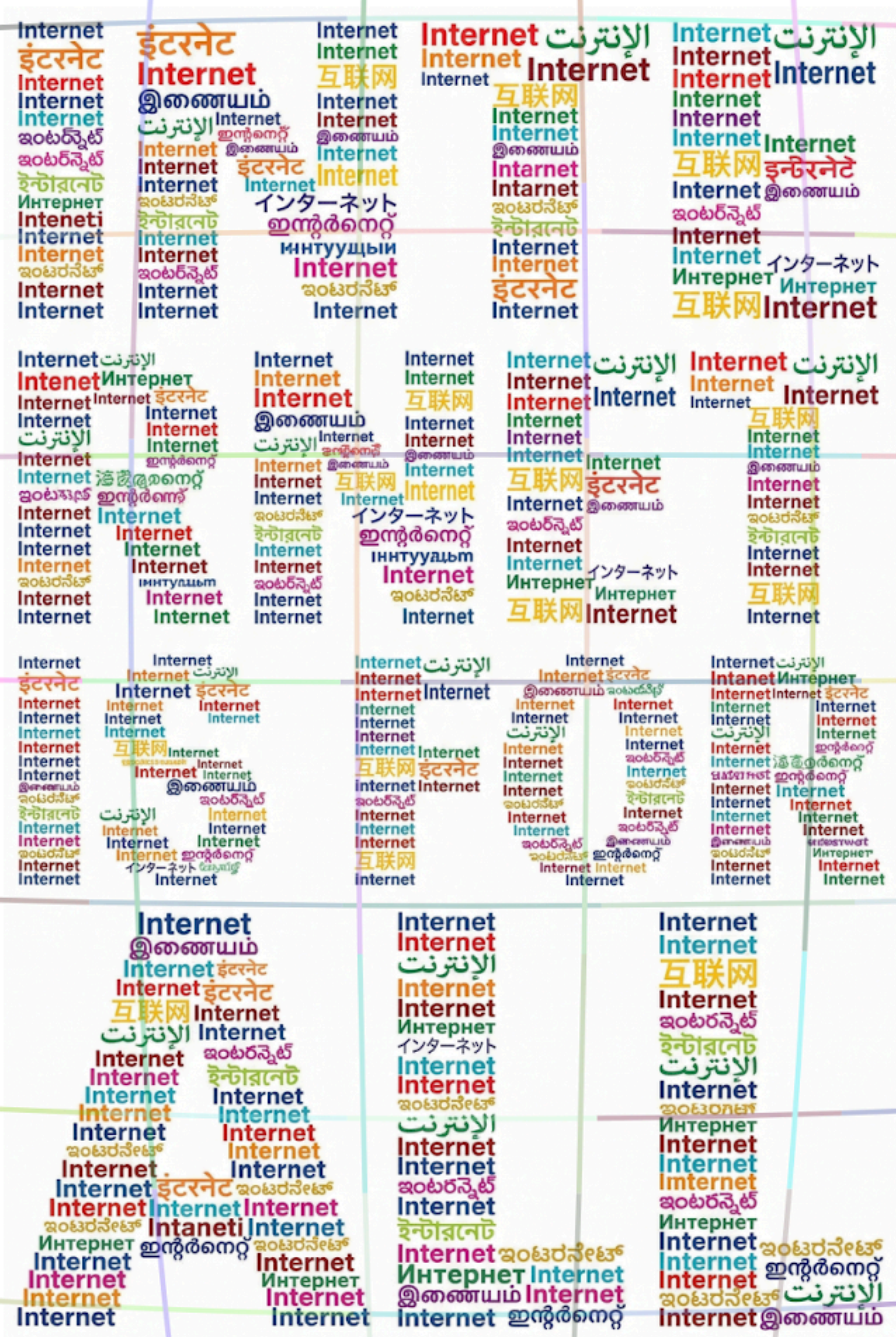
Internet Society
India Hyderabad
Chapter

