31 January 2024

RE: Universal Acceptance Issues with .TUBE, ASCII, and IDN Domains

Rami Schwartz
CEO
Latin American Telecom LLC

Dear Rami:

Thank you for your letter raising issues related to the Universal Acceptance (UA) of the .TUBE top-level domain (TLD) as well as with domain names more generally. The letter is posted at https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/schwartz-to-icann-board-12oct23-en.pdf.

ICANN org has set up a technical UA team to help address the UA-related issues documented through the work by Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) over the past few years. The team is actively engaging with technical organizations and communities, raising bug reports, as well as contributing open-source code where possible. Some of the recent work by the team is documented in Section 7.7.1 of the UA-Readiness Report for FY23 available at https://uasg.tech/download/uasg-047-ua-readiness-report-fy23/.

ICANN continues to conduct a multitude of efforts towards resolving UA issues. In addition, ICANN continues to engage with the developer community at-large and has conducted several outreach efforts, including:

1. Doing technical training for software developers globally, including Hackathons. Similar work is also being carried out through Local Initiatives supported by ICANN and UASG in multiple geographies. Broader training was also conducted through the UA Day events held in between February and May of 2023.
2. Conducting outreach through developer websites such as Stack Overflow. ICANN org has been submitting responses to relevant questions asked by developers at these forums.
3. Engaging at the developer conferences. The more recent example includes the outreach at the Web Summit in Lisbon in November 2023, where ICANN org leadership actively engaged on the Universal Acceptance topic for digital inclusion.

In addition, ICANN has also been engaging with organizations and communities providing applications which are used by a large user base. Examples include META and WordPress.

More specifically for WhatsApp, as you note, the underlying list of TLDs was recently updated in September 2023 and will percolate to the different devices based on Android OS updates. The ICANN org team has been meeting with META and reported UA related issues to them, including linkification. The team has recently also reported the issues shared by you related to more recently delegated TLDs, including .TUBE. META continues to look into these issues and is making progress towards resolving them.

Furthermore, ICANN org is focusing on the third-party open-source components that are typically used for linkification. ICANN org's team has checked and contributed improvements where necessary, including to those used in the top five programming languages.

These engagement efforts by ICANN org and the ICANN community continue to expand to other organizations, and your examples will be included in the conversations we schedule with these organizations in the future.

We also appreciate your input on how ICANN might better implement the solutions around UA. The TLD list published by IANA is already part of the UA documents and training and is being actively shared with technical community through the opportunities listed above.

ICANN continues to engage with the technical community. The technical community also engages with ICANN though multiple platforms, for example through Commercial Stakeholder Group (e.g., Business Constituency, or BC) and Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group (e.g., Non Commercial Users Constituency, or NCUC). These organizations can also more directly get involved with the UASG for UA-related discussions. Though the UASG continues to work with both ASCII and IDN domains, ICANN will work with the UASG to bring additional focus on ASCII domains.

I am thankful to you for bringing the matter to our attention and assure you that ICANN org will be looking to raise these issues with relevant organizations, as well as continuing to make a direct effort to address these challenges by putting in code fixes where possible. We are committed to making all TLDs work with all software applications. I would also like to invite your organization to consider contributing directly to UASG.

Sincerely,

Tripti Sinha
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors