UA EAI Working Group Meeting
14 November 2023

Attendees

Mark Svancarek

Anna Bagdasaryan

Jim DeLaHunt

Temwani Sungubele

Ece Cetin

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 [discuss offline on mailing list]
3. Draft an SOW for FY24 Action Item E2.1 (Make it easier to experiment with a self-hosted working EAI systems) [Would there be COI issues?]
   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 (Tech WG survey request)

Meeting recording: Link; password K!TFyqg4%0

Meeting Notes

Yin May presented the meeting agenda and there was an AOB item which would be briefed by Seda later.

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

Mark led the floor and started reviewing the EAI WG's 5-year action plan. Mark acknowledged that WG had challenges on what to accomplish and what ICANN or UASG goals to support as a WG. Throughout the years, WG has become more realistic, however, last week's meeting was less productive to his perspective.

Jim objected to the idea of just listing the goals of the 5-year plan. Yin May said last week was just listing and not finalizing any task in the list.

Mark asked Jim about what kind of structure to approach. Jim said what needs to be restructured is overall UASG, rethinking and measuring what changes we have done, and work for market conditions and business issues. Jim shared that the method of paying contractors to complete individual tasks according to the Statement of Work (SOW) may not always be effective, and the 5-year plan should look away from it. Jim saw disconnections between information and progress of the WG volunteers. The delivered outcome out of the SOW is something the WG do not have control over. Jin did not see ways to measure the contracted results that are actually advancing UA, while the funding system needs proper feedback to see improvements.

Jim referred to one of the discussion threads in the mailing list, which was about awarding the UA Championship to any product or service which adopts UA requirements. This would be one of the proper ways to spend money instead. Another one is to hire more people like Arnt to work on technical requirements of UA rather than relying on volunteers.

Mark recalled that WG had spent a lot of time in discussions historically. In the beginning, UASG did have a marketing group, which tried to market to users and providers, and do market analysis. However, at some point, these activities were stopped by the time Sarmad joined and became more technical. There must have been other parameters which made marketing unsuccessful. Mark appreciated that now there are more staff joined in, including Arnt. Recently, WG has spent a lot more time on defining SOWs and then we do not actually have a system to measure the effectiveness of results.

Jim said marketing could mean advertising (spending money to make people hear our message), but what he would like to say is understanding the business situations, who needs the values, who has the skills or solutions and who would be willing to offer the job. For example, knowing who would benefit if there is UA, and who would be willing to buy UA solutions. Our work on UA should be a solution for them to bypass the demand and supply paradoxes. For Jim, the market analysis paper which said about the 9 billion opportunity is more like propaganda than an actual research.

Jim recalled one of the conversations with Imran, the vice-chair of UA-measurement WG, who talked about the situation in Bangladesh and how UA would benefit the locals to overcome the obstacles such as language barrier. For them, local language email addresses would be a lot more usable than ASCII labels. The market opportunities here are for people who may not want to spend money on technology but are facing real obstacles. The market behavior of the people is that they largely use the internet on mobile devices and often use a shared computer at an internet cafe. This is kind of helpful market information.

Mark said the market maker would be the local government in this case. Jim talked about P&G company's marketing strategy of selling smaller amounts of products at a cheaper price for the low-income demographic. Jim said selling email or internet packages similar to this strategy would work. Jim also said that he was skeptical about relying on government mandate as a strategy. Mark said the effectiveness is hard to measure. Mark shared his experience of following the IPv6 matters, and suggested WG should set goals within our reach. For a government to issue a mandate on technology upgrading could be unpredictable.

About market forces, Jim shared his experiences of persuading developers of owners for supporting Unicode in applications. Basically, unicode was preferred because emoji icons were demanded by users. Jim would like to look for similar things when it comes to UA where the existing market could be served in better ways, and it could attract new users or new adjacent markets. Jim said he expected to see such ideas in the UASG strategic planning.

Mark said his example in UA is Rajasthan state of India, there are many languages which are required by law to be supported. There is also a system of identifiers called Aadhaar, which is a national identity system, which includes biometrics, phone numbers and email addresses, plus, they actually issue UA email addresses. There is also a business friendly environment, and also there are people like Dr Ajay Data, an entrepreneur who could see those opportunities and make the whole thing work. Mark said these are conditions to be noted for repeating the approach. Jin responded that this was a great story and suggested adding this to an action item of a 5-year plan. Mark said there is a case study of Rajasthan somewhere. Seda pointed to the UASG 013E document.

