Universal Acceptance (UA) Day 2024 Report

UA: ENABLING A MULTILINGUAL AND DIGITALLY INCLUSIVE INTERNET

20 JUNE 2024
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// ** Universal Acceptance
UA Day
#Internet4All
UA Day Overview

Universal Acceptance (UA) is a technical requirement that ensures all valid domain names and email addresses, regardless of script, language, or character length, can be equally used by all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems.

UA Day is an opportunity to rally local, regional, and global communities and organizations to spread Universal Acceptance (UA) awareness and to encourage UA adoption with key stakeholders. Following the success of UA Day 2023 in creating UA awareness and capacity (English | العربية | Español | Français | Português | Русский | 中文), the second edition of UA Day was organized in 2024, consisting of multiple types of events focused on creating awareness, capacity and strategy on UA.

The UA Day events were held by regional and local organizations, the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG), global partners, and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). These events aimed to engage and mobilize technical and language communities, companies, governments, and Domain Name System (DNS) industry stakeholders to better understand the benefits of UA.

Call for UA Day Proposals

ICANN and the UASG announced a call for UA Day 2024 event proposals on 1 November 2023 with 15 December 2023 as the last date for proposal submission. UA Day events could be held on or around 28 March 2024, designated as the UA Day, and between March and May 2024 to allow flexibility to local organizers. The call for proposals continued to support the event types from the past UA Day:

- **UA AWARENESS SESSION**
  Provide a high-level overview of UA and Email Address Internationalization (EAI), the benefits of being UA-ready, basic technical concepts related to UA, and next steps to become UA-ready.

- **UA TECHNICAL TRAINING SESSION**
  Provide in-depth training on becoming EAI-ready for email system administrators and on becoming UA-ready for developers.

- **UA STRATEGY SESSION**
  Discuss appropriate mechanisms to promote UA adoption at the regional level.

In addition, two new event types were introduced this year:

- **UA ACADEMIC CURRICULA**
  Engage in curricular development sessions with faculty members and experts to integrate IDN and UA-related topics in existing technical curricula.

- **UA ADOPTION**
  Conduct a UA adoption exercise and share challenges and solutions to become UA-ready, documenting your experience.
A total of 133 proposals were received for UA Day in 2024 from 68 countries. This compared with 90 proposals received for UA Day in 2023 from 56 countries, showing an increasing interest in this topic. An ICANN cross-community proposal review team was constituted with nominees from the UASG, At-large Advisory Committee (ALAC) and country code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO). They finalized the criteria and shortlisted 56 proposals from 51 countries. A few additional UA Day events were also organized, beyond those who submitted event proposals (e.g., by UNESCO in Paris, France for policy makers), while a few could not proceed for various reasons (e.g. some applicants were not legal entities to be able to sign an agreement with ICANN).

In total, 52 UA Day events were organized across 47 countries. The list and details of all these events is available [here](#). A breakdown of proposals received and shortlisted by the cross-community proposal review team for support from ICANN by region is provided in Table 1 below.

### Table 1: UA Day 2024 Proposals Received, Shortlisted and Organized by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>PROPOSALS</th>
<th>SHORTLISTED</th>
<th>ORGANIZED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APAC</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUR</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these events, 21 events were organized by At-Large Structures (11 AF, 3 APAC, 6 LAC, 1 NA) and 11 were organized with the collaboration of country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) managers.
The **keystone UA Day event** was announced on 31 January 2024 and the day-long event was held in Belgrade, Serbia, on 28 March in partnership with the Serbian National Internet Domain Registry Foundation (RNIDS). Mihailo Jovanović, Serbian Minister of Information and Telecommunication, officially opened the UA Day 2024 event, noting the linguistic and cultural diversity of Serbia. Dejan Đukić, CEO of RNIDS, and Danko Jevtović, Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors at ICANN, also provided opening remarks.