ISOC HYD UA DAY 2026

EVENT REPORT



Universal Acceptance

Microsoft

ICANN

Internet Society
India Hyderabad
Chapter

ISOC HYD UA Day 2026

Universal Acceptance | Microsoft | ICANN

Date: Saturday April 4, 2026; Time: 9.00AM - 4.00PM

Venue: Gate.No:2. Bldg 4 MPRS Microsoft Campus, Gachibowli, Hyderabad - 500032

Jayesh Ranjan
Special Chief Secretary
Govt.of Telangana

Vijay Mamtani
CVP. Microsoft
Hyderabad Campus

Sarmad Hussain
Senior Director ICANN

Amitab Singhal
Member Board of
Directros, ICANN

Maaly Hazza
Regional Advisor,
UNESCO

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Theme: Accelerating Universal Acceptance - Multilingual Internet, Accessible & Inclusive for All.

Core Focus Areas: UA Adoption Strategy, Digital Inclusion, Tech Adoption, Policy Enablement, Academia & Developer Engagement.

India's only UA Day 2026
Sponosored by ICANN

With Presentations from,
ICANN, UNESCO, MeitY, NIXI, MICROSOFT, CDAC, Government of Telangana, Industry and Academia heads.

K. Mohan Raidu
President
Director-Informaticsindia

Dr. Salman Abdul Moiz
Vice President
Proffessor-UoH

Bala Peddigari
Secretary
Chief Innovation Officer, TCS

Sandeep Srivastava
Convenor-UA Day 2026
Prod. Director Microsoft

Registration

https://bit.ly/4bt8rO9

Document Information	Details
Event Date	April 4, 2026
Host Organisation	Internet Society India Hyderabad Chapter (ISOC HYD)
Theme	Universal Acceptance for an Inclusive Digital Future - Driving Atmanirbhar Bharat
Venue	Microsoft Campus, Gachibowli, Hyderabad, Telangana, India
Classification	Public / For all Stakeholder
Prepared by	Manas Joshi, Member, ISOC HYD Chapter
Edited by	K Mohan Raidu, President, ISOC HYD Chapter
Report Date	4 April 2026

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Executive Summary

The Universal Acceptance (UA) Day 2026 event took place on April 4, 2026, at the Microsoft Campus in Hyderabad. Hosted by the Internet Society India Hyderabad Chapter (ISOC HYD), this meeting was an important step toward creating a digital environment that includes everyone. The event brought together government officials, technical experts, academic leaders and corporate executives. This group met as part of global efforts, such as the United Nations' WSIS+20 goals, and India's work toward digital independence. Under the theme "*Universal Acceptance for an Inclusive Digital Future – Driving Atmanirbhar Bharat*," the symposium studied how current internet systems can be biased. It also created a plan to make digital access more equal for everyone.

More than 345 people attended the event, including many students from top engineering colleges and professionals from the local IT industry. The conference did more than just discuss technical rules; it presented Universal Acceptance as a basic human right in the digital age. Universal Acceptance means that all domain names and email addresses should work equally in all internet systems, regardless of the language, script or length used.

The meeting resulted in several important commitments for UA in India. One key outcome was the plan to include UA technical training in college courses. The integration of UA technical modules into the curricula of higher education institutions emerged as a critical deliverable, ensuring that future software engineers are natively equipped to build inclusive systems without the legacy ASCII bias. Furthermore, the event underscored the profound synergy between Universal Acceptance and the development of sovereign, multilingual Artificial Intelligence (AI). By connecting high-level policies with practical technical work, the conference established India, and specifically Hyderabad, as a global leader in Universal Acceptance and inclusive digital services.

Background & Context

The Evolution and Significance of Universal Acceptance Day

First introduced in 2023, Universal Acceptance (UA) Day represents a synchronized, international mobilization effort designed to catalyze the adoption of inclusive technical standards across local, national and regional technological ecosystems. Organized in strategic partnership with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and local chapters such as ISOC HYD, these events serve as a critical nexus for stakeholder engagement. The primary objective of UA Day is to engage top-tier technical communities, software vendors, government policymakers and Domain Name System (DNS) industry leaders in a collaborative dialogue to understand the profound socio-economic benefits of UA and to share practical methodologies for auditing and upgrading legacy software systems.

