

UA Measurement WG Meeting

21 September 2023

Attendees

Nabil Benamar

Anna Bagdasaryan

Bibek Silwal

Harsha Wijayawardhana

Jim DeLaHunt

Sushanta Sinha

Sarata Omame

Arnt Gulbrandsen

Seda Akbulut

Yin May Oo

Meeting Agenda:

1. Welcome and Roll Call
2. Drafting the SOW Rating email software using EAI Self-Certification Guide (phase 1) - Continue from the Project plan section.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kz4ZcEG1t-XTnpxpXgZMGG9iOoysYVJw/edit>

3. Board IDN and UA WG (BIUWG) action item assigned to Measurement WG:
 1. UASG to explore UA-readiness by the next new gTLD round and how UA could impact the next round.

Action Items	WG Progress
<p><i>UASG to explore UA-readiness by the next new gTLD round and how UA could impact the next round.</i></p> <p><i>(Assigned to UA Tech and UA Measurement WGs)</i></p>	<p>We want everybody to be able to use whatever domain names and emails they come up with. The status of Universal Acceptance is inadequate, for reasons outside the domain name system, because the market lacks a clear advantage of Universal Acceptance or forecast of increase in the market. Existing markets and existing tools are happy with not being able to use IDN domains and email addresses. We have not discovered the big drive towards Universal Acceptance. Releasing new domain names with weak Universal Acceptance would not get much.</p> <p>UASG's Tech WG is working on identifying the biggest obstacles facing UA readiness which would be helpful to explore more and address this. - not only the obstacles but also look at the opportunities as well in the new studies to be conducted. (Analysis Mason). We need to tell why we should adopt UA, not only the challenges.</p>

Meeting recording: [Link](#), password 5JEkN9yZ^E

Meeting Notes

Seda presented the agenda items and the FY24 action plan for the UA Measurement WG, asking if there were any more contents to add before the next meeting with the Board.

Seda shared the link to EAI self certification guide:

<https://uasg.tech/eai-certification/>

Nabil requested Seda to help with the meeting agenda since the two previous meetings were about the UA curriculum discussion.

Seda has shared the Link to the [FY24 Action Plan](#) and the [SOW for M7](#).

Seda recapped the discussion and choices from the last meeting, and the first two choices were Gmail and Microsoft Outlook. The optional list includes Yahoo Mail, Zoho2 and ProtonMail.

Nabil invited WG to comment on the choices of email services to be tested.

Arnt said **Yahoo Mail is known to have not too much EAI support, so Yahoo cannot receive emails with unicode addresses.** Arnt also tried to send emails to the unicode address from the Yahoo test account, and the emails were not received from unicode addresses. **Harsha said Yahoo does not have UTF-8 support.** Sushanta also seconded about Yahoo, and asked if Yahoo could be left out of the list, or if this could be taken as an opportunity. Arnt said to what he knew, **Yahoo does not prioritize UA.**

Arnt experimented with **Zoho and it failed a test last April.**

Arnt does not know much about ProtonMail, but he would look for ways to contact their team.

Seda said the purpose of this SOW is to identify the problems with the EAI Self-certification Guide, therefore, if some services that could not be tested were chosen, it would be difficult to identify problems with the guide.

Jim believed the **primary purpose is to get the email market leaders to talk about UA and EAI readiness by discovering that they have done a good job and celebrate it. To find out the problems with the EAI Self-certification Guide would be the secondary effect.** The primary reason should be spending money to advance universal acceptance by influencing the email programs that most people use, and most like to use for non-Latin email addresses. However, it would not matter certifying a product using the guide if the product has features which do not apply, EAI Self-certification Guide would be tested in another way. It would be

much better to test the market leaders that a lot of people use. **It will be less helpful to test the email programs which are used by only Latin speakers, thus, Jim suggested dropping Yahoo Mail from the list. Arnt added that Yahoo's focus is American consumers.** Harsha agreed, however, this could be a push as well. For those to start supporting SMTP or UTF-8, they may need a push, and thus the three most used email packages are chosen. A lot of people use Yahoo in Sri Lanka.

Seda said [UASG030a](#) is a study which was done previously and similar to this current one, it showed the levels of support for different email packages. Seda shared the existing description of the M7 action item, and asked if the WG would like to change.

Jim said the SOW that we are talking about is definitely to fulfil M7, if we want to fulfil M7, we have to continue with this SOW. Jim also followed up with Harsha's comment, saying people in Sri Lanka have definite need for EAI support as their script demands it, and most of them use Yahoo mail even though Yahoo does not support UTF-8, and Yahoo does not seem to recognize the users in Sri Lanka. This would look like shaming them for not supporting UTF-8 emails, and should do this.

Harsha raised another point, the users would also worry if their unicode email address would be able to communicate with the contacts who happened to use Latin email addresses. To promote EAI, WE should have some strategies and brainstorming how to get everything on board.

Seda said the description in M7 also said that **there could be bugs in the software.** Jim said he understood as the report of EAI Self-certification, which is **rating the email services, is the primary goal in M7.** The identifying of problems in the Self-certification guide would be the secondary outcome of M7. Harsha agreed.

