

Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) Charter

Mission & Purpose

New top-level domains are inconsistently handled by software products and online services, in spite of community-developed resources such as the Public Suffix List <www.publicsuffix.org>. International character sets, whether in Unicode or Punycode¹, are also inconsistently handled, either from non-support of the RFCs or from support for outdated versions of these RFCs.

Software and service providers have historically been unaware of the problem or had little market or regulatory incentive to invest in solutions that would bring true interoperability to platforms or applications. The ongoing rollout of new TLDs, the democratization of computing, the growth of internationalized domain names (IDNs), and the completion of email address internationalization (EAI) standards will likely upset this status quo.

A coordinated industry effort is required to ensure a timely, practical, and continuing resolution to these changes.

Charter Application Timeline

As this is a project that will take years to fully address all Universal Acceptance issues, the Steering Group should be a standing group whose membership will evolve over the years. ICANN should be prepared for the Steering Group to drive action over the course of the next 10 years, though group leadership terms and structure shall be re-evaluated every two years.

Various Project Groups will be formed, and perform and complete their work, within the Charter period. This project-based format will provide needed flexibility. It is within the remit of the Steering Group to spin up or wind down any Project Group it deems is required to do actionable current work within the scope of the mission. These can each have individual timelines associated with the needs of the overall, big-picture efforts.

Group Composition

The Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) will be made up of ICANN community members as well as non-ICANN community experts. Each member will be counted on to contribute in some area of expertise needed by this program. The UASG will provide guidance to the ICANN team and work alongside ICANN staff throughout the project. Active volunteer participation is expected from the community.

¹ **Punycode** is a way to represent Unicode with the limited character subset of ASCII supported by the Domain Name System.

The UASG intends participation to be multistakeholder and encourages all capable and interested parties to contribute to the effort. The UASG is envisioned to be an activity-oriented advocacy group not a policy-oriented group. As a result, weighted representation is not expected, and participation from various stakeholders is expected to change over time and depending on the activities and priorities appropriate at various stages of the project.

Scope

The UASG will be tasked with undertaking activities that will effectively promote the Universal Acceptance of all valid domain names and email addresses. These efforts will at least target Universal Acceptance of all ASCII domain names, ASCII email addresses, IDN domain names, and IDN email.

This should be considered a multi-sector effort. Outputs may range from technical guidance and tools to support developers and service providers in addressing UA-related issues, to messaging and campaigns around why Universal Acceptance should be treated as a priority for businesses, governments, civil society, and other stakeholders.

Activities that would be considered within scope shall include:

- Work closely with ICANN staff to drive efforts related to Universal Acceptance. With ICANN, develop budgets (resource, staffing and money) necessary to complete specific projects and develop sourcing strategies;
- Prioritize efforts requested by domain name industry participants, registrants and Internet users, and ICANN and make recommendations to the steering committee;
- Identify collaborative opportunities in new communities;
- Oversee the development of informational materials for various stakeholders (including coordinating with industry efforts) to incentivize and facilitate resolution of UA-related issues;
- Study the need and requirements for appropriate repositories (and advocate for their development/deployment by ICANN or through collaboration with appropriate industry efforts);
- Follow up with the deployment of ICANN internal policies to support UA;
- Collect data and develop measurements/indices/surveys to measure UA readiness;
- Establish milestones to continue to track progress of UA;
- Invite non-ICANN community to the initiative and proactively reach out to non-ICANN community events/initiatives in order to have access to needed talents and skills;

Structure

The Steering Group itself will be overseen by one Chair and two to three Vice-Chairs who will be appointed to two-year terms with the possibility of one reappointment so that Chairs and

Vice-Chairs will serve for a period of no less than two years and no more than four. The goal of the Steering Group is primarily to oversee the work product of the UASG Project Groups and provide cross-Project Group support. The Steering Group will also lead the budget process, maintain the Charter, and coordinate the creation and dissolution of Project Groups. All unique work products will occur within Project Groups or through collaboration between Project Groups.

Each Project Group will be led by one to two Coordinators, an appointed role by the Steering Group Chair without specific term. Each group will develop budgets (resource, staffing and money) necessary to complete specific projects and develop sourcing strategies. Steering Group leaders and Project Group leaders should submit a Statement of Interest that is publicly accessible, and lists their affiliations and interests. Project Groups can spawn additional smaller working parties. At time of Charter formation we believe the following Project Groups are required to be formed. This is neither a definitive nor permanent list, but it serves as an initial point of action for our efforts:

Topline Issues Project Group

- Determining major issues and their potential resolutions
- Researching technical solutions

Community Outreach Project Group

- Information materials development / coordination
- Business community & consumer outreach
- Technical & academia community outreach
- Government & NGO community outreach

Internationalization Project Group

- Determining issues unique to IDNs with regard to technical challenges
- EAI issues
- Engaging on specific security and mail related issues surrounding IDNs

Measurement & Monitoring Project Group

- Identify measures of UA Readiness
- Perform regular measurements of UA Readiness

Each Project Group will be responsible for recording progress and milestones. Group Coordinators will report to the Steering Group on a periodic basis. Each Project Group will make its own budget requests to the Steering Group, which will coordinate the development of the macro budget.

