
Universal Acceptance of Domain Names and Email Addresses

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1. What is Universal Acceptance?

Universal Acceptance (UA) is the concept that all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems should accept all domain names and email addresses, regardless of script, language, or length of the top-level domains (TLDs). Adopting UA allows Internet users to effectively navigate and communicate online using domain names and email addresses that best align with their interests, business, culture, language, and script.

2. Notice concerning issues related to the Universal Acceptance of Domain Names and Email Addresses using New gTLDs

All applicants should be aware that approval of an application and entry into a registry agreement with ICANN do not guarantee that a new gTLD will immediately function throughout the Internet. Past experience indicates that network operators may not immediately fully support new top-level domains, even when these domains have been delegated in the DNS root zone, since third-party software modification may be required and may not happen immediately. Similarly, software applications sometimes attempt to validate domain names and may not recognize new or unknown top-level domains.

ICANN has no authority or ability to require that software accept new top-level domains, although it does prominently publicize which top-level domains are valid and has developed a basic tool to assist application providers in the use of current root-zone data. ICANN encourages applicants to familiarize themselves with these issues and account for them in their startup and launch plans. Successful applicants may find themselves expending considerable efforts working with providers to achieve acceptance of their new top-level domains.

Applicants should review <https://icann.org/ua> for background. IDN applicants should also review the material concerning experiences with IDN test strings in the root zone (see <https://www.icann.org/en/announcements/details/successful-evaluations-of-test-idn-tlds-31-1-2008-en>).

3. More detailed information on Universal Acceptance

There is ongoing work on Universal Acceptance by ICANN as well as the community-led UA Steering Group (UASG). ICANN publishes recent detailed information on Universal Acceptance

at <https://icann.org/ua>. The information includes a link to the latest annual UA-Readiness Report, which covers the status of UA support in technology, including programming languages, email tools and services, network utilities, social networking applications, content management systems, authentication tools, and others. The report also includes information on the bug reporting and bug fixing efforts currently being conducted. The <https://icann.org/ua> webpage also includes technical training materials and guidance on how to make systems UA-ready. It also links to UASG’s website <https://uasg.tech>, where additional work plans, detailed technical reports, case studies, blogs and announcements related to the ongoing UA efforts by the community are available.

Draft New gTLD Registry Agreement (RA) (also proposed for the new RA)	<p>1.2 Technical Feasibility of String.</p> <p>While ICANN has encouraged and will continue to encourage universal acceptance of all top-level domain strings across the Internet, certain top-level domain strings may encounter difficulty in acceptance by ISPs and web hosters and/or validation by web applications. Registry Operator shall be responsible for ensuring to its satisfaction the technical feasibility of the TLD string prior to entering into this Agreement.</p>
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Annex - Relevant Recommendations

Principle B from the 2007 policy is affirmed with modification under Topic 25: IDNs. Principle B is also relevant to this topic.

Affirmation 11.1: The Working Group welcomes and encourages the work of the Universal Acceptance Initiative⁷⁷ and the Universal Acceptance Steering Group.

Affirmation 11.2: The Working Group affirms 2012 implementation elements addressing Universal Acceptance issues, and in particular, guidance provided in section 1.2.4 of the Applicant Guidebook (“Notice concerning Technical Acceptance Issues with New gTLDs”), as well as clause 1.2 of the Registry Agreement (“Technical Feasibility of String”).

Recommendation 11.3: Applicants should be made aware of Universal Acceptance challenges in ASCII and IDN TLDs. Applicants must be given access to all applicable information about Universal Acceptance currently maintained on ICANN’s Universal Acceptance Initiative page, through the Universal Acceptance Steering Group, as well as future efforts.