Seda asked if the testing report and feedback report be done at the same time. Jim said it would be possible, but right now, focusing on choosing the email package to work on would be the first step. Nabil agreed with Jim saying Gmail and Microsoft Outlook could have the most content as email providers. Yahoo was listed because of the Sri Lanka community, and one of those shortlisted emails could be picked by the vendor. If WG agreed, Yahoo Mail could be removed and select one of these shortlisted ones, without giving a choice to the vendor. Nabil asked WG which way is better.

Jim asked to confirm if the community is free to do this kind of work, because there was an ICANN policy discussed during the SOW of the self-hosting system. Arnt answered that there was something doable and not doable.

Seda added that testing the major email services like we did for UASG 030a do not create any obstacles for us. The other discussion was something of promoting a proprietary system using the guide. Seda said we are not promoting any of them over another, but testing their UA readiness or EAI readiness, as this is a task of the UA Measurement WG.

Arnt clarified that the limit was concerned with adding a proprietary software or a commercial package in the installable image. We may test but we cannot say we recommend these products or we cannot add them to the installable image.

Jim said it was clear then, what was in the UA EAI WG was to help people choose EAI ready solutions, and was not evaluation.

Arnt left the meeting after this conversation for childcare.

Seda asked the WG if it could list only 3 email services without giving any options. Jim followed up with Nabil's comment, saying that either way is fine but we should make a decision which way at this meeting. Nabil tried to check it again with Harsha if Yahoo Mail is relevant or could it be left out. Harsha answered that it looked like Yahoo is not going to fix it without push, and his idea is giving it a rating would persuade them to add SMTP/ UTF-8. To conclude, Harsha's answer was not insisting on Yahoo Mail, he would go by WG's decision. Nabil said Yahoo has decreased its popularity by having security concerns, thus, Yahoo may not be a powerful tool to be considered. Harsha agreed with dropping Yahoo Mail.

Seda asked if Yandex could be an option. Nabil answered that Zoho was listed instead of Yandex because there is an Indian user community on Zoho. And ProtonMail was added here because of its ranking on a website. Nabil asked WG if they would like to recommend something else.

Jim said he does not know Zoho very well, but it has a large user count in India and potential to be EAI ready. It could be worthwhile to explore this. As for ProtonMail, what Jim knew was they paid more attention to security than other email features. The privacy of communication is what they pay more attention to, and they are trying to do better in order to compete and win the market. Jim said there is a reason to try them. However, Zoho would have more potential to work on EAI readiness because of the user community. Nabil agreed with Jim.

Seda said Zoho has 80 million users and ProtonMail has 70 million users according to her quick search on Wiki. Nabil said the user community of Zoho is a good thing. Nabil deleted Yahoo Mail and ProtonMail with no objections. Jim suggested listing the three as “Gmail, Microsoft Outlook and Zoho2”, without mentioning the OS.

Nabil said testing Outlook on Windows OS is prioritized and Outlook on MacOS should be after that. Seda kept the specification as follow:

“The proposal will specify Gmail, Microsoft Outlook on Windows and Zoho2 (desktop only). The vendor may also include Microsoft Outlook on macOS in the proposal, because of the commonality between Outlook on Windows and on macOS.”

Seda said the sections ‘Purpose’ and ‘Description’ were worked on during the last meeting. ‘Project Plan’ needed to be worked on after ‘Description’ part was finalized.

Jim suggested flipping the order of #3 and #4 in the ‘Description of Work’, and then, editing the #4 as “The vendor shall report problems with the EAI Self Certification Guide to the Guide support staff as mentioned on <https://uasg.tech/eai-certification/>.”

Jim did a time check and asked if the meeting would like to go on for the SOW document or go to other agenda topics. Nabil asked the WG and Jim answered that SOW may not be quickly done at once, and suggested talking about other agenda items.

Seda confirmed the ‘Description of Work’ with the WG before moving forward. Jim said there is a sentence about the Self-certification Guide, and suggested deleting the part “which is in phase one and might be incomplete and dynamic”. Jim also suggested deleting the brackets after “email clients”, which said “(both **mobile and desktop**)”. Seda said we usually added both of them in all the studies. It was said that we have the option to specify only desktop versions, and then in the next phase, we can opt for mobile versions. Jim said that he would favor the desktop only option and leave the mobile version to another phase. Jim suggested that if we do not ask for different versions, the whole sentence can be deleted. The phrase (desktop only) is added to the list of email programs in the ‘Proposal Submission’ section.

There was no objection.

Agenda#3 : Follow up action items from the meeting of UASG leadership and Coordination WG with the ICANN Board IDN and UA WG

Seda said there were several action items from the meeting, and one of them was given from the BIUWG to UASG to explore UA readiness. The Board asked how UA would impact the next round. WG needs to come up with estimation on UA readiness by then, and the impact that it would create. The next meeting is coming closer, estimated to be at the ICANN78. Seda suggested looking at it and welcomed suggestions. UASG leadership is also working on the five years strategic plan, which might be helpful to this drafting.

