

UA EAI Working Group Meeting

16 July 2019

Attendees:

1. Abdelmonem Galila
2. Dmitry Belyavskiy
3. Jay Paudyal
4. Nitin Walia
5. Jiankang Yao
6. Sarmad Hussain

Meeting Notes

As an introduction the members were informed that EAI working group (WG) has been active. The group focuses on email address internationalization (EAI), as defined by relevant RFCs. The client side and server-side software for emails needs to be upgraded to support EAI.

Email can be set up using email software by system administrators for an organization. There are also email service providers, which allow users to generate their email addresses and use the online services. Both email software and services would need to support EAI, for users to be able to use internationalized email for communicating with each other. The support is captured at two levels: Phase 1 allows sending and receiving email from internationalized email addresses, and Phase 2 allows for users to also create such email addresses to use.

In addition, even when email software may support EAI, the email system administrators may still need to be made aware of the need to support internationalized email and configure their email systems accordingly for their organizations.

There are at least three groups of stakeholders, (i) who develop email software, (ii) who offer email services, and (iii) who set up and configure email software for an organization. It was shared that the EAI WG would need to develop a strategy on whom to address and how to address them.

It was pointed out that even when sometimes an organization is familiar with EAI and uses email software which can support EAI with upgrade or change in configuration, the organization may still be reluctant to provide EAI support because such changes may potentially cause instability. Such challenges should also be addressed, e.g., through proper communication.

And, if the email service providers start supporting EAI, that will have maximal impact, because it will allow many users to have this support. There are two kinds of service providers, one who provides email services on premises for specific clients/organizations and other who is providing hosted email services online.

As a start, a list of the tools and service providers needs to be drawn and prioritized for testing and outreach purposes for EAI support. Some work on this has already been done, which needs to be reviewed and taken forward.

In addition, the group should also discuss how to reach out to the system administrators for mail servers at various organizations. They form a large group and the WG will need to think how to reach out to them. They are also dependent on the email software developers, as the email services

can only be EAI compliant once the underlying software they are using supports EAI. Therefore, the email software producers should definitively be focused. Awareness and training is also needed for deploying EAI support even where the email tools support EAI. This could be done by delivering online and regional training.

We could leverage I* partners, computer societies and also academic institutions. This will need modular and easy to follow training materials and possibly certification courses. The UA Ambassador program should also be leveraged to raise the awareness and conduct such training. A good set of training materials should be designed and developed after determining its audience and scope of the training.

The <https://uasg.tech> website should clearly articulate the goals including the EAI, so that the users can come and access the documentation and training. There are additional platforms which can be used to disseminate such work.

For next steps, it was shared that the charter for the EAI WG needs to be drafted to capture the purpose and scope of work, which should be discussed and finalized by the WG. Based on existing information available, the WG should develop a comprehensive and prioritized list of email software and email service providers. It was suggested to start a common document where all members can add their recommendations. Eventually, the training requirements should be defined for practitioners and academia for developing and disseminating them.

Action Items

No.	Action Item	Owner
1	Circulate and initial draft charter document for EAI WG for review	Sarmad Hussain
2	Based on existing information available, develop a comprehensive and prioritized list of email software and email service providers. Start a common document where all members can add their recommendations	All members