Report of Public Comments

Title:	Universal Acceptance of TLDs Draft Roadmap
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Section I: General Overview and Next Steps

The public comments were receptive of the draft version of the roadmap document, with many points of constructive criticism indicating the need for a final roadmap. A session for ICANN 51 is in planning and the agenda will be developed with public comments in mind.

Section II: Contributors

At the time this report was prepared, a total of nine (9) community submissions had been posted to the Forum. The contributors, both individuals and organizations/groups, are listed below in chronological order by posting date with initials noted. To the extent that quotations are used in the foregoing narrative (Section III), such citations will reference the contributor's initials.

Organizations and Groups:

Name	Submitted by	Initials
Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Association	Don Hollander	DH
Netmission.Asia	Sunny Liu	SL
ARI Registry Services	Donna Austin	DA
ICANN At-Large Staff	Heidi Ullrich, et.al.	HU
UANIC & Coordination Center for TLD RU	Михаил Анисимов	MA
eco Association	Thomas Rickert	TR

Individuals:

Name	Affiliation (if provided)	Initials
André Schappo		AS
姚健康 (Jiankang YAO)		健康
Jason Du		JD

Section III: Summary of Comments

The comments received fall into a few categories:

> Need for Outreach to Educational Institutions
> Focus on Internationalized Email
> Emphasis on IDN TLDs as a starting point
> Need for Interaction with Governments
> Need for update events to be conducted
> Need for ICANN to take a more active (hands-on) role
> Need to Develop Metrics
> Need to Develop a Timeline
> Other Specific Recommendations (to be Included in Messaging)

Need for Outreach to Educational Institutions

[AS] The prevalent lack of support for IDN TLDs is a symptom of a much deeper problem, which is the lack of IT Internationalisation (i18n) education in Schools and Universities.

[AS] There needs to be promotion of IT i18n in Schools and Universities leading to incorporation of IT i18n into the curriculum. IT i18n needs to be core and not peripheral.

Focus on Internationalized Email

[健康] IDN email is a killer application of IDN and IDN TLD Universal Acceptance.

[健康] I suggest that ICANN create an IDN email deployment Leadership group to promote the Universal Acceptance of TLDs.

Emphasis on IDN TLDs as a starting point

[JD] IDN New gTLDs have the potential of … getting more people online and generate more innovations than ASCII counterparts…

[SL] We believe one of the important incentives is the number of IDN users affected by this acceptance issues, so the use the public pressure to urge related parties to take actions maybe a way out.

Need for Interaction with Governments

[MA] Recommend GAC suggest [to] national governments [to] … unequivocally require from all ICT companies in countries using non-Latin scripts to support IDN in their products

[SL] GAC can play a more active role in introducing the acceptance issues to its members and brainstorm

possible rectification steps on an inter-governmental level.

Need for update events to be conducted

[MA] Have the biggest internet platforms and software vendors such as Google, Apple, Microsoft, Oracle, Facebook, etc. regularly update on IDN acceptance

[DH] (heavily paraphrased) We suggest the following concrete steps: ICANN engages with local regional and global stakeholders, particularly software communities; convenes a gathering where progress can be measured and reported; develops measures of success and evaluation tools that the software industry can use

Need for ICANN to take a more active role

[MA] Recommend ICANN deploy staff to test most popular software and applications for IDN support

[MA] Create a mailing list for as broad dissemination of the regular updates on the IDN UA program status as possible; to create a specialized information resource

[MA] Task a dedicated specialist (or even a department) to coordinate the IDN UA program

[DA] The roadmap is heavy on rhetoric and light on detail: it is significantly focused on raising awareness of the problems and sharing information whereas a considerable focus should be on finding solutions.

Need to Develop Metrics

[DH] (heavily paraphrased) We suggest the following concrete steps: ICANN engages with local regional and global stakeholders, particularly software communities; convenes a gathering where progress can be measured and reported; develops measures of success and evaluation tools that the software industry can use

[DA] We believe that a plan that clearly identifies the what, how, who and when would be a better tool for focusing activities and striving towards deliverables that lead to Universal Acceptance of all TLDs-which should be the ultimate aim of the plan.

Need to Develop a Timeline

[SL] ICANN should … establish clearer guidelines on the timeframe of universal acceptance of TLD development… to witness incremental changes in a near future

[HU] 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.