Project Group Goals

Each Project Group will build its own Scope and Timeline, and work towards consensus among Project Group members on the desired project goals, alternatives, construction phasing, and mitigation measures to include in the Project Group Scope.

Project Outcome

The process will be considered a success if:

- The Project Group establishes clear, consensus-based recommendations;
- The community is engaged in a meaningful way in evaluating the proposed work product and in reviewing and commenting on the Project Group Scope;
- Project decisions fit into the context of the surrounding UA Steering Group work and other UA-related work and address the needs of the community;
- The project meets cost and time goals, which were agreed at the start of the project;

Terms of Membership

The work of the Steering Group and each Project Group will be transparent to the community and open to all to observe, but membership will require active participation in a focused area of interest. The Steering Group is a small coordinating body with limited membership other than the Chair, Vice-Chairs, Project Group leads and a few issue leaders. A community member may participate in one or more Project Groups, and all Project Groups will be expected to solicit participation from the community. However, the Project Group Coordinators have the right to set rules of membership, which may be necessary so that a group's composition is fit for its task and focus areas. It is the responsibility of the Project Group Coordinator to make the terms of participation transparent and to establish their own code of conduct and other requirements for members.

A Chair or Coordinator position in the leadership of the UASG may be declared vacant if the member:

- Resigns from the UASG (this should be in writing and forwarded to the ICANN Secretariat)
- Fails to attend more than two meetings without prior notice

In a case where a Coordinator's position is declared vacant, the remaining Chair or Co-Chairs may appoint an alternative representative from the same Project Group to fill the position.

Convening of Meetings

Meetings will be held at the time and place chosen by the Steering Group Chair in the course of UASG meetings. UASG members will be informed of meetings through email at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Here are the expected formats for meetings:

Face-to-Face and Online/Telephonic Meetings

1. Steering Group meetings
 - track progress of activities by ICANN staff and Project Groups
 - calibration/recalibration of priorities
 - review/revise action plans
2. Project Group meetings
 - develop work product within the specified work area
 - determine necessary points of collaboration with other Project Groups
3. Public meetings
 - invite non-ICANN community participants to share experiences
 - update community on progress and activities of UASG
 - continue to recruit participation in ongoing activities

Mailing List Discussions

- conference calls as need be in between ICANN meetings
- coordination of activities outside of ICANN (by community members as well as ICANN staff)

Communication

- Meetings will be advertised in the Universal Acceptance public mailing list;
- Project documents and notices will be posted on the project website;
- ICANN Secretariat and the Universal Acceptance public mailing list should be copied on all email correspondence;

Conduct of Meetings

- Meetings will be open to all;
- Meetings will be facilitated;
- ICANN will endeavor to provide remote participation opportunities when possible;
- Informed alternates are acceptable and encouraged if the UASG member cannot attend;
- After all meeting agenda items have been addressed, time will be provided for non members in attendance to voice their opinions;
- Meetings will end with a clear understanding of expectations and assignments for next steps;
- Meetings are expected to be one to three hours and not exceed three hours, though multiple meetings could occur on a single day;

- The ICANN Secretariat will keep a record of meeting attendees, key issues raised, and actions required. Comments from individual members will generally not be attributed and a verbatim record of the meeting will not be prepared;
- The previous meeting record and a meeting agenda will be forwarded to members of the UASG at least one week before the next meeting;
- Any changes to the record of the past meetings shall be in writing and forwarded to the UASG prior to the next meeting;

Meeting Ground Rules

- Speak one at a time – refrain from interrupting others;
- Wait to be recognized by facilitator before speaking;
- Facilitator will call on people who have not yet spoken before calling on someone a second time for a given subject;
- Share the oxygen – ensure that all members who wish to have an opportunity to speak are afforded a chance to do so;
- Maintain a respectful stance toward towards all participants;
- Listen to other points of view and try to understand other interests;
- Share information openly, promptly, and respectfully;
- If requested to do so, hold questions to the end of each presentation;
- Make sure notes taken on newsprint are accurate;
- Remain flexible and open-minded, and actively participate in meetings;

UASG Members Agree To:

- Provide specific local expertise, including identifying emerging local issues;
- Review project reports and comment promptly;
- Attend all meetings possible and prepare appropriately;
- Complete all necessary assignments prior to each meeting;
- Relay information to their constituents after each meeting and gather information/feedback from their constituents as practicable before each meeting;
- Articulate and reflect the interests that Project Group members bring to the table;
- Maintain a focus on solutions that benefit the entire work area;

Conflict Resolution

When an issue arises that cannot be easily resolved, UASG members agree to:

- Remember that controversial projects are unlikely to receive funding, so the intent of all parties is to resolve issues so the project can be funded;

- Determine if the issue should be resolved within or outside of the UASG and participate however is appropriate;
- Ensure the appropriate decision makers are at the table to resolve the issue;