Jim asked the difference of using emails between Rajasthan state and others. And also asked are these emails more often used or did they get ignored. And if the program serves the needs of the Rajasthan government.

Mark came back to the limitations of how we do things as a WG, for example, our group is more of a technical than business oriented, so this could be a structural problem that we debated. Jim said the high level plans should be communications and technical, and there are less business analysis kinds of items. We need more business expertise and look into business and economic issues.

The following item as added to the EAI WG's 5-year plan:
E7: To follow up on the implications and results over the year

Mark explained that the discussions took longer to make sure they are realistic views in order to achieve our goals. Jim said Mark as a WG chair could speak up at the UA-Coordination meeting for this matter, and Mark admitted that has other commitments and could not attend the coordination meetings so far. Mark said he would participate more in these meetings to share his opinion and knowledge. Jim also said Yin May could convey his messages to the UASG Leaders in other meetings, and alternatively, he could email to UA-Discuss mailing list.

Seda said there would be a coordination meeting the next day, and they would go through all the comments, so Seda would include Jim's comments as well. Seda shared that the Coordination WG would come up with consensus and go through the comments and finalize responses to share back to WGs.
Mark would communicate with Seda to attend the Coordination meeting.

Jim asked about the meaning of the governance and transparency topic mentioned in the 5-year plan. Seda explained that this is about implementing the Statement of Interest (SOI) system which was discussed in the ICANN78 meeting. All UA-Discuss mailing list members or just the UASG Leadership would be required to be identified and only the identified members would be having the voting rights. This topic needs to be discussed further in the Coordination WG meeting as there were some counter opinions. This topic would be concluded as soon as possible, to begin the timeline of an actual implementation.

Jim said this is an interesting topic, and he did not see this on the UA-Discuss mailing list. He suggested sending this topic to the UA-Discuss list so that the members would be brought to pay attention beside the people who attended the meeting or in the leadership circle, so that the discussion of transparency would be more transparent. Seda said this would be shared after the ongoing discussion on this topic is finalized. This is an open topic which was started at the ICANN78. Mark encouraged WG members to follow the ICANN meeting transcriptions.

Jim said people who have interest in UASG works should pay more attention to ICANN78 and upcoming ICANN meetings, and how to make this happen. The leadership should encourage WG members to follow UA related topics and guide them to follow these. Jim was worried about the leadership going ahead with decision making before sharing the situations with UASG participants. Mark accepted that there has been room to improve the transparency. Seda suggested following the public meetings to catch up.

Mark suggested WG take a look at the EAI WG's 5-year planning items and send inputs through the mailing list.

Agenda#3: SOW
Seda asked the WG to consider finalizing the SOW over the next few weeks, so the proposal could be sent out before the year-end holidays. WG can issue the SOW and call for the proposals first, and then continue working on the planning items. Seda and Arnt would look through the SOW to see what could be adjusted and presented to the WG to finalize. Mark agreed that WG needs Arn't input on what should be included in the 'Deliverables' part of the SOW.

Seda asked about the options given in the current SOW, are these all or optional, and then when different vendors were to come up with different options, how would they be evaluated and get selected. Mark answered that having multiple customer segments would be more useful. Mark also pointed out that some of the solution makers are not open source, and there could be either license requirements or conflicts of interest. Mark suggested going with the options which allow open source tools in such cases.

AOB (Tech WG survey request)

Seda explained that some of the WG members were selected to do the survey of the UA-Tech WG. It was a reminder about completing the survey on time. Please check the emails and respond to the survey for approximately 15 minutes. Mark confirmed that he had done the survey.

AOB (The next meeting)

Mark said he would not be available in the adjacent week, and asked Yin May to confirm the next date and schedule. Yin May would ask the WG members, the leadership and supporting staff to work with the upcoming meeting schedules. The EAI meeting for the week of 19-25 November would likely be skipped. Yin May would follow up through emails and post to the UA-EAI mailing list.

Next meeting: Tuesday, **28** November 2023, **16:00** UTC

Action items:

No.	Action Item	Owner
1	Inform the WG for the new meeting time	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 offline (through mailing list)	WG
4	Convey Jim's message to the UASG leadership	Seda
5	Check with Seda to join the Coordination meeting	Mark
6	Finalize the SOW for E2.1 to be able to call for proposals	WG, Arnt and Seda