[TR] The JIG report is a result of work conducted jointly by the ccNSO and the GNSO and this report spells out concrete actions. This begs the question why such concrete activities have not been mentioned in the Abridged Roadmap with performance indicators and timelines.

Other Specific Recommendations (to be Included in Messaging)

[MA] Recommend all ICT use the IANA database as an authoritative source with regard to delegated TLDs

[MA] Recommend all OS vendors include support of IDN characters in Unicode as a default

[TR] During the evaluation of the new gTLD Program, the question will have to be answered whether this program has provided for consumer choice and competition.

Section IV: Analysis of Comments

General Disclaimer: This section is intended to provide an analysis and evaluation of the comments received along with explanations regarding the basis for any recommendations provided within the analysis.

Promoting awareness of internationalization, or localization, of strings of any form within an education system is a good thing. In some situations, educational institutions are ahead of this topic, in others it appears to be lagging. Educational institutions will be identified as one stakeholder group to engage.

Internationalized Email has been cited as an important application in growing the demand and thus driving the ability of IDN top-level domains to succeed. Email has a long history of being intertwined with the DNS, stemming from some seminal data types in the DNS being dedicated to email. History repeats itself, so it is not very surprising to once again link email and DNS as Internationalized Email and Internationalized Domain Names. ICANN will continue to include internationalized email in the roadmap.

The success of IDN gTLDs is clearly an enabler in growing the impact of the Internet into non-ASCII writing cultures and economies. That is one reason for the emphasis on universal acceptance for gTLDs and as part of that (and a big component of that) being IDN gTLDs. ICANN will continue to focus attention on IDN gTLD acceptance, understanding that universal acceptance of all TLDs will benefit as a result.

The specific suggestions to engage governments via the GAC are very useful points. This is a pathway in the right direction with a need to define steps. ICANN will consider the most expedient way to include governments as stakeholders that can benefit from expressing demand for IDN and International email.

Holding "update events", when service providers and software vendors are called upon to report on their progress towards universal acceptance is an idea that appears to have merit but presents two obstacles to neutrality. Vendors and providers need to be incentivized to participate, even if they have incentive to make progress they may be reluctant to be part of such an event. Partial participation can have negative consequences. One obstacle is that uneven exposure challenges maintaining a neutral footing. The other obstacle is the very act of "grading" participants. By promoting the vendors and providers who are making improvements, either failing to recognize others or in anyway appearing to name and shame, neutrality is lost. ICANN does not plan to arrange these events but welcomes others to do so, but ICANN may call on providers and vendors to help

identify technology gaps needing attention or to provide other insight.

Instead of conducting a grading of products and services, based on criteria derived after the products and services have been delivered, one idea is to focus on self-assessments. ICANN could develop a series of objective-based goals and test scenarios to be used in assessing whether a product or service passes universal acceptance. Stating the goals can be done in a neutral manner, leaving the assessments to the providers removes the chance that test procedures unduly favor one or another.

Requesting ICANN to take on a more active role in testing tools, evaluating tools, reporting bugs requires the use of resources, above and beyond the current plan. It's not just simply a need for resources, but the policy of what to test and how to test it creates another decision process. If a product is selected for testing, is that a statement of importance? On the other hand, leaving this role to the general audience is closer to the idea of "crowd sourcing" what the priorities are, what are the products and services that need fixing first and defining what are the important features to the beneficiaries of the Internet. ICANN does not plan to take on this increased mission, but will encourage others to define, run, and discuss the results of their own assessments.

Deriving metrics of universal acceptance is a desirable goal and there are efforts that have measured the deployment of IDNs, which seems to be a useful start. There are two reasons for measurements to be made, to estimate remaining work and to estimate progress. The former is useful to help identify where more effort is needed, and the latter promotes the importance of taking on the work. The trouble with both kinds of measures, related to universal acceptance, is that the list of software to be tested would include every system that can access the Internet or that uses domain names or email addresses. It's possible to reduce the problem by focusing on a set of software to be used, which faces the same subjective issues as mentioned previously. ICANN is taking on work to arrive at an acceptable ways to estimate future work and estimate progress.

Defining a timeline is made difficult due to the open nature of the goals of universal acceptance. In the sense that the Internet serves the various user groups and service/content providers, no single organization ought to be setting the path of progress. ICANN can set timeframes for focusing its own attention, setting an overall timeline is best left to the community in the same sense that "crowd sourcing" would be the best way to set priorities.

Remaining specific suggestions will be incorporated into more detailed communications that will take place over time.