



Since [Barcelona](#) things have started changing at the UASG. During the ICANN63 meeting in Barcelona, the ICANN Board included Universal Acceptance and IDNs as one of its five key strategic areas for the next five years. As a result, more hands-on resources have been applied by ICANN – mostly in the form of **Sarmad Hussein** – but also with even stronger interest from the GSE teams.

We've started working on a longer-term strategic plan and business plan and this has taken a lot of the attention.

But not everything has ground to a halt.

Documentation

During a face-to-face gathering in Washington, DC we learned more about the history of the transition from IDNA2003 to IDNA2008. This resulted in several our documents needing review and in some cases revision. As a result, we've withdrawn UASG005 and UASG007 from the website while they undergo their already planned review and revision.

We've also developed a review schedule for the rest of our documents that will see each already published document at least reviewed and possibly revised during the rest of the year. And while we're at it, we're reviewing our document naming and archival standards. These are all available in

<https://tinyurl.com/UASG000>

We've also had fresh interest from Russia and we are translating more of our documents into Russian. If there's benefit to be had for translating our documents into other languages we're quite happy to do so.

A proposed **Quick Guide to Right-to-Left Scripts** was submitted by Raed AlFayez of SaudiNic. This is going through a review process, including making sure that it's relevant for our mission and for Hebrew (the other prominent right-to-left script) and is expected to be published in some form during the next couple of months.

At its face-to-face meeting in January, the UASG Coordination Group decided that there might be a better place to address variant management than the UASG. John Levine agreed to raise this with the IRTF. But when UASG007 is revised we'll include a section on variants there.

A contract is going through the ICANN Administrative process as at the end of February 2019 to review and revise UASG005 and UASG007. The original contract was deemed insufficient for the actual work involved and the UASG Coordination Group agreed to extend the terms. As some work was done by the contractor in their initial evaluation, we expect a revised UASG005 to be available as soon as the revised contract is signed. We expect UASG005 to be finalised within a month of the contract signing and UASG007 within four months.

Case Studies

We've published an interesting case study about [RajMail](#), an initiative of the government of Rajasthan to give each citizen a free email address in English or Hindi. The case study provides detail about the process and the technology deployed and can provide a template for other governments that serve non-ASCII script communities.

We're also going to prepare a second case study on ICANN IT to look at the progress that they've made and how they've gone about it. This is expected toward the end of June.



Contracts

We have a number of contracts working their way through the ICANN administrative process. These include:

- A revision of the report on Linkification based on lessons learned during the Washington DC face-to-face meeting
- A review and revision for UASG005 and UASG007
- Two separate contracts for reviewing the top 1000 websites for UA readiness as well as another 1000 websites in batches of 50
- Renewal of technical consulting contract with Standcore
- Performing the Pilot Evaluation for EAI Readiness by Catalyst

Evaluations

UA-Readiness of Websites

As indicated above, during the face-to-face meeting in Washington DC the UASG Coordination Group agreed to split the evaluation of UA readiness in websites into two projects. The first was to look at the top 1000 websites (we did this in 2017) and the second was to look at 20 sets of 50 websites. These could be, for example, the most popular websites in a country, or an industry.

Linkification

This has been a challenging piece of work for a number of reasons. First, the expected approach of automated testing didn't work and the project shifted to manual testing. Second, the resulting analysis showed we hadn't asked the right question. The testing didn't need to be repeated, but the analysis did – and this time the analyst took ill. The third instance that required a re-analysis was our clearer understanding of the issues

around IDNA2003 and IDNA2008. While the actual testing was done quite some time ago, the resulting analysis should be beneficial – and it will show that there are some applications that do particularly well.

EAI Evaluation

Late in 2018 we completed the evaluation criteria and opened bids for a pilot evaluation. A contractor was identified and that's going through the ICANN administrative process.

State of EAI Deployment

This was a relatively straightforward analysis of the state of EAI readiness of mail servers and is published as

<https://tinyurl.com/UASG021D> The first published version showed a marked improvement since Microsoft's Outlook.com service became EAI Ready in early 2018. We also developed a blog post to help drive interest in the report and amplified across UASG's social channels. We plan on running this quarterly.

Issue Logging

Since early 2017, ICANN Global Support Centre team have been providing a Help Desk service where people can log instances of UA issues and the ICANN team reaches out to the relevant website to raise awareness.

<https://uasg.tech/global-support-centre/>

There were just 61 cases logged in 2018, down slightly from the previous year. There is some effort at resolution. Most of the websites managers who did respond had not heard of the issue before. Of those who did make an effort to respond to the complaint, several just addressed the specific email address or, sometimes, the associated TLD, that didn't work – but they didn't address the more general issue.



EAI

The EAI Working Group has been fairly quiet, but there is progress happening in the email community.

John Levine has presented some EAI training at recent M³AAWG meetings in Germany, New York and San Francisco. John's also going to provide similar training to the Certified Senders Alliance in Germany later this quarter. These meetings are gathering spots for some very large email processing operations.

Apple's iCloud mail service is said to be ready and China based TenCent with nearly 1 billion mailboxes, is working on modernising its email systems. XgenPlus, probably the most aggressive mail software provider that can actually host an EAI address, is expanding the deployment of their software around the world. XgenPlus also offers a free service for email addresses in a variety of scripts. And Oath, who include Yahoo and AOL, are said to be working on getting their systems EAI ready with work starting this quarter. And Microsoft announced that Exchange 2019, released just before the Barcelona meeting, can send and receive EAI addresses. We expect a number of corporates, including ICANN IT, are working on their transition roadmaps.

