



APrIGF Delhi 2014

Workshop Summary Report

Date: 6th August 2014

Time: 15:30-17:00

Workshop Title: Bringing diverse linguistic communities together for a unified IDN ruleset

Reported by & Contact Email: Akshat Joshi (akshatj@cdac.in)

Moderators: Akshat Joshi

Panelists:

Dr. Govind: CEO, National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI)

Mahesh Kulkarni: Associate Director and HoD GIST Research Labs

Ram Mohan: ICANN Board of Directors & CTO, Afilias Limited

Udaya Narayan Singh: Professor, Rabindra Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan

Mr. Abhijit Dutta: Community representative (Open source)

A brief summary of presentations (If any)

The main objective of this workshop was to touch upon the various aspects of creation of the Label Generation Ruleset for the Neo-Brahmi scripts. Akshat Joshi, C-DAC GIST started the session with the introduction to the panelists. The panel was made up of experts from a wide area of disciplines and specialisms: ICT, Community expertise, Language expertise to provide a holistic overview of the main thematic of the workshop. He followed it up by a brief introduction to the Internationalized Domain Names and the history of “Variant Issues Project” (also known as “IDN Variant TLDs”) at ICANN.

Dr. Govind CEO NIXI, talked about the journey of IDNs in Indian Languages which had started in 2005 and the efforts their team put in to make IDNs happen in Indian Languages. He stressed the importance of IDN’s to India’s economy and also underlined briefly the measures set in place to ensure that the ccTLD’s are secure.



In his presentation Mr. Ram Mohan from AFILIAS ICANNs initiative for IDNs specially the “Variant TLD Program” which was started to lay down a set of rules for the representation of IDNs in the root zone. He also touched upon the topic of Universal Acceptance of the IDN TLDs and new gTLDs. Asia Pacific region being the most diverse in terms of languages could bring about positive major change for the universal acceptance of TLDs.

Mr. Mahesh Kulkarni’s talk brought more details to Mr Ram Mohan’s presentation in which it underlined the grand challenge of handling 22 languages and 11 scripts of India and bringing the same to the community. He touched upon the importance of the Internationalized Internet. Since internet is reaching to the masses and India being the diverse country as far as languages and culture are concerned he also said that IDNs could fill that gap which was keeping away the monolingual user to access their native language content over the web.

Dr. Udaya Narayana Singh gave a glimpse of Multilingual and Multiscriptal India. In his presentation he talked about the complexities of scripts and languages in Indian sub-continent, their diversities, historical origins and the statistics involved. He traced the history and evolution of Indo-Aryan scripts and with rich illustrations and precise examples from a variety of languages he demonstrated the richness of Neo-Brahmi scripts and how it is important that computers capture their fine nuances within the ambit of IDN’s.

Mr. Abhijeet Dutta’s presentation presented a perspective from the user point of view. He emphasized on the principle of equivalence which was “Whatever works in English for the user should work in any other language”

A substantive summary and the main issues that were raised:

During the Q&A session, Mr. Edmon Chung (DotAsia) brought forth the issue of equivalent treatment for the non-latin scripts. He, drawing from the point that Mr. Abhijeet Dutta made regarding whatever works for English should also work for other languages, said that this may not always be the case for IDNs. Mr. Ram Mohan supplemented the discussion by bringing forth the case-folding decision which was a decision which is particularly applicable to English (Latin Script) and not to the other languages/scripts.



There was a comment from Mr. Don Hollander (APTLD) regarding the manner in which the Universal Acceptance of new TLDs can be broadened. He emphasized that since India is a major software development hub, Indian software community is well poised to take up the issue and resolve it. He also expressed his satisfaction over the fact that ICANN is focusing on the IDN issues.

Conclusion & Further Comments:

The session ended with a vote of thanks to all the participants and panelists. The discussions highlighted that the community is warming up the IDNs and thus the issues and solutions related to those. The workshop emphasized the need for community to participate in the process.