



**WHEN
YOU CAN'T
TRANSLATE
EVERYTHING**

**SUCCESSFULLY MANAGING TRANSLATION
EXPECTATIONS ON A LIMITED BUDGET**

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smartling 

If you manage a global website and you're frustrated by an insufficient translation budget, I have news for you.

You're not alone.

The truth is, few companies ever translate everything they want. Translation is too often a zero-sum game, in which limited funds are stretched across an ever-expanding number of localized websites and expanding content. But just because you can't translate everything doesn't mean you can't have successful local websites.

The key to success is in setting and managing language expectations for your customers. This eBook provides a number of tips on how to make the most of a limited translation budget and, more important, how to create a positive user experience, regardless of language.





DON'T CREATE A LANGUAGE FACADE

Some companies, when going global, make the mistake of trying to spread their localization budget across as many countries/languages as possible, resulting in websites that I call “local facades.”

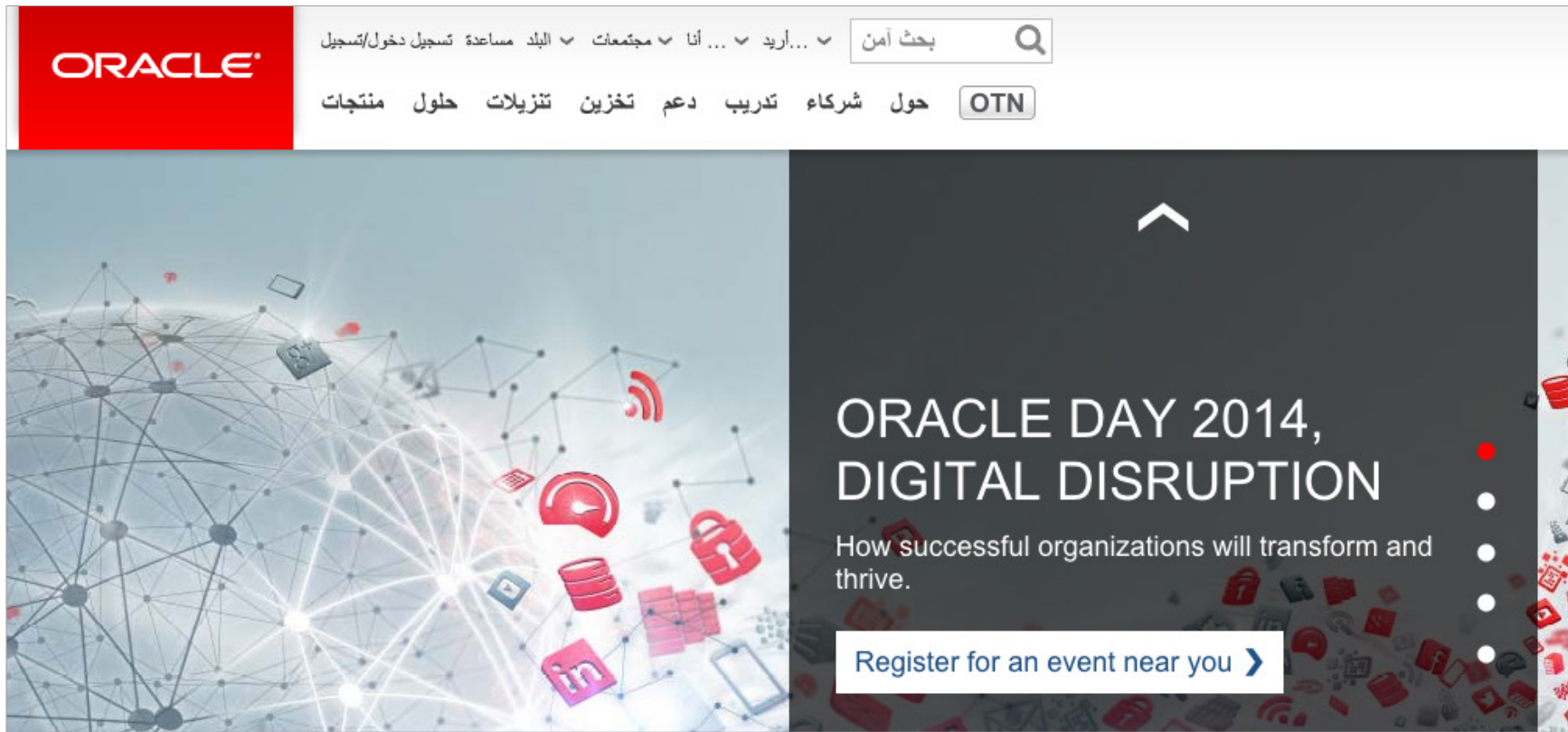
If you can afford to translate only one or two pages of a website into a given language, you’re probably better off not translating anything at all.

