

Multilingual Internet – Connecting all Indians

The beginning of the Internet has brought about the diverse opportunities for sharing information and knowledge in various languages. Today, anyone can produce content, share it with the rest of the world and receive feedback. In general, the Internet is open to all languages of the world when certain technical conditions are met, and when the necessary human and financial resources are in place.

However, many languages are not available on the Internet. There is a vast linguistic divide, which exists in cyberspace today and this will only intensify the digital divide. Everyone therefore should have access to the Internet which could be navigated using their respective languages. Nations, communities and individuals without access to the Internet and its resources will certainly be marginalized with limited access to information and knowledge, which are critical elements of sustainable development.

India is the second-largest Internet market in the world with "Total number of internet subscribers increased to 825 Million (July 2021), as per the reports of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

About 89% population of India can't speak or understand English and unable to use Domains (websites) and emails for communication because of their language barrier.

With the internet becoming progressively more prominent, and the next 500 million Internet users, very likely from the semi-urban and rural areas are, slated to come from India, hence it becomes crucial to ensure access to the internet without any disadvantage or discrimination

Further, Universal Acceptance (UA) is a foundational requirement for a truly multilingual Internet, one in which internet users can navigate entirely in local languages. To achieve Universal Acceptance, Internet applications and systems must treat all TLDs in a consistent manner, including new gTLDs and internationalized TLDs. Specifically, they must accept, validate, store, process and display all domain names. EAI, Email Address Internationalization, is part of the Universal Acceptance Program and includes support for IDNs in the domain name part of an email address and Unicode characters in the local part of an email address.

In order to reach the benefits of the Internet to a larger part of the population use of local scripts and languages will be very critical.