Decoding the Universal Acceptance Imperative

At its core, Universal Acceptance is a foundational technical best practice ensuring that all valid domain names and email addresses can be utilized seamlessly across all digital applications, identity validation interfaces and network protocols. In the formative decades of the Internet, the DNS was architecturally restricted to the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII), inherently embedding an English-language bias into the very fabric of global digital communication. In recent years, ICANN and the global technical community have aggressively expanded the root zone to reflect the diversity of human language and enterprise needs. This expansion introduced thousands of new generic top-level domains (gTLDs, e.g.,.photography,.technology) and Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs, e.g. एमईआईटीवाई.सरकार.भारत, بارت.سرکار.انڈیا, etc.)

Despite these monumental advancements at the DNS infrastructure level, a severe bottleneck persists at the application layer. Contemporary software systems, web applications, email servers and consumer-facing portals frequently rely on antiquated string validation algorithms, such as hardcoded regular expressions (regex) that unilaterally reject domain names exceeding three characters or containing non-Latin scripts. This technical failure results in systemic user

exclusion. Therefore, widespread awareness and remediation of this issue are non-negotiable prerequisites for a truly global, multilingual Internet.

The Strategic Value of UA for Bharat

Achieving comprehensive Universal Acceptance is of paramount strategic importance for India, a nation defined by its staggering linguistic diversity. With an estimated 700 million vernacular users either currently navigating or actively seeking entry into the digital sphere, the demand for a multilingual Internet is unprecedented. For these populations, the inability to interface with technology in their native languages constitutes a severe barrier to digital inclusion and economic mobility.

Supporting IDNs and EAIs yields profound economic and social dividends. It empowers citizens from rural and semi-urban demographics to seamlessly interact with local government platforms, access micro-financing and digital credit systems and establish localized e-commerce enterprises. This localization of digital interaction aligns seamlessly with the national vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and the broader objectives of the BhashaNet initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI).

Furthermore, integrating UA into the foundational layers of India's robust Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) ensures that platforms such as the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Aadhaar-linked authentication services remain universally accessible. From a commercial perspective, achieving UA compliance is not merely a regulatory burden but a profound market access multiplier. Businesses that re-engineer their systems to accept local linguistic identities position themselves to capture the vast, untapped economic potential of the next billion internet users, fostering a resilient, inclusive and culturally vibrant digital economy.

Session Summaries

09:30 | Opening and Context Setting

The conference began with an interactive session on context setting, led by **Bala Prasad Peddigari**, Secretary of ISOC HYD and Chief Innovation Officer, ICS and **Manish Gupta,** Partner, Riceberg Ventures. To engage the diverse audience of students and professionals, the speakers used the Mentimeter platform to conduct real-time polls.

This part of the event went beyond basic introductions by asking participants about their backgrounds and the languages they use most often. The resulting data highlighted the gap between the participants' linguistic diversity and the English-only nature of most digital platforms. By showing these statistics, the moderators demonstrated that technology must evolve to support different languages rather than forcing users to adapt to limited systems.

10:00 | Inaugural Ceremony

The formal inauguration of the event featured strategic addresses from key organizational leaders. These speakers reviewed the history of Universal Acceptance in the area and discussed its future development.

K. Mohan Raidu, President of ISOC Hyderabad, described the chapter's consistent work on Universal Acceptance since 2021. He noted that the Hyderabad chapter is a leader in digital inclusion, as it has hosted India's only dedicated UA Day event for three consecutive years. Mr Raidu also mentioned about the growth of the chapter's ISOC Academic Hubs, which now includes 20 academic hubs at major universities. He highlighted the substantial growth in engagement while reflecting on past successes.