The opening panel topic was “Multilingual Internet as an Imperative for Digital Inclusion”, with presentation from Sally Costerton, ICANN Interim President and CEO, Anil Kumar Jain, Chair of UASG, Leonid Todorov, General Manager of Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Association, Jaroslav Ponder, Head of the International Telecommunications Office (ITU) Office for Europe, and Bhanu Neupane, UNESCO.

The day-long program also covered other topics, including: Universal Acceptance in Local Communities: Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities, Showcasing Universal Acceptance Implementation, Integrating UA into Technical Curriculum in Universities and a technical workshop on Universal Acceptance Implementation. Highlights of the event are available in the [post UA Day event video](#).
Based on the numbers in Table 1 above, Figure 1 below shows 33 percent of the UA Day events were held in Africa, 29 percent were held in the Asia-Pacific region, and 25 percent were held in the Latin America and Caribbean region. There were fewer events in Europe and North America.
The UA Day events were organized over a three month period from March – May 2024, with the majority of events occurring on or around 28 March 2024. A few events were held around Internet Day on 17 May 2023, as shown in Figure 2. The figure also illustrates that the organizers use the flexibility provided in organizing the UA Day, with 17 events held in March, 14 events held in April and 21 events held in May 2024.

**FIGURE 2: TIMELINE OF UA DAY 2024 EVENTS**
UA Day **Events by Location**

UA Day events were held in 47 countries and territories, 16 in Africa, 13 in Asia Pacific, 12 in Latin America and the Caribbean, five in Europe and one in North America. Though regional events included representatives from multiple countries, only a host country is listed below. Therefore, participants from many more countries participated online.

**AFRICA**
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Republic of Chad
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- South Africa
- United Republic of Tanzania
- Togo
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

**ASIA PACIFIC**
- Armenia
- Bangladesh
- China
- India
- Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Malaysia
- Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- Pakistan
- Republic of Korea
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- United Arab Emirates

**EUROPE**
- France
- North Macedonia
- Serbia
- Spain
- Switzerland

**LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN**
- Argentina
- Plurinational State of Bolivia
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- El Salvador
- Haiti
- Mexico
- Republic of Panama
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Uruguay
- United States of America
The 52 UA Day events held were distributed across the various types of events as per Figure 3 below. The detailed breakdown per type and region is provided in Table 2 below.

A total of 20 events were held on UA Awareness. Interestingly, 16 of the events were focused on the new category of UA Adoption, and 10 on UA technical training. There were also three events organized on UA Academic Curricula.

### Table 2: UA Day 2024 Events by Types and Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>AF</th>
<th>APAC</th>
<th>EUR</th>
<th>LAC</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UA Regional Strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UA Academic Curricula</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UA Adoption</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UA Awareness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UA Technical Training</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 3: Distribution of UA Day 2024 Events Based on Session Type

- **UA Awareness**: 22 events
- **UA Adoption**: 12 events
- **UA Technical Training**: 12 events
- **UA Regional Strategy**: 3 events
- **UA Academic Curricula**: 3 events
The UA Adoption event, introduced for the first time this year, was challenging for many organizers who opted for it. A total of 12 UA day event organizers were able to make their system UA-ready with much effort as well as support provided by the ICANN org team. They presented the results at the UA Day event. Some examples include:

- iMasters, in Brazil, **showed** how to set up a complete self-hosted mail server, with Portuguese user names and domain names. They shared the video with 100,000 Brazilian software developers with 1700 views to-date.

- Theekshana, in Sri Lanka, made the **website** of All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC, a large Buddhist organization), UA-ready by registering domain for ACBC in **Sinhala** and showing support for contacting ACBC using email addresses in Sinhala language. Theekshana has also issued some ACBC members email addresses in Sinhala.

- Lao National Internet Center, in Laos, implemented an email system in Lao language. They launched and showcased the email system at the UA Day event.

- Internet Society, in Trinidad and Tobago, partnered with University of West Indies to make its website UA-ready. The organizers demonstrated that someone with an Arabic address can apply to study at their university. They aim to continue with making their entire university UA-ready and accept students from all over the world.

