

Brazilian Association of Software Companies (ABES)'s comment on Preliminary Issue Report on Latin Script Diacritics

Context and Relevance for Latin America

The omission of Latin diacritics in the DNS has been a significant concern for Latin American countries, where languages such as Portuguese, Spanish, French, and the written transcription of native languages, all utilize diacritical marks extensively. The historical reliance on ASCII-only character sets has led to an incomplete representation of these languages on the Internet, failing to capture the linguistic nuances and cultural significance inherent in the use of diacritics.

Seeing as now we can fully utilize these capabilities; the Brazilian Association of Software Companies (ABES) believes that this Issue Report presents us with an opportunity to enhance the inclusivity of Latin American communities on the DNS by fostering an environment in which applicants can have both the safety of owning the ASCII fallback and innovating with an IDN version of the TLD.

Cultural and Economic Implications

The omission of diacritics from domain names not only affects linguistic accuracy but also has broader cultural and economic implications. In a region where local languages and dialects are integral to identity, the inability to fully represent these in the online space can lead to a sense of exclusion. This exclusion can extend to businesses, cultural institutions, and governments that seek to engage their audiences authentically. Moreover, in a global economy increasingly reliant on digital presence, accurately represented domain names are crucial for branding and identity. The lack of support for diacritical marks can result in brand dilution and miscommunication, potentially affecting the trust and credibility of online entities from the region.

Proposed Policy Development Process (PDP)

ABES advocates for a tailored PDP that addresses the unique challenges posed by the inclusion of diacritical marks in TLDs. This PDP should not only consider the technical feasibility but also prioritize cultural and linguistic considerations, with an eye towards:

- **Promote Inclusivity and Cultural Integrity:** The policy must respect the linguistic integrity of Latin American languages by facilitating the operation of TLDs that include diacritical marks. This ensures that digital identities can be expressed authentically, aligning with local linguistic norms and practices.

- **Mitigate User Confusion Through Clear Guidelines:** While enabling the use of diacritics, the PDP must also consider measures to prevent user confusion. This could involve the implementation of bundling rules, where both ASCII and diacritic versions of a TLD are managed as a unified entity by a single registry operator. Such measures should ensure consistency in branding and reduce potential misunderstandings among users.

Conclusion

ABES urges ICANN to recognize the critical need for a nuanced approach to handling Latin script diacritics. A well-defined and culturally sensitive policy will not only enhance the accuracy of linguistic representation but also foster greater inclusivity and participation in the global digital economy. This initiative will strengthen the region's cultural heritage and provide a more equitable platform for its digital presence. We look forward to a policy that embraces the full linguistic spectrum of Latin American languages, reflecting the region's rich cultural tapestry and advancing its digital future.

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