

## Middle East Space

ICANN 64 in Kobe, Japan Monday 11 March 2019

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### Statement about **Universal Acceptance**

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We, the Middle East (ME) community members participating in the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers' ICANN 64 community Forum in Kobe, Japan, and attending the Middle East Space session on Monday 11 March 2019, addressed the concerns of the **Universal Acceptance (UA)** project with special focus on the Arabic Script and prepared this statement in consultation with the wider ME community.

UA is a foundational requirement for a truly multilingual Internet, in which users around the world can navigate entirely in their own local languages by using Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs). It is also the key to unlocking the potential of new generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) that have more than 3 characters, fostering competition, consumer choice, accessibility, and innovation in the domain name industry.

UA ensures that all domain names and email addresses can be used by all Internet-enabled applications, devices and systems.

We believe that UA is of growing importance to our region (and beyond), for it supports inclusion, allows users of the Internet to build their own online identities and improves their online experience.

For the Universal Acceptance Project to progress, we recommend that ICANN:

- ❖ Develop a UA open issues inventory of different scripts that affect the project such as:
  - ✓ The issues related to Right-To-Left (RTL) languages
  - ✓ All domain names including the protocol part "http, https, etc." to be from the same language
  - ✓ Mixing between different scripts within the same domain name
  - ✓ Attacks "e.g. Homograph"
  
- ❖ Develop guidelines to the (API)s builders specially the open-source community to make it generic for all the available languages scripts considering RTL languages.
  
- ❖ Encourage and collaborate with all stakeholders like the private sector, technical and academic communities, and governments to help them in taking their first step towards **UA readiness** and
  - ✓ Identifying the applications that should be UA ready,
  - ✓ modifying the current systems to be UA ready,

- ✓ Requiring that new developed applications to be UA ready, and
  - ✓ providing guidelines and toolkits for how to make applications UA ready.
- ❖ Pave the way to develop indicators that measure the readiness of the online environment as it pertains to IDNs, EAs and new gTLDs, where UA is one of the factors that affect the connectivity of the next billion Internet users.
- ❖ Developing a case study for a role model of countries who did the best applied practices and find the ways they did to:
  - ✓ Enable EAI support at the email servers
  - ✓ Make a consistent environment starting by accessing local content with local domain name and send and receive emails using the local email address
- ❖ Conduct region-focused surveys on how to further promote IDNs, EAI, and UA in the regional countries, and conduct market analysis on the usage of IDNs and EAI
- ❖ Allocate more resources to Label Generation Rules-2 (LGR-2) and support the community in coping with their challenges like:
  - ✓ Lack of lingual volunteers
  - ✓ Lack of representation in the IDNs communities
  - ✓ Security challenges
  - ✓ Lack of accessibility and reachability due to variances within the same script.
  - ✓ Not allowing insecure/unsafe code points that may affect the stability of the registry domain space (e.g. control code points, combining marks, diacritics, Tatweel,etc.).
- ❖ Develop guidelines and procedures to establish strong collaboration between the UA project actors like UASG and the other IDNs communities such as the Task Force on Arabic IDNs (TF-AIDN<sup>1</sup>)
  - ✓ One main coordination group which has representative from such groups that will handle all of these guidelines with other sub-coordination groups
- ❖ Allocate a budget to community-driven UA efforts to allow for more outreach and engagement conducting more outreach in specific area of UA.
  - ✓ Email providers
  - ✓ Domain providers
  - ✓ Software Providers “Database, Web, Desktop, Android, IOS, etc.”
  - ✓ Open source providers
- ❖ Keep in view the linguistic diversity in the regional markets<sup>2</sup> and work with the governments, registries, registrars, etc., to potentially be more beneficial in raising awareness about UA within the regional community through:
  - ✓ Launch more UA users’ awareness campaigns.

- ✓ Make the UA topic among the topics taught to IT students in universities, information technology institutes, etc.

We, the ME community, strongly believe that our recommendations will greatly contribute towards the achievement of Goal 3.1 of ICANN's 5 Years Strategic Plan of 2021-2025. Therefore, we are delighted to present the ME community recommended actions to the ICANN community for better development of the UA project in the ME.

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- 1- The Task Force on Arabic Script IDNs (TF-AIDN) is a community-driven working group formed in 2013 to work on technical issues and solutions and promotes Arabic Script IDNs, its UA and secure deployment. TF-AIDN was the first generation panel that completed its proposal for the Root Zone Label Generation Rules (RZ-LGR) for top-level domain names. They also completed the LGR for second-level domain names for the Arabic, Urdu Farsi and Pashto languages as a reference for the community to use. Furthermore, TF-AIDN is in contact with Jawi, Swahili, Sindhi and Turkmen language communities for LGR2. They have also prepared the use-case report on issues encountered by languages using the Arabic script. In addition to above, TF-AIDN has initiated study on IDN security, which will be shared with the larger community soon, after finalization by TF-AIDN.
  - 2- See for example, Lebanon (Arabic, French, English), UAE (Arabic, English, Hindi, Urdu, French), and a number of other countries with similar demographic when it comes to the use of language.