

# UA EAI Working Group Meeting

07 November 2023

## Attendees

Mark Svancarek

Abdalmonem Galila

Abraham Selby

Harsha Wijayawardhana

Jim DeLaHunt

Jules Nizeyimana

Kunle Olorundare

Michael Alabi

Mohammad Kawsar Uddin

Seda Akbulut

Yin May Oo

## Meeting Agenda:

1. Welcome and roll call
2. Developing a [5-year action plan](#) for EAI WG to achieve the [UASG's 5-year strategic plan](#)
3. Draft an [SOW for FY24 Action Item E2.1](#) (Make it easier to experiment with a self-hosted working EAI systems)
  - a. [EAI Self-Certification Score Generator](#) to go along with the SOW (completed spreadsheet)
4. How could the WG help for the upcoming UA-Day
5. AOB

**Meeting recording:** [Link](#); password b.sZ3d32y2

## Meeting Notes

Mark led the meeting by announcing the new main item of the meeting, the agenda is about Developing a 5-year action plan for EAI WG to achieve the [UASG's 5-year strategic plan](#). The document is open to receive comments.

## Agenda#2: Developing 5-year action plan for EAI WG to achieve the UASG's 5-year strategic plan

Mark led the floor and asked when would be the deadline for completing the 5-year planning. Yin May answered it would be somewhere in December before the holidays, and would check again and update on this. Mark said there is one month's time for completing the 5-year plan.

Mark led the WG to review the [FY24 action plan](#) and started the discussion to list out the EAI related action items. Mark started going through the list and added the uncompleted action items towards the 5-year planning spreadsheet. Looking at the list of action items, Mark said E1.1 was completed. Jim discussed his points of view on some of the items.

E1.1: This action is partially done but not completed yet, thus, brought forward.

E2.1: This is about the SOW for self-hosting EAI system, and also brought forward.

E2.2: This is about making the training videos. EAI WG has yet to give the content To Comms WG for this to be worked on.

E3.1: Identifying reference customers to showcase adoption.

E3.2: Identifying reference mail service providers to showcase adoption.

E4: This is about supporting the Self-certification guide users.

E5: JIM recollected that on this matter we noted to try it again and see if we could do better this time. It said UASG Blog should have answers searchable in HTML. Jim agreed with the idea of having answers in our own website rather than getting less up-votes on other places.

E6.1 and E6.2 were kept as lower priority.

Jim discussed E6.1 and E6.2 that it would be a myth to say ICANN would communicate with Whatsapp (one of the market share leaders) on the UA issues and they would fix them. Jim said he was skeptical of these action items. Jim said they would need motivation to fix these issues.

Mark said back in 2018, UASG actually got to talk to QQ and other market leaders at a meeting in Shenzhen, Guangzhou. The outcome of the meeting was great, and the companies actually worked on UA, these were connections of Dot Asia's Edmon Chung. Mark concluded that meeting with the market leaders actually could work, but we need to set a time and place to have a meeting. Mark said E6.1 would be the higher priority than E6.2. Mark asked the WG to see which of these should be added to the 5-year plan, or change in priority.

Jim said the starting point is the UASG 5-year plan document, which means we should think outside of this list of tasks. For example, the work is not just making the Self certification guide, but it would become a program to work with the

Self-certification guide, and activities of many more years on the potential users. Jim said UASG also should work on business perspectives and statements of strategic obstacles to UA. Now it felt like building a road without a map.

Jim said he would rather fix the foundation which is the UASG's 5-year plan, and the leadership needs to engage the members better, or WG could work on the plan for the next two years first. Mark said WG should figure out what we want to do for the next two years, by looking at the current task list and thinking of how it would fit into the 5-year plan.

In two years, products should be self-certifying, there should be more training materials, and 6.1 and 6.2 could still be priority then. Jim said more than self-certifying, we should create a market category which has EAI supporting email services and email products, and customers who are asking for those. The power of the self-certification guide is to potentially create a market and open up business forces and economic forces. Jim said if we want to set top level goals in two years, we want EAI ready email tools and services using the self-certification levels that we defined. Mark said the list presented on the screen were in service towards a similar goal, but not explicit.

Harsha said different countries have different levels of UA requirements, and there may not be a common solution for some of the issues. For Sri Lanka, there are Sinhala and Tamil email services, however, things need a little push, because some people do not want to have an additional email address. Most people already have ASCII email addresses, therefore, the use cases should be improved for those non-Latin email addresses. Harsha said market forces would come later, before that, people should experience it first. The concern is that would their non-latin email addresses be treated fairly among the latin email address users. Harsha shared the idea of his new project which would differentiate email addresses of non-Latin usernames and provide Latin usernames with approvals. On the other hand, how would the people respond if they do not have any email addresses or not using the internet right now. Harsha said the two IDNs for Sri Lanka would be promoted with basic services at first. Mark said it is a good high-level goal.

Harsha said a lot of email providers do not include SMTP UTF-8, they were not contacted for various reasons, but because of these issues, people could not fully experience the systems with the language of their choice. Harsha has estimated for the next 3-4 months to build various UA compliant parts and let the people experience it. There are Wordpress Plugins, and some websites with Sinhala and Tamil IDNs for the people to experience how it would work. Mark asked what should the WG be doing for this process to multiply the success in other countries.