A critical milestone highlighted by Raidu was the transition from mere awareness generation to institutional capacity building. He proudly announced the successful execution of a rigorous, three-day Faculty Development Program (FDP) led by ICANN experts, which resulted in six major universities formally committing to introduce Universal Acceptance engineering principles directly into their core academic curricula. Recognizing India's 700 million vernacular users, Raidu declared that the ultimate objective is to elevate India to the status of a "global lighthouse for UA." He concluded by confirming a strategic partnership between ICANN and the ISOC Hyderabad Chapter designed to be the ICANN's UA Local Initiative in India to implement UA projects directly into the heart of the city's IT industry.

Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary to the Government of Telangana, delivered an enlightening opening address on the intersection of public policy, digital infrastructure and linguistic inclusion. Drawing upon his extensive tenure architecting the 'Digital Telangana' initiative, Ranjan articulated that physical connectivity is entirely insufficient without cognitive accessibility.

Ranjan noted that people in rural areas often hesitate to use digital tools because they see the internet as something designed only for urban, English speakers. To change this, the Telangana government introduced technology-based support in areas like farming and government services. He used examples of government platforms in local languages to show that digital empowerment happens when systems are designed for a person's native language. Finally, he called on developers and officials to ensure that the technological growth in Hyderabad benefits all citizens.

10:30 | Keynote Address: Building the AI-Powered Multilingual Internet

Vijay Mamtani, Corporate Vice President at Microsoft, gave a keynote speech about how Artificial Intelligence and Universal Acceptance are connected. Mamtani stated that AI is becoming the main way people use technology. He warned that if AI systems do not support different languages and scripts, it will create a large gap in who can access digital information.

He explained Microsoft's plan to use Universal Acceptance at a large scale. He noted that AI models must be built to understand and create content in many different languages. Mamtani said that creating technology for everyone requires using more than just English data. If AI cannot work with international domain names or email addresses in local scripts, many people will not be able to use these new tools. The speech highlighted that technology leaders have a responsibility to create products that work for people regardless of the language they speak.

10:50 | Keynote Address: Reimagining the Internet: UA as the Foundation for the Next Billion Users

Amitabh Singhal, Member, Board of Directors, ICANN, gave a detailed address that highlighted Universal Acceptance as not just a technical standard, but a vital tool for global fairness. Singhal noted a major difference between the growth of Internet systems and the slow adoption of these systems by software applications. He reported that the global DNS now supports 151 Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) in 37 languages and 23 scripts, which has led to millions of registrations around the world.

However, Singhal shared concerning data about how these tools are actually used: currently, only 14% of the top 1,000 global websites can accept email addresses based on IDNs and only 28.4% of systems can process emails in local scripts. This lack of adoption leaves out 3 billion people from the global population who are either not connected or have poor internet access.

Despite current progress, Singhal highlighted a stark adoption gap where only 14% of top websites and 28.4% of email systems support local scripts, excluding 3 billion people from the digital economy. He noted that the "next billion users" will rely on mobile and AI tools, expecting the Internet to adapt to their native languages, like a Hindi-speaking farmer needing local-script domains to run a business and talk to suppliers, rather than being forced to change how they communicate to fit the technology.

To address this market failure, Singhal urged governments to mandate UA in public procurement and called for private-sector benchmarks to hold software vendors accountable. By embedding script support into developer (CI/CD) pipelines and national Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), he argued the industry can shift the paradigm from “users adapting to systems” to “systems adapting to users,” transforming compliance into a gateway for unprecedented global market access.

11:30 | Session #1: Language, Identity and Digital Inclusion: Why UA Matters for Humanity

Ma’aly Hazzaz, Regional Advisor for the Asia-Pacific at UNESCO, elevated the technical discourse by contextualizing Universal Acceptance within the framework of international human rights and anthropological preservation. Hazzaz firmly posited that UA is not a niche engineering concern but a ‘foundational enabler of digital dignity’. She argued that the Internet serves as the modern repository of human culture; therefore, ensuring that every language, script and individual holds an equal and functional place in the digital sphere is an absolute necessity.