EAI Momentum News Release

The UASG is planning on celebrating industry progress on EAI readiness later this year in recognition of two billion EAI capable email addresses. We are finalising the promotional effort for the first half of this year, which includes a press release to be distributed to relevant industry media.

EAI Evaluation

As mentioned above, we have two EAI evaluation projects underway and we expect to see fresh results from each of these by the

end of April, assuming that the contracts get signed.

Also at the ICANN64 meeting, EAI Working Group members Coremail and XgenPlus will be offering free EAI email addresses for people to try. Coremail addresses, available in Chinese, are available from <http://互联网.网絡>. XgenPlus addresses, available in a wide variety of scripts, can be obtained by visiting <https://mail.datamail.in/>

Working Groups

We have several working groups underway.

The **EAI Working Group** is fairly quiet but does provide reviews of our EAI documentation and evaluation efforts. Participants also work directly with each to organize inter-operability testing.

At its face-to-face meeting in Washington, the Coordination Group agreed to support an exchange program between EAI software and service providers.

The **Community Outreach Working Group** has had a community meeting, but most of the work is done by the two co-coordinators – Christian Dawson and Lars Steffen.

At its face-to-face meeting, the UASG Coordination Group approved a number of initiatives:

- 1) An updated list of high-level principles to consider when determining sponsorship
- 2) Sponsorship of the Certified Senders Alliance
- 3) Partial sponsorship of the Hackathon at the CloudFest event in Germany
- 4) Performing some original research through Wakefield Research, which will provide audience insights as well as content for our media relations program



A renewed **Measurement Working Group** convened in February. This small group will help identify opportunities for measurement and review measurement efforts on the state of UA & EAI generally, the effectiveness of UASG initiatives, and the measurement of particular tools and utilities.

A **UASG Ambassador Review Working Group** was established at the Washington DC meeting. The goal of this group is to look at the first year's operation of the program and consider whether it should continue, either in its current form or in alternate structure.

And finally, we're expecting to convene a **Technology Working Group** to provide guidance for the UASG project on technology issues – including any standards or standards bodies that need to be engaged and what utilities or programming languages should be addressed and in what order and how to address them. People with current software development experience are encouraged to participate.

Elections

The UASG is an Internet community initiative that is governed by an elected committee of one Chair and two or three Vice-Chairs. Individuals are limited to two terms in any one role.

After four years, the UASG will see Ram Mohan retire from the position of Chair and both Edmon Chung and Rich Merdinger will retire from the position of Vice-Chair.

Election information has been distributed through the UA-Discuss mailing list and published on the UASG website. Election results should be available toward the end of the ICANN meeting in Kobe.

Community Outreach

Besides the case studies and evaluations already discussed, the Community Outreach Group has produced blog posts about the EAI readiness of deployed email servers and the inclusion of Universal Acceptance within the ICANN Board's list of priorities.

The Wakefield research that's being commissioned will focus on the UASG updated targeted geographic regions of North America, China, India, Ireland, Russia and the UK.

Our social media activities continue to be focused on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.

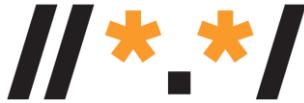
We are also developing a strategy specifically targeted at some of the largest and most influential tech firms.

And we'll be undertaking a review of the website and adjusting it to resonate with specific communities of interest.

Because of the revision underway with our two cornerstone documents (UASG005 and UASG007) the work of the Technical Marketing team has had to shift to data collection instead of reaching out to communities. Our list of trade and professional associations has grown as a result of contributions from the community.

UA Ready Certification

Since the meeting in Barcelona we've been thinking about what this might look like. We'll be including this discussion during the UASG Workshop in Kobe on Friday, the 8th of March. At this point it could be a list of tests that show good practice in terms of UA and EAI.



Regional Initiatives

China Local partner CNNIC have started a series of regional events where they promote IDNs and Universal Acceptance.

India Local partner IAMAI proposed including UA in a broader Indic language in applications initiative. However, the other expected partners didn't materialise. Instead, IAMAI ran a couple of UA promotions with limited success. A different approach is planned and the UASG will review the results before deciding whether or not to continue with the initiative.

Brazil Local partner ABES performed an evaluation of [UA Readiness in popular Brazilian websites](#), similar to our UASG017, and presented on their efforts during the Barcelona meeting. The results were very closely aligned with the UASG's global measure from 2017. ABES is going one step further and reaching out to the website owners whose UA readiness score was low and letting them know about UA and EAI and the tools that are available. *The UASG will take a similar proactive approach once we've completed the 2019 global UA readiness measurement.*

Dynamic Coalition for DNS Initiatives (DC-DNSI)

This initiative operating within the IGF construct aims to raise one aspect of the DNS to the IGF community each year. During 2019 the topic is Universal Acceptance. The UASG is keen to work with the DC-DNSI and support them in their work to raise awareness of Universal Acceptance to government and corporate policy makers.

Universal Acceptance at ICANN64 in Kobe

The UASG has two events at the Kobe meeting of ICANN

- On **Friday the 8th of March** there will be a full day workshop starting from 9:30. On **Wednesday, the 13th of March**, there will be UASG Community Forum starting at 10:30 in the Ruby Room.

Administrative

The UASG remains well under budget through the end of December 2018. As of the end of December we had spent just over \$181,000.

As of the middle of February there were 435 subscribers to the UA-Discuss list from at least 195 different organisations and 32 countries.