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AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ALAC Statement on the IDN TLDs - LGR Procedure Implementation - Maximal Starting Repertoire Version 2

Introduction

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

On 27 February 2015, this Statement was posted on the At-Large IDN TLDs - LGR Procedure Implementation - Maximal Starting Repertoire Version 2 Workspace.

On 03 March 2015, Alan Greenberg, 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 11 March 2015, 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 16 March 2015, Staff confirmed that the online vote resulted in the ALAC endorsing the Statement with 9 votes in favor, 0 vote against, and 1 abstention. You may review the result independently under: https://www.bigpulse.com/pollresults?code=4607mSxiRpu8Kz5YazFj2a45.

Summary

- The ALAC notes that the inclusion of the six scripts added in MSR-2 is expected to benefit several million end-users of the Internet, particularly from Developing Countries. The ALAC also notes that while some of the GPs are seated and active, others have been less active or inactive.

- It is important that the IDN program is harmonized (in terms of parameters such as technology dissemination, capacity building and outreach) with the UAI. The ALAC also recommends that the UAI be utilized to ensure better community participation for the IDN program.

- MSR-2 is based on Unicode 7, but is limited to the Unicode 6.3 subset. Given the fact that Unicode 8.0 is scheduled for release in 2015, there may be questions from the community on the stability of the contents of MSR-2, particularly if the Generation Panels are to immediately commence their work based on MSR-2. The ALAC recommends that ICANN clarifies the likely impact, if any, of changes to the underlying Unicode standard on MSR-2.

- Once MSR-2 becomes operational and provides the basis of LGR-1, and once IDNs start getting registered, it would not be possible to change the once-registered names (or add more PVALID code-points to the MSR) without causing serious erosion of trust in the global Internet in general and IDNs in particular. The ALAC recommends extensive consultations with end-user and language communities to discuss the MSR-2 recommendations, as these have long-term ramifications.

- The ALAC assures its support to the IDN team in stimulating participation of end-user communities. The ALAC would welcome joint activities that involve At-Large Structures in relevant geographies.

The ALAC notes the progress made in the LGR Procedure Implementation project through the release of the Maximal Starting Repertoire Version 2 (MSR-2). The release of MSR-2 is an important step towards the creation of LGRs, which will, in turn, provide a consistent and predictable set of permissible code points for IDN TLDs, besides also providing ways to detect variant forms of labels. The ALAC commends ICANN and the teams which have worked for this milestone.

MSR-2 adds six scripts (Armenian, Ethiopic, Khmer, Myanmar, Thaana and Tibetan) to the 22 scripts covered earlier in MSR-1, resulting in 33,492 valid Unicode code points (out of the total 97,973) that may be used by the Generation Panels (GPs). The ALAC notes that the inclusion of these scripts is expected to benefit several million end-users of the Internet, particularly from Developing Countries.

The ALAC also notes that while some of the GPs are seated and active, others have been less active or inactive, reflecting the varying nature of community participation in the program.

Recommendations
1. ICANN is in the process of rolling out a major initiative for Universal Acceptance (UAI) that is expected to be operational for the long-term. It is important that the IDN program is harmonized (in terms of parameters such as technology dissemination, capacity building and outreach) with the UAI so that the synergies between the two can be leveraged. In addition to such harmonization, the ALAC also recommends that the UAI be utilized to ensure better community participation for the IDN program.

2. MSR-2 is based on Unicode 7, but is limited to the Unicode 6.3 subset. Given the fact that Unicode 8.0 is scheduled for release in 2015 (a draft has already been released), there may be questions from the community on the stability of the contents of MSR-2, particularly if the Generation Panels are to immediately commence their work based on MSR-2. The ALAC recommends that ICANN clarifies the likely impact, if any, of changes to the underlying Unicode standard on MSR-2.

3. Once MSR-2 becomes operational and provides the basis of LGR-1, and once IDNs start getting registered, it would not be possible to change the once-registered names (or add more PVALID code-points to the MSR) without causing serious erosion of trust in the global Internet in general and IDNs in particular. This calls for sufficient interactions with communities to ensure that any contentious issues are addressed.

   For instance, *0D4C* �ൌ *MALAYALAM VOWEL SIGN AU* is PVALID, but marked as 'Obsolete' in MSR-2, which has been pointed out by some users as not justified, as the sign in question is widely used. Whether this particular case is valid or not, it points to the need for more interactions.

   The ALAC recommends extensive consultations with end-user and language communities to ensure that they get an opportunity to discuss the MSR-2 recommendations, as these have long-term ramifications.

4. Noting that end-user communities should be better integrated into the IDN Program, the ALAC assures its support to the ICANN IDN team in stimulating participation of end-user communities. In particular, The ALAC would welcome joint activities that involve At-Large Structures in the relevant geographies.