Okay. Sorry, please. Go ahead.

GUILHERME CANELA

Just one thing from the UNESCO side. Of course, data governance, including in the relationship with the language aspect, is also an

important component of this conversation. So, you probably saw in my initial presentation that one of the key parameters for the policy brief we are jointly launching. With ICANN is the mandatory collaboration with the linguistic communities, because we also need to hear from them what are their eventual concerns related to this.

So, if you search for UNESCO data governance toolkit, you will see something we prepared under the umbrella of the Broadband Commission that is precisely looking to these different policy aspects of the new data governance challenges with the increasing amount of data related to the AI systems and so on. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you very much. Over to you please.

TARUNA KAUR BAMRAH

Taruna Kaur Bamrah, NextGen for the record and an Admission Ambassador 2026 as well. So, I'm presenting on the AI divide, bridging digital inequality through inclusive internet governance and talking about UA and UA WG group foundation work. So my question is, how does the UA Expert Working Groups new guidelines build on the UASG foundational technology readiness that has been dissolved right now, reports to specifically test AI platforms for the IDN and EAI compatibility, addressing exclusions like IDN emails? Thank you.

EDMON CHUNG

Thank you. I think in terms of the measures, it builds on the UASG work that was looking at how to measure the readiness for email systems, as well as registries and registrar systems that ICANN team created. These things are the foundations. In terms of AI, I don't think we specifically covered it, because in the next few years, the time horizon for this particular work, is focused on the next few years. T

he UA work, I think, is wrapped up a little bit more in the multilingual internet work. And I think the relation to AI is what me and Guilherme mentioned, is that with the local language content, that's going to drive better AI for different languages.

SEDA AKBULUT

Okay. We have a hand from Nitin before.

NITIN WALIA

Thank you, Seda. So. just to set the context right, actually there was a question from there regarding the data, and then we have a question regarding the EAI and the IDN domain names. As far as the UA is concerned, UA is related to all valid domain names and email addresses, and there the story ends. UA is not focused on data. Data is already flowing over the internet from decades.

People are communicating that there is huge data which is available, and based on that only, the policies in various governments for data privacy and data security is getting made. As far as the impact of those privacy policies on UA, there would not

be a major impact. Reason being, it's not related to data. is related to communication, which is the domain names and email addresses.

People are already communicating over it, and as far as the AI is concerned, even after the AI, the impact of adoption will increase, not decrease. Reason being, the adoption for the email addresses and the adoption for the valid domain names is increasing day by day.

And as far as the UNESCO is concerned, UNESCO was already part of this particular report and they have also parallelly released a separate report for the Universal Acceptance, which is within the government constituencies and others. The major impact which it will bring in the next five years down the line is completely focusing on adoption of valid domain names and email addresses. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you very much. Please.

ABDULRAHMAN ABOTALEB

Thank you so much. My name is Abdulrahman Abotaleb from Yemen, and I'm an ICANN85 Fellow. Now the strategy document shows that to have a successful UA adoption, we showed the document cover wide range of stakeholders and players to make it successful. We have big tech, we have open-source community, we

have software developers, governments, all of these players supposed to play an important role to make it successful.

And I think or I believe that this wide range alone is a challenge in itself. So my question is, could you explain more what indicators and metrics will ICANN use to measure the progress of UA adoption globally in regard to these challenges? Thank you.

EDMON CHUNG

Edmon here. I guess I can respond quickly noting that this report doesn't cover that. We look to the staff implementation to come back with a detailed implementation plan and report to us. You know back at ICANN. That's on the next step slide that I was on, But I don't know if Seda or Sarmad who's online might want to add to this. How do we measure our own progress and success in actually implementing these guidelines?

SEDA AKBULUT

Sarmad, would you like to add on this?

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Sure. Thank you, Seda. So, as Edmon presented, though we are already collecting some data on use of email addresses on websites and also in mail servers, which is reported, as I shared earlier, through the UA readiness report on an annual basis. In the current guidelines which have been published for public comment, as

Edmon shared, there are four different aspects for metrics which we will be working on implementing.

These cover the awareness of UA policy work on UA implementation and capacity building. Though we have been doing work in these areas along with the community, of course, but we've not had clear metrics on this, so, that's a follow-up implementation work for ICANN. We will develop some metrics, and then start reporting on these as well in addition to some of the implementation work which is already currently reported. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you very much, Sarmad. And Nabil raised his hand.

NABIL BENAMAR

Yeah, thank you very much, Seda. This is Nabil for the record, member of the Expert Working Group. So, there was a good question about the relation between Universal Acceptance and the data that circulates and AI too. So, last month here in India, it was the Global AI Summit, and one of the slogans was AI for All. As we have been saying in the past, Internet for All.

So, AI for All means that also for the language, that all languages should be well represented. So the data that we are generating now and the models are trained mainly on English. So, if you ask any GenAI platform on something in English, the answer would be

more accurate than compared to other languages. So, we still have some language divide when it comes to AI.

