AccessPlus

in partnership with

Internet Society
Women SIG

Internet Society
Uganda Chapter

Concept Note

Universal Acceptance in Uganda

Date: Monthly webinar series (July to November 2021)

Background

[Access Plus](#) is a Ugandan based organisation that aims at improving livelihoods by promoting inclusive access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Internet to contribute to solving economic barriers. We do this by improving access to knowledge, information exchange and building technical capacity to use these technologies.

In partnership with government entities and private institutions, AccessPlus has so far carried out the following activities: [Created awareness on safe browsing](#) to students by sharing the risks of online presence; [held a webinar on the importance of Internet connectivity in times of pandemics](#): case for community networks in Uganda, [provided smartphones, printers and large-size monitors to Gwokke-keni ICT4D center in Northern Uganda](#) and held community training to demystify the Internet and technology to rural girls and women involved in businesses.

About Universal Acceptance (UA)

For any device to communicate with another on the Internet, it needs a unique identifier - a name or an Internet Protocol (IP) address. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) community develops policies that allow these identifiers to work well. Until 2010, the global Domain Name System (DNS) only allowed Top Level Domains (TLDs) which are in the Latin script. The DNS then expanded to include Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) for country code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs) and domain names for other TLDs. However, many language scripts and writing styles are used around the world, many of which are currently not supported by web browsers, email clients and software applications. This is where Universal Acceptance (UA) comes in.

UA helps to remove technical barriers for users, meaning that all TLDs should be able to work within all software and email applications regardless of the language script or number of characters. It is a foundational requirement for a truly multilingual Internet to remove linguistic barriers for accessing the Internet by allowing people to use native/indegenous languages and in turn bringing more people online.

According to the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) country readiness report (2020), the goal of UA is for these email addresses 测试1@server.technology and دون@رسيل.السعودية to have the same rate of acceptance as user@test.org. However, many organisations and businesses have not yet updated their systems to make this possible. In 2020, 9.7% of email servers were potentially configured to support email addresses in local languages and scripts. Chinese and Arabic are among the top spoken languages globally, yet only 11% of the top 1,000 websites globally support email addresses in these languages.

There are over 40 languages spoken in Uganda and over 140 spoken in East and Central Africa. Language has been named as one of the barriers for connecting the unconnected yet it

would give the world's population an opportunity to access the Internet. Local language domain names can help to support the creation and access to local language content and email addresses.

Aims and Objectives

1. Our project would like to contribute to UA efforts, from a Ugandan and East African perspective by creating awareness and sharing technical training content with policy/decision makers, software developers, website owners, researchers, technology enthusiasts, Internet end users, open source communities, among others, to understand UA and why it matters. At the intersection of UA and data science, we hope to work with the open data community to build a repository of resources to promote the adoption of new Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and updating existing ones to allow more language scripts.

2. Our aim is to develop a toolkit that can support these efforts and write a policy brief that will be used as an advocacy tool to inform policy. We hope that this can influence national and industry digital inclusion projects to promote local content and multiple language scripts.

Target Participants

We intend to hold monthly webinar series on Universal Acceptance on different topics. The events are anticipated to attract over 300 participants including Government entities, Policy and Decision makers, Data Scientists, Activists and Researchers.

Draft Agenda

Month (2021)	Activity
July (Online)	***Webinar 1: Understanding Universal Acceptance*** This session will define Universal Acceptance and focus on our readiness and why it matters. Panelists (TBC): ● Ajay Data, Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) ● Mohamed El Bashir, ICANN ● Yaovi Atohoun, ICANN Moderator: Internet Society Uganda Chapter representative
September (Online)	***Webinar 2: Universal Acceptance and Data Science*** Panelists: (TBC) ● Mutegeki Cliff Agaba ● Mark W. Datysgeld, Governance Primer

	● Data Science Uganda representative Moderator: Esther Patricia Akello, Access Plus
August (Online)	***Webinar 3: Universal Acceptance initiatives around Africa and globally -lessons learned*** This session will focus on showcasing case studies of Universal Acceptance implementation around the world Panelists (TBC): ● Abdalmonen Galila, UA Ambassador ● Yazid Akanho, ICANN ● Lilian Ivette De Luque Bruges, Vice Chair, UASG ● Jules Nizeyimana, Internet Society Rwanda Chapter Moderator: Lillian Achom, Access Plus
October (Blended - Onsite and Online)	***Webinar 4: The Role of Researchers, Developers and Technologists in Universal Acceptance*** This session will focus on sharing best practices on integrating Universal Acceptance (UA) into technology solutions and building an open repository for UA resources.Contributions can come from researchers, technology enthusiasts, industry experts and internet end-users. Panelists: (TBC) ● Researcher ● Douglas Onyango, Independent Consultant ● Malick Alassane, Internet Society Benin Chapter Moderator: Sarah Kiden, Access Plus
November (Blended - Onsite and Online)	***Webinar 5: Policy Interventions for Universal Acceptance Implementation*** The session will combine the discussions from the first four webinars into a policy brief that will be used as an advocacy tool to inform policy. The target audience will be policy makers, researchers and anyone interested in policy implications of technology solutions. Panelists: (TBC) ● Gloria Katuuku, Ministry of ICT & National Guidance ● Emmanuel Mugabi, NITA-U ● Bob Ochieng, ICANN ● Liz Orembo, KICTANET Moderator: Maureen Agena, Tune Communications

Sponsorship Request

Given your interest in development within the technology space, we would greatly value your opportunity to support our convening. We are seeking support on the following:

Draft Budget

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost ($)	Amount ($)	Description
Conference Venue & Refreshments	150	45	6,750	For Conference (inclusive of break tea, lunch & evening coffee)
Fellows & Travel	5	2,500	12,500	Fellowships for young participants
Identification Tags	150	1	150	Identification tags
Event production (Video Coverage & Photography)	1	600	600	One day coverage
Logistics	1	2,000	2,000	Publicity, Communications, Transport
Promotional Materials	1	2,700	2,700	Banners, flyers, t-shirts, pens, AfChix laptop stickers
Cocktail	150	20	3000	Networking event
Total			**$27,700**	

Bank Details

Funds will be received through the organization account:

Account Name: ACCESSPLUS
Bank: Tropical Bank
Account No. 2001815892
Branch: Nakivubo Bank, Kampala, Uganda

Contacts

Organising Team: Lillian Achom, Sarah Kiden, Esther Patricia Akello, Mutegeki Cliff Agaba on
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