
GAC Universal Acceptance and IDN Working Group (UA-IDN WG) Meeting

Session # 10 - Meeting of the UA-IDN WG

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Session Objectives

During this session the GAC Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names Working Group (UA-IDN WG) will (1) seek GAC endorsement of the working group's Terms of Reference (TOR), (2) collect GAC Member feedback on the working group's proposed 2020 work plan and (3) update the GAC on the latest developments regarding the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG).

Background

Universal Acceptance (UA)

Universal Acceptance (UA) is the concept that all domain names should be treated equally. UA ensures that all domain names and email addresses can be used by all Internet-enabled applications, devices and systems and is essential for the continued expansion of the Internet as it provides a gateway to the next billion Internet users. UA enables the private sector, government and societies to better serve their communities through the use of an increasing number of new domains, including non-Latin based, language-specific domain names (IDNs) in Arabic, Chinese and many other scripts.

Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs)

Internationalized Domain names (IDNs) enable people around the world to use domain names in local languages and scripts. IDNs are formed using characters from different scripts, such as Arabic, Chinese, Cyrillic or Devanagari. These are encoded by [the Unicode standard](#) and used as allowed by relevant [IDN protocols](#).

The ICANN organization (ICANN org) instituted the IDN Program to assist in the development and promotion of a multilingual Internet using IDNs. The program is primarily focused on the planning and implementation of IDN top-level domains (TLDs), including IDN country code TLDs and generic TLDs. The IDN Program also supports projects geared towards effective use of IDNs at the second-level of the Domain Name System, as guided by the community.

ICANN org maintains its own web page that provides information regarding the IDN program at - <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/idn-2012-02-25-en>

The Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG)

Founded in 2015, the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) is a consortium of companies (including Afilias, Apple, GoDaddy, Google, ICANN, Microsoft, Verisign and many others) that works to raise awareness of UA and help organizations ensure their systems are UA-ready and able to accept all domain names and all email addresses. The support and engagement of these participating organizations, notably ICANN, has made the UASG's work possible.

The role of governments in UA is recognized in the [UASG Charter](#) where it is recognized that UA activities must be considered a multi-sector effort. The charter provides that “outputs may range from technical guidance and tools to support developers and service providers in addressing UA-related issues, to messaging and campaigns around why Universal Acceptance should be treated as a priority for businesses, governments, civil society, and other stakeholders”.

The UASG maintains a separate website for information and updates on UA issues at – <https://uasg.tech/>.

Formation of the GAC Universal Acceptance/Internationalized Domain Name Working Group

At the ICANN66 Public Meeting in Montreal, the GAC formally established the new Universal Acceptance and IDN Working Group to help the committee track, consider and address matters and topics relevant to governments in those areas.

The decision was the result of several previous discussions among GAC members and with members of the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) about the importance of these matters to governments.

Interested group members met briefly in Montreal to establish some initial collaborative connections with the UASG. The initial work of the UA-IDN WG between the GAC's ICANN66 Montreal meeting and the GAC's ICANN67 meeting has focused on the development of the working group's draft Terms of Reference and an initial annual work plan for the working group that can be reviewed and endorsed by the full GAC membership.

As developed in its draft TOR document the stated mission of the working group is:

“To provide the GAC with an avenue for addressing topics, matters and work related to the universal acceptance of new generic top level domains (gTLDs) and internationalized domain names (IDNs) as those matters affect and impact governmental interests.”

As developed in its draft TOR document the proposed scope of work of the working group is to include:

- *Providing information and knowledge building resources and opportunities for GAC members on developments related to Universal Acceptance (UA) and Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs).*
- *Developing positions and drafting recommendations for consideration by the full GAC on policy matters related to UA and IDNs.*
- *Coordinating and managing GAC input on ICANN public comment opportunities related to UA and IDN issues.*
- *Interfacing with the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) to leverage governmental input and information sharing on UASG work plans*

Proposal for GAC Action

At ICANN67 in Cancun the Working Group will seek:

- GAC endorsement of its draft TOR document, and
- Input from GAC members on its proposed 2020 work plan.

Key Documents

- Draft Working Group Terms of Reference - (see - <https://gac.icann.org/sessions/initial-universal-acceptance-and-idn-working-group-call>)
- Draft 2020 Work Plan of the Working Group - (see Documentation Section of <https://gac.icann.org/working-group/gac-universal-acceptance-and-internationalized-domain-names-working-group-ua-idn-wg>)

Further Information

- ICANN org website for Internationalized Domain Names - <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/idn-2012-02-25-en>
- Universal Acceptance Steering Group website - <https://uasg.tech/>
- GAC UA-IDN WG Website - <https://gac.icann.org/working-group/gac-universal-acceptance-and-internationalized-domain-names-working-group-ua-idn-wg>

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