The session cast a spotlight on the critical necessity of advancing multilingual Internet access to facilitate equitable public service delivery, inclusive educational frameworks and local entrepreneurship across South Asia. Hazzaz intricately linked the objectives of UA with UNESCO's broader mandate, specifically the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032). She warned that languages failing to transition functionally into the digital realm face accelerated extinction. By forcing users to abandon their native tongues to access basic online services, legacy systems actively contribute to linguistic erosion.

Hazzaz detailed the robust, ongoing collaboration between UNESCO and ICANN, operating under a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly address the digital language divide. She expressed profound gratitude for the multi-stakeholder synergy witnessed at the Hyderabad event and noted that UNESCO is proudly partnering with ICANN to celebrate more than 30 UA Day events globally between March 25 and May 30, 2026. Her talk concluded with a steadfast commitment to continue promoting the policy standards and capacity-building necessary to ensure that every community can thrive online without sacrificing its linguistic heritage.

11:50 | Session #2: From Policy to Practice: Building a Global-Local Ecosystem for Universal Acceptance

Satish Babu, Co-Chair of the ALAC IDNs Working Group and IEEE Member, provided a critical analysis of the challenges facing the Universal Acceptance (UA) movement. His presentation focused on the gap between policy and practice. Babu noted that while major tech companies, national governments and ICANN all agree that UA is necessary, there is still a lack of progress in actual implementation and its adoption.

Babu pinpointed the root cause of this implementation failure: a systemic lack of coordination across policy frameworks, technical standard-makers, independent software vendors and frontline developers. This lack of teamwork leads to users being excluded from digital services. It also causes digital onboarding processes to fail and reduces trust in technology when valid identities are rejected by websites and applications.

To bridge this gap, Babu analyzed the required architecture of a "global-local ecosystem." He highlighted India as the ultimate global reference implementation for UA, given its

unprecedented scale and its operation of at least 15 official scripts. To show the importance of UA, Babu shared the history of the Tulu language in India. He explained how the introduction of the printing press by missionaries centuries ago inadvertently marginalized the Tulu script in favor of more dominant regional languages due to the economic constraints of physical typesetting. Today, however, young, technologically proficient advocates are leveraging digital tools to revive the Tulu script, pushing for its eventual integration into the global DNS. This powerful example demonstrated that digital infrastructure, when governed by UA principles, can actively resurrect historical identities rather than overwrite them.

Babu concluded by calling for stronger action. He called for aggressive 'push factors,' specifically urging governments to enforce strict procurement standards requiring all vendor software to be verifiably UA-compliant before deployment in public projects.

12:15 | Session #3: Inside Universal Acceptance: Standards, Challenges and Implementation Roadmap

Sarmad Hussain, Senior Director of IDN and UA Programs at ICANN, provided an exhaustive technical briefing on the evolution, current state and future roadmap of Universal Acceptance standards. Hussain traced the historical expansion of the DNS, noting that prior to 2009, top-level domains were restricted exclusively to ASCII script. The paradigm shifted with the implementation of the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process, which permitted the delegation of country codes in local languages, followed by the massive expansion of generic top-level domains in the 2012 application round. Hussain proudly noted that the system currently boasts 61 delegated ccTLDs representing 42 countries and territories in local scripts, including a significant concentration within India due to its vast script diversity.

Despite infrastructure-level triumphs, Hussain presented data revealing that 80% to 85% of prominent local websites across 20 countries reject valid local-language email addresses, while 72% of global email servers fail to process internationalized identifiers. To rectify this lag in application-layer adoption, he urged technology providers to overhaul design processes and sysadmins to audit dependencies, pointing to ICANN's own 92% UA-readiness and its contributions to open-source platforms like WordPress as a model for progress.

Furthermore, he emphasized the critical role of academia in ensuring sustainable capacity. Hussain formally announced the global rollout of the ICANN UA Curriculum, applauding early adopters like the Sri Rama Krishna Institute of Technology in India and urged universities nationwide to integrate these technical protocols into their standard computer science programs. He closed by looking forward to the next round of new gTLDs launching in April 2026, which will introduce even more IDNs, reinforcing the absolute urgency for systemic UA compliance.

