JIG Final Report on Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs

DRAFT 0.2

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This is a Final Report from the JIG on the recommendations for actions to be taken by ICANN and the ICANN community to address the issue of Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs in support of the implementation of IDN gTLDs and IDN ccTLDs. The document incorporates the findings from the Initial Report along with the public comments received respectively:

* Initial Report published for public comments: January 6, 2012
  + <http://www.icann.org/en/news/public-comment/universal-acceptance-idn-tlds-06jan12-en.htm>
* Public Comment period conducted: January 6 - March 23, 2012
  + <http://www.icann.org/en/news/announcements/announcement-06jan12-en.htm>
* Report of Public Comments: May 23, 2012
  + <http://www.icann.org/en/news/public-comment/report-comments-universal-acceptance-idn-tlds-23may12-en.pdf>

The JIG (Joint ccNSO-GNSO IDN Working Group) was created to discuss issues of common interest between the ccNSO and the GNSO on IDNs (Internationalized Domain Names), especially IDN TLDs. The JIG has identified 3 issues of common interest to date:

1. Single Character IDN TLDs
2. IDN TLD Variants
3. Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs

This report is specific to issue 3. Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs.

**1. Summary of Recommendations**

[brief description, may need further development for final wording]

1. Recommend IDN TLD operators (including IDN ccTLD, IDN gTLD and IDN gTLD Accredited Registrars) to support Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs in their own systems
2. Allocate specific budget for the advocacy of Universal Acceptance beyond the passive development of informational materials and toolkits
3. Development of checklist/guides for new IDN TLDs (including gTLD and ccTLD) to handle issues of Universal Acceptance
4. Direct efforts, lead by staff, with the participation from the community, for further studies to investigate the scope of the issue and what other services or actions could be taken by ICANN to support the Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs beyond outreach and awareness campaigns

**2. Background & Related Works**

[include background from Initial Report, plus updates including latest work from staff team on the subject]

**3. ICANN Policy and Coordination Considerations**

[include discussions for suggestions to implement recommendations:

Recommendation A:

Consideration for updating ICANN IDN Guidelines

Recommendation B:

Consideration for input into ICANN budget/strategic plan process

Recommendations C & D:

Input for Staff team on Universal TLD Acceptance

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**4. Proposed Recommendations**

**A. Recommend for IDN TLD operators (including IDN ccTLD, IDN gTLD and IDN gTLD Accredited Registrars) to support Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs in their own systems**

In the course of the discussion regarding Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs, while much of the issues concern systems outside of the direct remit of ICANN, the JIG identified one specific aspect that is directly within ICANN’s purview and related to the TLD registries and registrars.

Based on empirical sampling studies, some registries and registrars do not in their own systems support the use of IDN TLDs for data items such as nameserver records, child hosts, and/or contact (registrant, administrative, technical, billing) email addresses.

In order for other outreach efforts (beyond the ICANN community) to be effective, it is important that Universal Acceptance is properly supported by systems within the community.

As such, the JIG recommends that IDN TLD providers, including IDN ccTLDs, IDN gTLD Registries and IDN gTLD Registrars support Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs within their own registry/registrar systems to accept IDN TLDs for nameserver records, child hosts and contact email addresses.

**B. Allocate specific budget for the advocacy of Universal Acceptance beyond the passive development of informational materials and toolkits**

Internationalization is identified as a key strategic goal of ICANN. The advocacy of Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs should be one of the pillars of internationalization efforts by ICANN.

As such, the JIG recommends that ICANN identify Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs as a specific item for its Strategic Plan (under Competition, consumer trust and consumer choice) and for its Budget processes (as a core organizational activity separate from and beyond 1. New gTLD pre-Launch & 2. IDN Programs).

A reason for distinguishing between Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs and the Universal Acceptance of TLDs in general is based on the scope of the JIG and also the overall scope of ICANN spanning across gTLDs and ccTLDs. Generally speaking, ASCII ccTLDs (even for newly created ones) experience much less acceptance issues than gTLDs (especially those longer than 3 characters). The advent of IDN ccTLDs forms a unifying front for the entire community of TLDs regarding the issue of Universal Acceptance. Therefore, JIG recommends that ICANN set aside specific budget and priority for coordinating community wide efforts, involving gTLDs and ccTLDs in the advocacy of Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs.

**C. Development of checklist/guides for new IDN TLDs (including gTLD and ccTLD) to handle issues of Universal Acceptance**

**D. Direct efforts, lead by staff, with the participation from the community, for further studies to investigate the scope of the issue and what other services or actions could be taken by ICANN to support the Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs beyond outreach and awareness campaigns**

[provide more details in the implementation of the recommendations]

**Appendix A: Working Group Members**

**Appendix B: [Summary from received comments to Initial Report]**