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AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ALAC Statement on the Universal Acceptance of TLDs Draft Roadmap

Introduction

Satish Babu, Vice-Chair of the Asian, Australasian and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO), composed an initial draft of this Statement after discussion of the topic within At-Large and on the Mailing Lists.

On 09 July 2014, this Statement was posted on [the At-Large Universal Acceptance of TLDs Draft Roadmap](#).

On that same day, Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Chair of the ALAC, requested ICANN Policy Staff in support of the ALAC to send a Call for Comments on the Recommendations to all At-Large members via the [ALAC-Announce Mailing List](#).

On 19 July 2014, a version incorporating the comments received was posted on the aforementioned workspace and the Chair requested that Staff open an ALAC ratification vote on the proposed Statement.

On 27 July 2014, Staff confirmed that the online vote resulted in the ALAC endorsing the Statement with 15 votes in favor, 0 vote against, and 0 abstention. You may review the result independently under: <https://www.bigpulse.com/pollresults?code=4126T6VpUGqc8y5vU86jKNBr>.

Summary

1. Universal Acceptance is very important for upholding the public trust in the evolving Domain Name Ecosystem, and for facilitating the participation of broad sections of populations in the world.
2. The ALAC appreciates ICANN's efforts to release the draft roadmap, as it will be of significant benefit to end-user communities.
3. The ALAC stresses the importance of ensuring that there are frequent and free-flowing interactions between the large number of stakeholders working together to achieve Universal Acceptance.
4. The ALAC recommends the creation of an intermediate-term, cross-community mechanism that not only facilitates stakeholder interactions, but also allows organizational retention of issues and learning.
5. The ALAC recommends monitoring of progress of the UAI based on jointly identified indicators.
6. The ALAC reiterates the need for ongoing advocacy with all stakeholder communities, particularly end-user communities, for the dissemination of information on Universal Acceptance.
7. The ALAC recommends that ICANN explores the use of mechanisms that allow quick validation of TLDs so as to enhance end-user trust.
8. The ALAC suggests that advocacy and outreach efforts targeting end-users need to be undertaken in consultation with the At-Large community.

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Preamble

Universal Acceptance refers to the universal and consistent ability to use Top-Level Domains (TLDs), whether existing, Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) ccTLDs, or new gTLDs, "...regardless of the written script, and length or newness of the TLD". Universal Acceptance is a critical factor to foster and ensure competition, consumer trust and choice in the DNS marketplace.

The Universal Acceptance Initiative (UAI) is an internal initiative of ICANN that attempts to address these concerns using ICANN's multistakeholder constituencies in a collaborative and coordinated manner, applying additional resources as required. UAI focuses not only on IDNs, but all TLDs.

On 18 June 2014, ICANN Staff released a draft document on the proposed roadmap for the Universal Acceptance Initiative which was based on past work, including the final report of the Joint ccNSO-GNSO IDN Group (JIG) on Universal Acceptance of IDN TLDs.

The ALAC Response to the Draft Roadmap

1. From an end-user perspective, Universal Acceptance is very important for upholding the public trust in the evolving Domain Name Ecosystem, and for facilitating the participation of broad sections of populations in the world hitherto excluded from utilizing DNS because of the lack of support for their scripts.
2. The ALAC places on record its appreciation for ICANN for the efforts taken to release the draft roadmap. The roadmap, when implemented, will be of significant benefit to end-user communities that the ALAC represents.
3. Given the large number of stakeholders who need to work together to achieve Universal Acceptance—including DNS operators, software vendors, service providers, protocol & standard bodies, system & network operators, security practitioners and end users—it is important to ensure that there are frequent and free-flowing interactions between these stakeholders.
4. The ALAC recommends the creation of an intermediate-term, cross-community mechanism that not only provides facilitation for stakeholder interactions, but also allows organizational retention of issues as well as learning, acting as a knowledge base for all aspects of Universal Acceptance.
5. The ALAC also recommends monitoring of progress of the UAI based on progress indicators that are jointly identified as part of the above mechanism, so that there is clarity on the progress of the initiative.
6. The ALAC reiterates the need for ongoing advocacy with all stakeholder communities, particularly end-user communities, for the dissemination of information on Universal Acceptance.
7. The ALAC recommends that ICANN explores the use of light-weight mechanisms that allow quick validation of TLDs so as to enhance end-user trust.
8. When targeting end-users, these advocacy and outreach efforts need to be undertaken in consultation with the At-Large community.