Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Association

Response to ICANN's Call for Comment on Universal Acceptance Initiative

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The Universal Acceptance Initiative – an Abridged Roadmap is vague on the scope, solutions and ICANN's role in addressing the issue. While APTLD is delighted that ICANN is involved in the issue, we would like to see some more specific objectives and measures of success.

To be clear, the issue of Universal Acceptance is that new top level domains, including IDN TLDs, do not work in the real world. While they resolve, as they should, the software community needs to recognise that new TLDs are here to stay and need to accommodate for them.

If the proposal is for ICANN to catalogue the classes of challenges, then that will be useful.

If the proposal is for ICANN to convene gatherings of the software community where success can be applauded and challenges shared, then this will be useful.

If the proposal is for ICANN to use its global relationships to highlight the issue to software developers around the world, then this will useful.

If the proposal is for ICANN to use its position within the Internet community to get the topic included in software developer conferences, then this will be useful.

If the proposal is for ICANN to work with others to be able to measure progress in achieving Universal Acceptance, then this will be useful too.

The Abridged Roadmap should include specific actions and classes of actions that ICANN will undertake. It should be clear which parts of ICANN would undertake the activities.

We note that the Abridged Roadmap suggests that ICANN's own tools should be compliant. We fully support this and note that the IANA Functions team have been able to support all TLDs, including IDN TLDs, for some time – with the exception of e-mail. This is a pragmatic decision as ICANN's e-mail platform, Microsoft Exchange, is not yet compliant. At APTLD we are supportive of ICANN making sure as many of their systems as possible are compliant without putting core operational stability of the organisation at risk.

APTLD welcomes ICANN's focus on this issue and will be happy to work with ICANN.

We suggest the following concrete steps (which could be inferred from the abridge roadmap):
• ICANN develops a communication pack (slides, notes, perhaps some media articles) that ICANN staff around the world could use when engaging with local, regional and global stakeholders – particularly software communities.
• ICANN convenes a regular (annual?) gathering where stakeholders can share experiences and progress can be measured and reported. APTLD believes that a gathering prior to the Los Angeles meeting, with its proximity to Silicon Valley and other software developers on the West Coast of the USA, will be useful.
• ICANN, working with others already in the field, develops measures of success and reports on them on a regular basis. We bring your attention to the work already done by EurID on the use of IDN TLDs.
• ICANN, working with others already in the field, develop and publish some evaluation tools that the software industry can use to determine objectives and achievement. We bring your attention to the work already done in this space by the .sa registry.

For the APTLD community, Universal Acceptance issues, particularly for IDN ccTLDs, is an important area of focus. We welcome ICANN explicit engagement in this space, but would like this document to be more explicit. Perhaps the full roadmap, and not just this abridged version, is.