12:40 | Keynote Address: From Local to Global: Building Bharat's AI-Native Multilingual Internet

Kiran Chandra Yarlagadda, Founder of SWECHA and the VISWAM.AI Centre of Excellence, gave a speech about how Universal Acceptance, AI and digital independence are connected. Yarlagadda argued that current AI development, mostly led by Western companies using English-language data, risks creating a new form of digital and language-based control over other parts of the world.

To combat this, Yarlagadda detailed the mission of VISWAM.AI, a joint initiative between Swecha and IIIT Hyderabad designed to build an indigenous, AI-native multilingual ecosystem for Bharat. He showcased remarkable community-driven engineering achievements, most notably 'Gonthuka,' a Telugu Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) system. Unlike proprietary systems,

Gonthuka was crowdsourced from the ground up, utilizing 1.5 million voice samples contributed by over 45,000 citizens, meticulously capturing the vast array of regional Telugu dialects. He also highlighted 'AI Chandamama Kathalu,' the first Small Language Model engineered specifically to generate culturally contextualized stories in Indic languages.

Yarlagadda dedicated a significant portion of his address to the urgent need for novel legal and policy frameworks to govern these native datasets. He detailed a recent stakeholder roundtable held at IIIT Hyderabad, where VISWAM.AI and SFLC.in released a pioneering draft open-source license tailored for the AI era. Yarlagadda explained that traditional open-source licenses, which primarily protect source code, fail to prevent proprietary tech giants from scraping and monetizing community-built linguistic datasets without providing attribution or reciprocal value. The proposed license integrates strict principles of community ownership, reciprocity and verifiability, ensuring that as India builds a truly multilingual internet, the cultural data fueling that infrastructure remains an equitable public good rather than a monopolized corporate asset.

13:45 | UA Adoption Demonstration

The event moved from high-level policy to practical engineering, as **K Pranava Raidu** and **Kanugula Sanjay** from the ISOC Hyderabad UA Team gave a detailed, live technical demonstration of Universal Acceptance implementation. This session was designed for software developers, system architects and IT administrators responsible for updating older systems.

The presenters offered a careful, complete guide and demonstration to optimizing code so it could properly support Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Email Address Internationalization (EAI). They showed the practical steps for updating server environments and changing database structures to use UTF-8 encoding, which is essential for saving data in non-Latin scripts.

A key focus of the session was solving the most common failure point: the logic used to validate forms on both the frontend and backend. The presenters first showed old regular expression (regex) patterns that only allow basic ASCII inputs and unfairly restrict the length of Top-Level Domains (TLDs), explaining how this code quietly excludes users of local languages. They then wrote and showed new, UA-compliant code libraries that can correctly analyze and accept various script inputs through proper Punycode conversion.

By successfully setting up and displaying an identity in a local script during the session, the demonstration proved to the technical audience that meeting Universal Acceptance standards is an easily achievable task when using current development tools.

14:15 | Academia and Research Track: Building India's UA-Ready Talent Ecosystem

This panel discussion, moderated by **Manish Gupta**, addressed why Universal Acceptance (UA) is adopted slowly: the way engineers are educated. The panel included notable academic leaders: **Dr. Uday Desai**, the Founding Director of IIT Hyderabad and **Prof. Salman Abdul Moiz** Professor at University of Hyderabad.

The panel agreed that current computer science lessons continue to favor English-based systems because they do not teach students about modern, inclusive coding standards. Dr. Uday Desai emphasized that academic frameworks must become more flexible and modern. Dr. Desai stated that Indian universities should stop simply following Western technology trends and instead lead by creating solutions, like UA, that meet the needs of the Global South.

Prof. Salman Abdul Moiz, an expert in high-performance computing and AI, offered a practical plan for updating school subjects. In line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, he

explained how versatile education models can include UA principles. He argued that UA should be part of core classes like Database Management and Network Protocols rather than being taught as a separate, minor topic. The panel concluded that better cooperation between industries and universities is necessary to ensure new developers can build an inclusive, UA-ready internet.