The fact that we are embracing Universal Acceptance, making all applications accept and process and deploy and display correctly, smoothly any script, this will go towards the fact that embrace the same principle of AI for all. And for the guidelines, I just want to shed more light on two things. For example, when it comes to the technology we are using, most of the technology is UA ready as we have assessed in the measurement working group and also here.

But for example, when it comes to deploy this for the email address, we still see that big, big, big, big companies, big tech companies are still behind, they are still reluctant on whether to give the user the possibility to create an account in his own scripts or not. So, still, we are still in this stage, we have not reached this goal yet. And I believe that when we encourage these big companies creating email addresses in any script, this will be a big shift.

And the second thing is the academia. So, we have focused also on academia because any change should come first from academia to sustain this change, to prepare the next generation of engineers embracing this and also for any user to embrace the Universal Acceptance as something that is normal, not something that is exceptional. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you very much. We have a question in the Q&A pod from Maria for Guilherme, “It was mentioned that the UA policy brief is going to be spread across governments. How else can the UA policy brief be used for getting practical results in UA adoption in a country?”

GUILHERME CANELA

Well, I mean, the wider UNESCO family is about our member states, the governments, and the governments means not only one type of ministry, several ministries, but UNESCO also distribute this kind of policy briefs, for example, to all the UNESCO Chairs in universities to reverberate the comment that was just made related to these issues. And then we have the other stakeholder communities connected with the UNESCO ecosystem.

So, first, I think the policy brief would be useful to raise awareness about this topic among those that are not the technical community that is already interested in Universal Acceptance because we need to widen our allies in this conversation. So, I think this is the first idea with this policy brief that is a joint effort UNESCO-ICANN.

Of course, ICANN will also further distribute to the own ICANN community which is complementary to the UNESCO community. Obviously, it's not a binding document, so we can't force people to make change, but change always starts by this, by raising awareness, by making sure that people can further discuss this.

So, we will also make sure that in different opportunities, concretely we were discussing this morning, in the next World Summit of Information Society events in July, and then in the IGF and so on, we will find spaces to further discuss this policy brief and engage these actors that are important for advancing the conversation, but not necessarily are primarily interested in Universal Acceptance. So, I think this is the key objective.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you. We have a hand from the Zoom room. Anil, please, over to you.

ANIL KUMAR JAIN

Thank you, Seda. My question is to UA Expert Working Group. Anybody, either Sarmad or Edmon can reply. Taking in addition to what Sarmad has discussed right now, we are talking about implementation or adoption.

I remember in the USG, last time we set up some targets of achieving how much UA can be implemented in browsers, how much UA can be implemented in emails, how much UA can be implemented in social media or any other apps which are required including the open source. I am very happy to see that some of the parts of these things are included in the stakeholder discussions.

My question is that have we discussed about targets? How much we can achieve by what date? Because it is a fact that despite a lot of efforts from all the corners, UA adoption is slow. I just want to

give a rough estimate that there are only 1.5 to 2%, maybe slightly more, internet data flow within the internet ecosystem from the multilingual internet.

So, there is a lot of things which we have to achieve in this area. So, I just want to ask whether the target setting is discussed. If they are not discussed, I strongly recommend that it should be part of the guidelines. Thank you.

EDMON CHUNG

I'll quickly respond. Thank you, Anil. I think it's a very important topic. I think for the scope of this working group, we're not looking into that. I will defer to Sarmad in the implementation plan to include some of this. But Sarmad, I guess over to you.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Thank you, Edmon, and thank you, Anil, for the question. And so, I think there are two parts to it. First, of course, is reporting the data, which is, I guess, step number one, so that we can use the data to gauge our progress. So, I think that comes first. We are already reporting some data, more data needs to be reported.

The second part of it is then actually using that baseline or the data we collect to then measure progress and then set targets. The challenge, of course, in this space has been and continues to be that the implementation is not directly by ourselves, or it actually is by the larger community, which includes many different stakeholders.

And though we can raise awareness, create some influence on those stakeholders, eventually, the actual take up of the technology is really based on their own decisions. So, we will be obviously working towards raising that awareness capacity and trying to, I guess, make UA move forward.

Your point is well taken. I think we will also look to see where we should set targets, and some of that work will be done in the implementation phase. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you so much. There is a hand in the room, please.

HARISH CHOWDHARY

Harish Chowdhary. Because Anil asked that UA adoption is slow, but given the AI perspective, it is everywhere. So, how is this Expert Working Group planning to implement AI driven adoption approach to expedite, because we have all the documents, data sets available with us, so are how we planning adoption of UA through AI?

And my second question is that how are we planning that these AI models should treat domain names as email addresses equally to the sky-based, because in the normal perspective when everybody is using the AI models for their research, so somehow if we are not providing the benchmark data sets, then one model, X model could say that an email in local addresses or a domain name is a malicious one and another one say no, it is correct one. So, it will

again create problem in future. So, why not we add the 11th guideline that the adoption of UA in AI?