While the navigation text in the header has been translated into Arabic, clicking on the links takes users to English-language content.

That is, unless those few web pages offer true value to web users, such as providing contact information for in-market sales or support teams who speak the customer’s language.

But if all you’re doing is trying to create the impression that you support the user’s language, you’re going to create the wrong impression. Users will quickly discover after clicking on a link or two that there is little content of value for them, and they’ll leave the localized website disappointed and unlikely to return.

For example, shown below is the home page of Oracle’s Oman website. While the navigation text in the header has been translated into Arabic, clicking on the links takes users to English-language content. This website would qualify as a facade because so little text has been translated for the user – including the prominent featured content.



You only get one chance to make a first impression, and you want that first impression to be positive. If users arrive at a localized website and are quickly disappointed, you'll face more work in the months or years ahead trying to get them to return to the website once you've added sufficient translated content.

2

FOCUS ON USAGE SCENARIOS

People come to your website or open your web app to accomplish a goal. Some of these goals are common to the majority of your visitors — such as shopping for a product or service — while other goals are less common, such as searching for a job opening or viewing your company’s mission statement.

I recommend taking a scenario-based approach to your localization strategy and spending. That is, identify major scenarios that users expect you to support through your websites and apps, and then find out what localization of each scenario will cost.

Purchasing a product would qualify as a scenario. What elements of your website require localization to help users achieve this goal? What content needs to be translated? How much work is required to support international ecommerce, shipping, and

returns? For a new market, you might focus on a scenario that includes just a small number of products, thereby limiting your translation costs. You might also rely on in-country retailers or distributors to manage sales fulfillment.



Every scenario will require different levels of investment. You will soon develop a list of scenarios and their related costs. You might find that some scenarios are simply too expensive to support initially, such as providing real-time phone support in the user's language.

But by having this information up front, you can plan to support different scenarios across

different websites, depending on your goals for each site.

Take, for instance, the Amazon Netherlands home page. The website is geared only towards the Kindle device and the consumption of eBooks. In this case, Amazon launched a localized website with a very narrow scenario in mind.

amazon.nl

The Amazon logo, a curved orange arrow pointing from left to right, is positioned below the text 'amazon.nl'.

The screenshot shows the Amazon.nl homepage. At the top left is the Amazon logo and the text 'amazon.nl'. To its right are links for 'Jouw Amazon.nl' and 'Hulp'. On the top right, there is a 'GRATIS Kindle-leesapps' banner. Below the logo is a navigation bar with 'Winkelen per Afdeling' and a search bar containing 'Kindle Store'. A 'Zoeken' button and a 'Halo. Aanmelden Je account' link are also present. The main content area features a 'Sinterklaas-promotie' banner with a Santa Claus icon, stating 'Tot 70% korting' and 'Trakteer jezelf!'. Below this are several book covers including 'Sutler', 'Richard House', 'Harlan Coben', 'Water vuil', 'Morgaan', and 'Ik ben pelgrim'. To the right of the promotion is a 'Nieuwe Nederlandse Kindle store!' banner with the text 'Uitgebreide selectie, lage prijzen' and a 'Neem een kijkje' link. Below that is a 'Fokke & Sukke Gaan Digitaal!' banner with the text 'Exclusief bij Amazon.nl' and an 'Ontdek meer' link. At the bottom, there is a 'Download onze gratis' banner and a 'DE VERNIEUWDE' banner.