- The University of Dodoma, in Tanzania, also updated their website to support internationalized email addresses.

- Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), in India, adapted a local e-commerce site to make it UA-ready. It can be accessed at: सोल्सऑफ़इंडिया.भारत or **soulsofindia.com**.

These events are very important because they not only build technical capacity, but also show real adoption, encouraging others to be UA-ready. In many cases, the local language email addresses are being introduced for the first time for the communities. Together with domain names in local languages, these have a direct impact on digital inclusion for local communities.
To support UA Day event organizers and manage consistent messaging, a variety of materials were developed, including awareness and technical training presentations, graphics, and videos. The materials were also translated and made available in Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish languages. These materials were made available to UA Day organizers through the UA Day webpage at https://uasg.tech/ua-day/#UADayMaterials. The materials included the messaging videos and presentation materials. These are listed below.

Welcome videos:
- Tripti Sinha, Chair of the ICANN Board
- Sally Costerton, ICANN Interim President and CEO
- Theresa Swinehart, ICANN Senior Vice President, Global Domains & Strategy
- Anil Kumar Jain, Chair of the UASG

Promotional Videos:
- UA Community (English)
- UA Community (English and Multilingual)

UA Day materials (with translations):
- Awareness Presentation-2hr (AR, ES, FR, PT, RU, ZH)
- Academic Curriculum Roadmap Development (AR, ES, FR, PT, RU, ZH)
- Programming Training for UA-4hr (AR, ES, FR, PT, RU, ZH)
- Email Administration Training for UA-4hr (AR, ES, FR, PT, RU, ZH)
- UA Adoption Event Requirements

The webpage also included suggested UA Day agendas to help organizers plan their event.
UA Day Participants

UA Day events were able to create significant awareness around the world and featured a total of 6,544 participants across the globe. A total of 42 percent of participants were from the LAC region, 29 percent from Africa, 21 percent from APAC region, seven percent from Europe, and one percent from North America. The distribution of participants across regions is shown in Figure 4.

These participants represented many different stakeholders, including:

- Businesses
- Governments and telecom regulators
- Civil society and non-government organizations, including At-Large Structures and Internet Society chapters
- Intergovernmental Organizations
- IT companies and technology startups
- DNS industry
- Internet service providers and hosting providers
- Academia, including faculty and students
UA Day **Events by Language**

UA Day events were held in more than 23 languages, including Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bangla, Bemba, Burmese, Chinese, English, French, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Korean, Lao, Macedonian, Nyanja, Portuguese, Serbian, Sesotho, Sinhala, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, and Thai.

UA Day **Outreach and Media Coverage**

ICANN conducted comprehensive communications outreach to spread UA Day awareness and encourage participation. An announcement and a press release were published in English and translations in Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish:

- **UA Day 2024: Call for Proposals** on 1 November 2023
- **Press Release: UA Day 2024: Driving a Multilingual Internet through Universal Acceptance** on 31 January 2024

The ICANN UA Day 2024 press release was replicated exactly by 455 media outlets, reaching a total potential audience of 115.1 million. It was viewed more than 6,300 times and garnered over 1850 “click throughs” to the published release. UA Day was also promoted extensively via social media from ICANN, UASG, and organizer channels. Other channels included ICANN newsletters, public meetings, a website presence on icann.org and uasg.tech, and promotion form UA Day event organizers.

Several interviews with ICANN’s Sally Costerton were conducted during UA Day keystone in Serbia, including online, print, and broadcast resulting in broad local coverage. The host of this event, RNIDS, also created a post UA Day event video that can be found online at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=es5csOHHWNs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=es5csOHHWNs). In addition, many of the local event organizers promoted their UA day events via direct outreach to journalists and social media channels best suited to their region.

UA Day **Photos**

For a gallery of UA Day event photos, visit ICANN’s [Flickr page](https://www.flickr.com).