15:00 | Industry Deep Dive: UA as a Business Multiplier

This expert corporate panel changed the discussion of Universal Acceptance from a technical or charitable duty to an important and profitable business strategy. The panel was moderated by **Bala Prasad Peddigari**, Chief Innovation Officer, TCS. It included **Seshu Venkata**, Vice President, Wipro, **MGPL Narayana**, Chair, IEEE Hyderabad Section and **Rajeev Ranjan**, AI Leader, Wipro. They discussed the clear financial benefits of supporting multiple languages.

Seshu Venkata reviewed Universal Acceptance in the context of digital business changes and the increase in hybrid work. Using examples from global healthcare and life sciences, Venkata showed that as large organizations move to advanced cloud-based systems to support international teams, limited identity management systems become a problem. Modern business

environments need to be able to identify and verify diverse employee and patient records to ensure clear communication, strong security and steady operations.

Rajeev Ranjan discussed the impact of Universal Acceptance on Artificial Intelligence and data platforms. As an expert in global data strategies, Ranjan argued that AI is a tool to improve human ability, but it only works well if it includes data from everyone. To build reliable solutions in a world that values privacy, data platforms must be able to accurately identify customer records in different scripts and languages. Systems that do not accept non-English inputs create errors in customer data, leading to missed business opportunities in new markets.

MGPL Narayana provided an analysis of how businesses can stay agile. He stated that a business is only successful if it can respond to new challenges, such as the hundreds of millions of people now using the Internet in their local languages. Narayana argued that organizations that cannot update their software to Universal Acceptance standards are showing technical weakness. The panel concluded that using Universal Acceptance is a vital way to grow a business and reach the next billion consumers.

15:45 | Closing Ceremony & Vote of Thanks

The extensive day of technical learning and strategic discussion concluded with an energizing certificate distribution ceremony. Members of the ISOC Hyderabad team, along with academic and industry partners, were formally recognized for their contributions to the UA agenda.

The top performers of the interactive quiz were officially announced during the closing ceremony and received special prizes to encourage active participation.

Dr. Salman Abdul Moiz, Vice-President of the ISOC Hyderabad Chapter, delivered a sincere Vote of Thanks. He expressed deep gratitude to Microsoft for providing the campus venue and to ICANN for its consistent strategic and logistical partnership. Dr. Moiz also thanked the Informatics India team for their excellent technical management of the hybrid event. Finally, he gave special recognition to the moderators, Manish Gupta and Bala Prasad Peddigari, for their engaging facilitation that maintained high energy throughout the program.

Representation and Participation

The 2026 Universal Acceptance Day in Hyderabad generated a highly enthusiastic response from the regional technology community, attracting **over 366 registered attendees**. In line with ISOC Hyderabad's strategic focus on developing the next generation of digital experts, the majority of participants were university students, academic faculty and young IT professionals.

Academic Hub Participation

The event was majorly highlighted by college students, primarily from the academic hubs through the ISOC HYD chapter.

About the Host

Internet Society India Hyderabad Chapter (ISOC HYD)

The Internet Society India Hyderabad Chapter (ISOC HYD) is an influential, multi-stakeholder, non-profit organization fiercely dedicated to advancing the open development, evolution and equitable use of the Internet for the benefit of all. Through targeted policy advocacy, grassroots capacity building and robust technical training programs, ISOC HYD actively shapes the technological landscape of the region. The chapter has cultivated a massive community presence by establishing dedicated academic hubs across major universities and forging strategic alliances with global bodies such as ICANN, UASG and IEEE. While serving as the vanguard for the Universal Acceptance movement in India, the chapter's deep technical expertise also encompasses critical focus areas including IPv6 deployment, end-to-end encryption advocacy, internet forensics and DNS security. ISOC HYD operates on the unyielding principle that the Internet must remain an open, globally connected, secure and trustworthy resource for human empowerment.

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