Harsha said the different countries may need different solutions, for example, the Sri Lanka Government has supported this matter, and posted the requirement for all government websites to be in all three official languages, Sinhala, Tamil, and English. The government websites would be using the Sinhala and Tamil IDNs in the process, after that, different organizations, NGOs, various temples or tourist attraction places would be starting to use the IDNs and email addresses as well because those are the places where people use the local languages. Mark said these are great executions of tactics. Mark noted that most of the time, WG does not get to work with governments directly, and we could only give suggestions changing procurement rules. Mark said people like Harsha, Abdal or Dr Data could initiate to make UA happen, and WG should have specific region's champions.

Harsha said talking to big players is something that Sri Lanka could not do alone. Mark agreed and said that was already on the action plan. Harsh added that the self-certification guide needs to be followed while building the UA compliant website, and a UA-compliant logo could be added at the footer of the website. There are small action items to be done and having some small document like a checklist would be nice. Harsha said we should look into little details as well to make a difference.

Kunle said regarding the idea of speaking to the big players, they would reach out to the big conference and workshops, and once we can find a connecting point, it would become very helpful. We need to communicate with them to share on how important UA is for the users. Jim followed up with Kunle about identifying the big players. Kunle answered that mainly it would be the big email service providers, also the hardware equipment companies, and it may need help identifying more of them. Kunle said this is a good time for identifying and writing to them and

then having meetings with each of them to convince them to support UA. We could inform them about UA Day 2024 and let them participate with the wave. For the big players, to maintain their status, they would not ignore the trend and they may want to participate more to influence the market. Jim said we may need some criteria to figure out who the big players are, they could be global or regional, thus we should try to get both of them.

Jim asked that once we get to meet with such a provider, what would be the talking points. Kunle answered that the highlights should be what would they gain for adopting UA and making their products UA compliant. It could be in terms of selling more services, or getting more new customers or their products getting more acceptability. Some may not make a decision straightway, allowing them to test the waters may work as well. Jim agreed and thanked Kunle on this matter.

Jim said we could also turn to their customers or potential customers to want more support on IDNs, UA and EAI. If we could share success stories of users who have experienced UA and EAI services, it would convince them more. Another way would be letting them see their potential customers who would want better support for IDNS, better support for EAI, and UA ready products. An example story can be about a local organization who would like to use an internationalized email address but it did not work, this could be an example of a potential market. Another way is to work with a smaller regional service provider, who would be willing to support UA, and would compete with the big players who have yet to support what the locals need. This would create attention from the big players.

Mark said this has been a challenge because WG has to agree on a few things, we have to agree on our top principle to accomplish goals in two years, or five years, and then we have to break them down into planning for each year. And then, we would need to get annual plans approved and get the budget. Today, we only have listed the action items from FY24 towards the 5-years planning spreadsheet. We have yet to talk about other agenda items and WG usually spent a lot of time in this kind of process. Going forward, to improve efficiency, we need to think about how to build a table like this, how to come up with tasks and descriptions, and how to map their priorities together with the existing action items. After all the

discussions today, we should also think about how many actions we would like to have.

Harsha said in the five years of time, what we talked about could be completely obsolete. Even for now, people are using mobile applications like Whatsapp, and some are saying that emails are out of fashion. Harsha and his team are thinking about how to bring all these back again, and need to consider the trend as well.

Mark said this is a good sanity check, and a good grounding. Email is used as a communication tool, while some people use it as an identifier. For mobile devices, their mobile phone numbers could be their identifiers as well. Still, email is still important and required in many areas and we can keep this in mind to prioritize what we do.

***Seda's notes from the chat:***

*I am ok with your suggestion Mark. I think there's no one single solution in developing a plan. What EAI WG can do over the 5 years in a way that is prioritized will shed light on our path.*

*We may consider the followings:*

- What collaborations are needed with which organizations? UASG040 : <https://uasg.tech/download/uasg-040-ua-readiness-evaluation-of-standards-and-best-practices/>*
- How to promote the Self-hosted working EAI system for showcasing adoption globally for businesses / academia / governments?*

*We can also think outside the box: Meaning we don't have to list only the things that EAI WG should do, but also if there are any other actions that you believe would be beneficial, we can drop a note here.*

*How best can we use the Self-certification guide in UA Day events (in the further years, not only for 2024 US Day) to measure UA level globally? That might be something good to consider too...*

## AOB

Mark reminded the WG that the daylight saving time has started to change. Mark and Abdalmonem discussed the meeting time shift, and Yin May advised avoiding driving time. The meeting time was agreed to shift to UTC 15:00 said WG should continue the discussion next week since the time is up.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, 14 November 2023, **15:00** UTC

### Action items:

No.	Action Item	Owner
1	Make sure meeting time is 15:00 in every invite	Yin May
2	Informed WG when to complete the 5-year planning	Yin May, Seda
3	Come up with ideas of tasks, their descriptions and priorities	WG
4	Review the document and discuss more on UASG 5-year plan	WG