EDMON CHUNG

This is Edmon. Responding quickly, please put it in the public comment period. I've heard AI talked about a few times now. It's probably worth when the group reconvenes to take a look at it. But do add it in the public comment so that it is all recorded. Of course, this meeting is recorded as well, but it's not a replacement of the public comment process.

SEDA AKBULUT

And I just added in the chat that there will be a session tomorrow on Monday at the ccNSO Tech Day in which AI will be discussed for the Universal Acceptance.

PETER JIA WEI CUI

Jia Wei Cui from Taiwan and a part of the TWNIC Fellow. I want to focus on the capacity building part because there's also one important principle in the guidelines that's provided by the Expert Working Group.

So, I want to know more details about the capacity building part, and also, I think that the real problem is that people with the expertise on the UA technical policy, they should have people from local communities and diversities that really understands the

challenges and the difficulties for without UA, how difficult it would be for some marginalized groups to use the internet.

So, I wonder if these kinds of considerations is being considered by the Expert Working Groups and whether there's an action list or it's on step-by-step roadmap to dealing with the problem.

EDMON CHUNG

Edmon here. I guess I'll respond briefly, and then I don't know if Sarmad would help add to it. One of the areas, if you can go to number 10, part of the framework is to measure capacity development. So, there is a little bit more detail on what we are looking at in how UA is directly integrated.

And then earlier in other parts, sorry I'm jumping like this, but I think earlier in other parts, we also highlight the importance of capacity building in multiple places and what needs to be done, especially for the software development community, system administrators, and the hosting providers. So, each of them, as I quickly highlighted, has a component on capacity development. I don't know if, Sarmad, you wanted to add anything to it.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Yes. So, thank you, Edmon. So, the capacity development element, I think, from the guidelines perspective is really cross-cutting. In addition to the stakeholders which Edmon just mentioned, there is also, I guess, the group has identified need to develop capacity in non-technical aspects as well.

So, for example, working with the policy makers, but also, I think in looking at the academia, the recommendations for academia, it is identified that UA concepts be integrated not only in the technical programs, but also in internet governance programs, in the linguistic programs. So, there is generally guidelines to go much broader, and as I said, cross-cutting across multiple stakeholders. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT

Thank you. We have a hand from Abdalmonem.

GUILHERME CANELA

Just one quick addition from my side. The UNESCO part is precisely to help to widen this perspective. So, for example, we invited Sarmad to present part of this work on Universal Acceptance in the last Global Working Group task force meeting of the decade of indigenous languages.

So, then Sarmad could present what ICANN is doing on that, but he also could listen to the preoccupations of the indigenous communities related to this. So, this joint effort is precisely to make sure that the voices of the relevant language communities are included in this conversation as well in the aspect the aspect of capacity building. Thank you.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Yes, this is Abdalmonem Galila for the record. I will wear the hat of GAC at the moment. As GAC UA Day and Worker Group Chair, I have

some comments related to this guideline. First of the same, we are thinking globally and act locally. We agree for this. So, this document of these guidelines, maybe it is going forward to shape the future of ICANN work on Universal Acceptance adoption globally and government and CCD are mentioned there. That is fine.

I am very satisfied with this document. But at the same time, what is the shape of communication between ICANN and its community like ccNSO and GAC in order to foster the adoption of Universal Acceptance adoption? It is how we need to go for the local one in addition to the global one. This is the first thing.

Wearing the hat of ccNSO as the Chair of the Universal Acceptance Committee within ccNSO, tomorrow, we will have a session for the first time for the Tech Day, we'll consider artificial intelligence as the current situation working for domain name industry and the potential AI applications that could be used for accelerating the Universal Acceptance adoption.

So, I invite you all in order to attend this session. Common wise, I need to know in a correct way that what is the lifetime or the expiration of these guidelines. Is it forever? Should it be reviewed from time to time? This is one point. I think it's enough to save time. Thank you.

EDMON CHUNG

Just quickly on that, at least in my mind, this is a work that flows from the strategic plan for 2026 to 2030. So, I will see this as a five-year horizon. But the strategic plan itself gets reviewed periodically. I guess part of the work will need to be reviewed periodically based on the annual kind of reporting that the next steps talks about as well. But maybe Sarmad can add to that.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

I think, Edmon, you shared correctly that of course, this work is going to lead or drive ICANN's implementation work for 2026-2030 based on the current strategic plan as also it evolves over the years. I think at this time, that's the scope of work which we are looking at or a timeline of the work we're looking at. Thank you.

SEDA AKBULUT

I think with that, we come to the end of this session. We thank all of you for your participation and interactive session, and also thank Guilherme and Edmon and Sarmad for the great panel and wish you have a good rest of the ICANN85 meetings. We can stop the recording, please.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]