**Middle East Space**

Online Virtual Meeting on Monday 8 June 2020

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**Universal Acceptance & Email Address**

**Internationalization using Arabic Script**

Draft Statement

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We, the Middle East (ME) community members, participating in the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Middle East Space, addressed the concerns of the Universal Acceptance (UA) & Email Addresses Internationalization (EAI) using Arabic Script that have been raised in previous discussions in the different WGs, and came up with this statement.

UA is a foundational requirement for a truly multilingual Internet, in which users around the world can navigate (via Domain Name System) entirely in their own local languages. It is also the key to unlocking the potential of new generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) that have more than 3 ASCII characters to foster competition, consumer choice, accessibility, and innovation in the domain name industry.

The ME Space community already made general recommendations about Universal Acceptance in its statement at ICANN 64 in Kobe, Japan, and through this statement, we will now focus on **email addresses using Arabic script.**

The deployment and use of EAIs are still restricted to a handful of languages and there is very limited or no support for it offered by email servers (SMTP, IMAP, POP), email providers (Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail) and email clients (Thunderbird, Mail, etc..). Often, it is not even possible to create an email ID for end-users in a non-ASCII based language.

To help making good progress in the Email Address Internationalization using Arabic Script, we recommend that ICANN:

* Develop a study for the prospective roles of Internationalized Domain Names (IDN) ccTLD operators, Email service operators and governments support.
* Get proposals from GAC members in how to promote the project in their countries and provide ideas on:
  + Recommended policies and industry led measures to drive the wheel for more EAI adoption and usage.
  + Adopting best practices for the usage of EAIs in their respective countries.
  + Developing Standard Operating Procedures for transition from the old applications which do not support EAIs to the new ones which are UA ready and keep the interoperability of the internet.
  + Making strategies to promote this type of emails to citizens through the digital inclusion projects.
  + Getting ideas from GAC members on the usage of EAIs and IDNs especially for people who only know their native language or only know their writing system.
* Develop a study about the clear steps and the role of different stakeholders groups such as the end users, software providers, technicians, academic, governments, private sector, etc., for further promotion of UA, IDNs and EAIs.
* Encourage all the stakeholders, and coordinate efforts with the private sector, civil society organizations, technical and academic communities and governments to get their first step towards enabling EAI in their current email systems.
* Study the current model in the countries and discuss what constraints they have to reach to the full implementation.
* Help on that though
  + Training local initiatives trainer “UA Technologies, Internationalized Domain Names, Email Address Internationalization”
  + Improving ICANN Learn environment with local languages.
  + Increasing the number of universal Acceptance ambassadors who have good skills to move the wheel ahead.
* Consider IDN managers to be part of ccNSO so we could open the channel for further EAI deployment on the top of their IDN TLDs.
* Develop an UA issues inventory for Arabic script languages affecting the progress of the project.
* Encourage more Universal Acceptance local and regional initiatives within the region and have more support about IDN, EAI and UA technologies.
* Establish a platform and/or forum that might be a suitable first step to develop awareness and collect information to deal with all the issues each community has in relation to using and accessing EAIs and IDNs.
* Sponsor the establishment of a free EAI service supporting Arabic Script. This system can be used by the community in the ME region for ICANN meetings and regional events registration.
* Encourage community members working on UA and EAI to be involved in technical and public policy events and in academic research related to the use of Arabic IDNs.
* Encourage and support projects for the adoption of Arabic EAI with Arabic global organizations (working on the promotion of Arabic script languages, ALESCO is an example), governments, public entities and private sector and civil society organizations. These projects will show the benefits made possible by having Internet domains and Email Address in local language scripts.

We want to thank all those who are working hard to push the Universal Acceptance project forward including the Email Address Internationalization (UASG, community members who are helping especially on the linguistic aspects, etc.). We hope that these recommendations will be taken into account to make significant progress.