

Situation Overview

Thailand's Internet penetration is relatively low, standing at approximately 35 percent. Increasing this figure is vital to the future economic development of Thailand, but there are fundamental challenges that inhibit further growth of the online population, one of which is language. Thailand's English proficiency stands at approximately 20 percent and while the local population is well served by Thai language website content, the need to use some English in web and email addresses has presented a barrier to increased Internet penetration. That's why THNIC, the Thai government, and others are fully supportive of the .Thai Internationalized Domain Name (.ไทย) and Email Address Internationalization (EAI) initiatives, which facilitate the use of email addresses utilizing the .ไทย IDN.

THNIC has been working to address two main issues. The first is to raise awareness of the .ไทย Top Level Domain (TLD) and EAI. The second is to educate the Thai technical community on the issue of Universal Acceptance related to the .ไทย and new gTLDs more broadly. The aim is to provide guidance around how to ensure these web extensions and email addresses are accepted and able to be widely used in Thailand.

Educating Thai Internet Users

THNIC has been communicating the benefits of the Thai IDN ccTLD (.ไทย) via workshops, the publication of materials, and through online videos (a number of which can be viewed via the UASG website) targeting the Thai Internet and business communities. The awareness-raising campaign created demand for the Thai IDN ccTLD within the business, Internet and technical communities, and has contributed to growing registration levels, which currently stand at approximately 17,000.

Universal Acceptance Case Study:

Thai Network Information Center Foundation (THNIC)

Industry: Internet domain registration services

Location: Bangkok, Thailand

UA-Ready Systems:

- * .th domain
- * .ไทย registration

Benefits Identified:

- * Increased Internet penetration in Thailand
- * Improved Internet usability for Thais

"Universal Acceptance is playing an important role in helping increase Internet penetration in Thailand and we hope that in turn, this will feed into economic growth. Allowing the Thai population to access the Internet and communicate entirely in the native language has significant societal benefits, including the growth of local online businesses."

— Parkpoom Tripatan
Director, THNIC

Educating the Thai Technical Community

THNIC, together with the Electronic Transactions Development Agency, conducted workshops on EAI deployment and UA, targeting the Thai technical community, together with local mail service provider ThroughWave (which had carried out its own EAI implementation project), Microsoft and Chinese web services company Coremail. For these workshops, THNIC developed basic guidelines on how to set up a mail server and conducted demonstrations. They also presented research on best practice for email settings to support EAI.

Universal Acceptance Approach

Leading by example, THNIC also implemented its own EAI and UA compliance project, assisted by ThroughWave. The project took about six months and is now in its final stages.

While it's too soon to assess the benefits of the project in financial or other terms, THNIC's management believes it was a success in that the technical aims were achieved.

In terms of resources utilized in the implementation of its own EAI and UA project, THNIC has identified these as consultancy from its partner ThroughWave, engagement of an engineer on a part-time basis, THNIC management oversight, advertising & marketing materials and hardware.

In terms of advice for companies embarking on EAI and UA projects, THNIC's management believes that support from management is key and that resources provided by the UASG, along with information sharing through UA groups is vital.

About:

Thai Network Information Center Foundation

The Thai Network Information Center Foundation provides domain registration services for the Thailand (.th) country code Top-Level Domain (ccTLD) and .Thai internationalized Top-Level Domain – or IDN (.ไทย). THNIC Foundation authorized T.H.NIC co., Ltd. to be the only official registrar for both .Thai and .ไทย. The company offers authorized official resellers and provides domain hosting, parking and email services. THNIC has been offering the .th ccTLD since 1999. .ไทย became available in 2011.