

# UNESCO WEB SITE EXTRACTS

## Steps taken for multilingual Internet

15-11-2007 (Rio de Janeiro)



ICANN, ITU and UNESCO will forge universal standards towards a multilingual cyberspace

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**The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UNESCO will collaborate on global efforts to forge universal standards towards building a multilingual cyberspace.**

The three agencies organized a workshop on this subject during the second Internet Governance Forum (IGF) taking place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 12 to 15 November 2007.

The Internet is a key factor in developing a more inclusive and development-oriented information society, which stresses plurality and diversity instead of global uniformity. Multilingualism is a key concept to ensure cultural diversity and participation for all linguistic groups in cyberspace. There is growing concern that hundreds of local languages may be sidestepped, albeit unintentionally in the radical expansion of Internet communication and information. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) recognized the importance attached to linguistic diversity and local content, with UNESCO given the responsibility to coordinate implementation of the Summit Action Line.

Thanks to ICANN's evaluation of Internationalized Domain Names, Internet users around the globe can now access wiki pages with the domain name "example.test" in the 11 test languages - Arabic, Persian, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Russian, Hindi, Greek, Korean, Yiddish, Japanese and Tamil. The wikis will allow Internet users to establish their own sub-pages with their own names in their own language; one suggestion is: example.test/yourname.

Domain Names, which are currently mainly limited to characters from the Latin or Roman scripts, are seen as an important element in enabling the multilingualisation of the Internet, reflecting the diverse and growing language needs of all users. "ITU is fully committed to assist its membership in promoting the diversity of language scripts for domain names," said Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of ITU. "This workshop represents an important opportunity to strengthen the need for cooperation with relevant organizations, such as UNESCO, WIPO and ICANN among others to ensure Internet use and advancement across language barriers."

The Plenipotentiary Conference of ITU, which took place in Antalya, Turkey in November 2006, recognized the need to make Internet content available in non-Latin based scripts. Internet users are more comfortable reading or browsing through texts in their own language and a multilingual Internet is essential to make it more widely accessible. The WSIS outcomes also focused on the commitment to work towards multilingualisation of the Internet as part of a multilateral, transparent and democratic process involving governments and all stakeholders.

UNESCO, joined by both ITU and ICANN, seeks to convene all major stakeholders around the world towards an agreement on universal standards regarding language issues in cyberspace. Such issues are far broader than the single issue of IDNs as they extend to standards for fonts and character sets, text encoding, language implementations within major computer operating systems, content development tools, automatic translation software, and search engines across languages. Ultimately, equitable



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### Features

[Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace](#)


[Adopted by the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference \(October 2003\)](#)

[UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity](#)

[Adopted by the 31st session of the UNESCO General Conference \(November 2001\)](#)

## UNESCO and World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

Towards Knowledge Societies

   [Advanced Search](#)

UNESCO with its unique mandate to promote the free exchange of ideas and knowledge has played a key role in WSIS. UNESCO's contribution incorporated the ethical, legal and sociocultural dimensions of the Information Society and helped to grasp the opportunities offered by the ICTs by placing the individual at its centre.



### WSIS IMPLEMENTATION and FOLLOW-UP



UNESCO works with all stakeholders towards the implementation of the outcomes of WSIS.

#### Action Lines

- [C3 - Access to Information and Knowledge](#)
- [C8 - Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content](#)
- [C7 - E-learning](#)
- [C7 - E-Science](#)
- [C9 - Media](#)
- [C10 - Ethical dimension of the Information Society](#)

#### Database of UNESCO WSIS related activities



UNESCO is contributing to the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action by a variety of activities that operationalize UNESCO's concept of "Knowledge Societies". This Database provides information on these activities. >> [Go to the Database](#)

#### Upcoming WSIS Facilitator's events



- >> [More Upcoming Events](#)
- >> [Past Events](#)
- >> [More on Implementation and Follow-up](#)

## DISCUSSION FORUM



Discussion forum for the preparation of upcoming action line meetings 2008

### Action Lines Discussions

- [C3 - Access to Information and Knowledge](#)
- [C8 - Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content](#)
- [C7 - E-learning](#)
- [C7 - E-Science](#)
- [C9 - Media](#)
- [C10 - Ethical dimension of the Information Society](#)

### News

- 20-06-2008 (Paris)

#### [UNESCO recruits expert to strengthen its WSIS follow-up team](#)

- 23-05-2008 (Geneva)

#### [Information Society on the move: ITU issues WSIS stocktaking report](#)

- 15-11-2007 (Rio de Janeiro)

#### [Steps taken for multilingual Internet](#)

- 14-11-2007 (Paris)

#### [Freedom of expression and security on the Internet](#)

- 08-11-2007 (Paris)

#### [UNESCO workshops on Freedom of Expression and Multilingualism at the Internet Governance Forum](#)

- 07-11-2007 (Kigali)

#### [ITU and Microsoft launch online platform to track ICT development](#)