Jim said he is interested but confused, he missed a lot of context. Jim asked what was the meeting that he did not hear about. Seda answered that it was a closed meeting with UA Coordination WG with UASG Leadership, IDN-UA WG, and ICANN Board. The background information was that there were some requests from the UASG to the BIUWG, and they also asked for support for the new gTLD round to get the UA expert ideas for the next round. The asks that were from UASG are not related to this. For example reaching out to the big tech organizations working on the UA remediation. Those were part of the discussion, and the action items were given to UASG, and those were divided by Coordination WG and given to different UA WGs. For example, this question is assigned to Tech WG and Measurement WG to answer. Tech WG also has another action item about accessing the variant TLDs and its impact on the UA adoption. They are mostly asking for technical insights from UASG about IDN-UA work that can impact on the next round.

Jim said if UASG wants inputs from the non-leadership part of UASG, they need to give us context and background, and just dropping a topic and description to the agenda was not helpful enough. Jim said people who are not on this call may want to know the background too. Jim also asked for the meaning of the next round.

Abdulkarim said in his notes, the question was about variants of IDNs impact on the new gTLD. Abdulkarim does not see any difference between the previous round, which was 2012, and the next round. For the next round, the talking was all about the variants. He seconded Jim's point and asked for more context. Jim also asked when the next round would be, and how it relates to UA. Abdulkarim said the last round was when UA started because they introduced longer TLDs with more than 3 characters. The next round is supposed to happen

some time soon. ICANN is still in the process of putting it together. Abdulkarim shared his understanding that there is more concern on the variants than UA.

Jim thanked Abdulkarim and asked the meaning of variants in domain names. Abdulkarim answered that if you have a name of a website and there is another name with similar characters, both could get registered, although they may look or mean the same, there would become two different domains.

Nabil added that it is mainly for the various scripts, for example Arabic scripts used in different languages, which can have visually similar names, there are different characters which are visually similar, and without the IDN principle on the concept of variants, it would be impossible to create domain names in Arabic. The variants are defined to prevent phishing or misleading security problems.

Harsha said this is the reason why we need the Rootzone LGR rule set. The variant labels can only be registered by the same entity, registering by different entities is not allowed. When only one of the variants was registered, the others were to be blocked. So when the next round would have variants, Harsha said having LGR for scripts is secure enough to prevent variant problems. We can say there is no issue.

Jim thanked WG for the explanations and shared what he knew about the Latin script. They have uppercase letters and lowercase letters, so Jim understood the other scripts may have variants in similar ways. When it comes to the UA question, Jim asked what the definition of 'impact' would be, wondering if this impact refers to the failure of the next round if there is not enough UA in the world.

Nabil said for the first question, the lowercase and uppercase are just a subset of the whole variant problem. Nabil explained that the variants in Arabic script and other scripts have different characters or letters they have visual similarities and they may not be referring to the same thing, but there is a possibility to mislead the user. If they were differently registered and the user went to the wrong website, this could lead to security issues such as phishing attacks and so on. This is why the language user communities came up with LGR rules for the TLDs which were implemented in ICANN root servers, and then also the second level domains. Also, Arabic script is a subset of the problems, and the problem is hard when it comes to the root zone top level domains since they can be used by different communities. There is a lot of information on the ICANN website, Nabil

would send him links to the related work by different generation panels. Jim requested sending this through the WG email list.

Jim asked again about the 'impact' part. Seda provided the background information that there was one board member who raised this question during the discussion of the next round TLDs, because the focus is on IDNs. Whether this focus would promote UA adoption or would UA adoption cause problems or limitations. Would it impact positively or negatively, was the question. It did not imply anything but we need to look into it.

Seda said there would be more discussions that would feed to this action item, which is the five years plan of UASG, which would be brought to the community to review. Some of them are about website remediation, some are for the ASCII TLDs and emails with EAI readiness, and other discussions which may contribute to the estimation. The estimation would be based on the action items of the WGs development to achieve the goals. These work would explain the UA readiness level each year. Seda concluded that WG might need more time to answer this. Jim said sharing the background information and context through the mailing list would save much time.

The meeting ended.

Chat messages:

Jim: Re agenda item #3: discussion of "next round" and "current round" assumes knowledge of ICANN activity and domain name policy. I do not have this knowledge. I would appreciate someone sending an email which explains this context.

Seda: Regarding the background info: IDNs are a big part of the next new gTLD round. Will this focus on IDNs promote UA adoption, expose the UA limitations further or raise UA issue in a way that community tries to resolve it? This requires more study And the UASG will answer this question later in writing.

That was the starting point of the discussion and assigning the task to UASG.

Jim: It would be very helpful for someone to write down this context and send it to the email list. Everyone deserves a chance to understand, not just those of us on this call.

Next meeting: Thursday, 05 October 2023 at UTC 1600

Action items

No.	Action Item	Owner
1	Share more about IDNs, variants and the work of generation panels.	Nabil
2	Email the background information and context of the BIUWG action items to the mailing list	Seda
3	Prepare to finish the SOW	WG