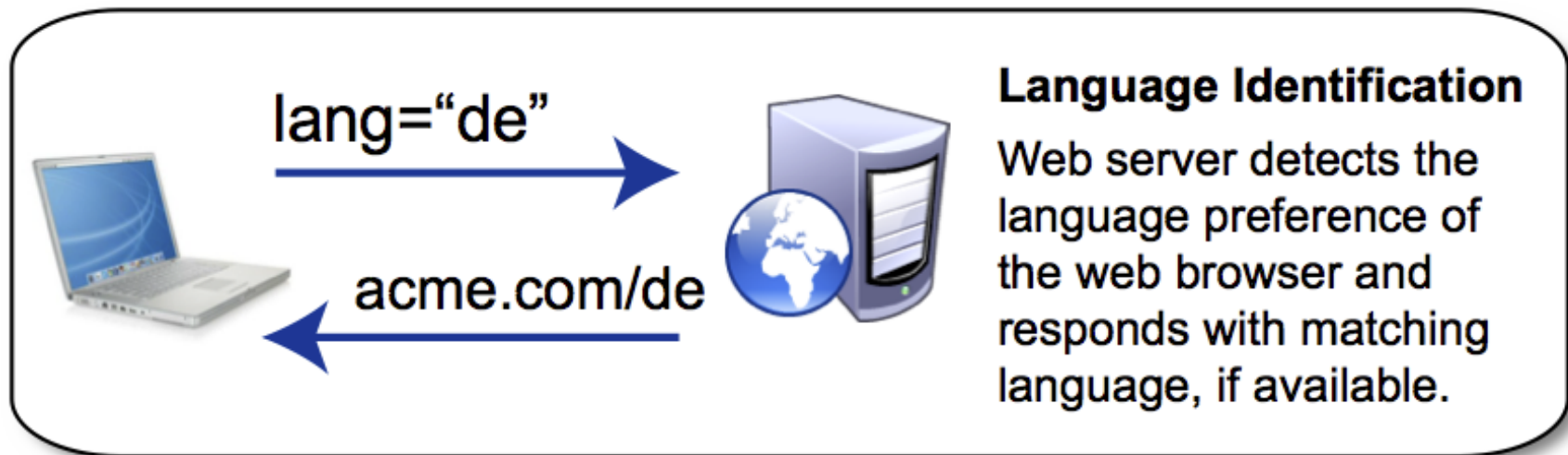
The nice thing about a scenario-based approach is that you're not focusing on a "page count" for your website. Too often, companies look at how many pages they want translated and budget from there, when this doesn't always serve users successfully. For instance, what's the good of translating a product page if the user can't actually purchase it because you didn't localize your online ecommerce engine?

3

HELP USERS QUICKLY LOCATE THEIR LANGUAGES

Language identification, also known as language negotiation or content negotiation, is an effective technique for delivering content in the languages that users want — before they even ask for it.

Web browsers send a “locale code” to web servers when requesting a web page. This code may be as simple as a language code, such as “de” for Germany, or may include both language and country codes, such as “es-mx,” for Spanish-Mexico.



Google, Facebook, and many other global companies make use of language identification to automatically deliver content in the user's preferred language.

The user's web browser language setting is typically aligned with the operating system of the computer or smartphone, which helps to ensure that the language requested is indeed the language the user wants to use. However, be aware that users may speak more than one language and prefer to interact with your website in a different language than you assumed. So you might use language identification to give users a choice of languages, particularly in situations in which users may be bilingual.



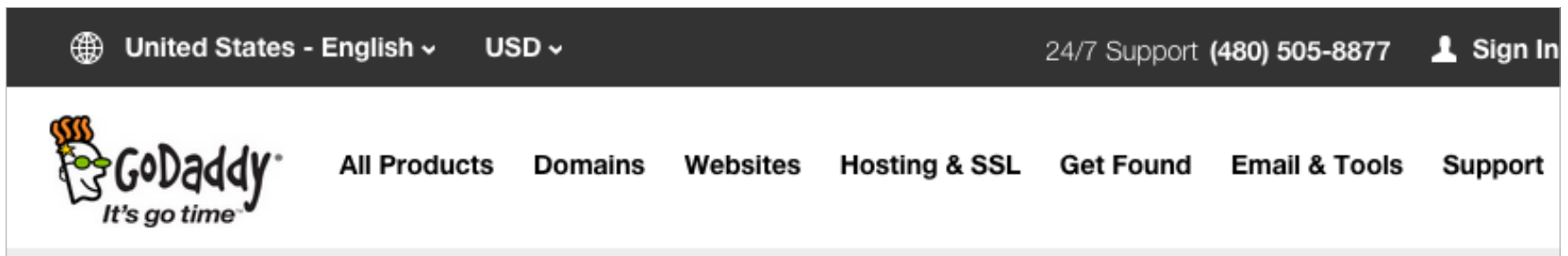


Por favor confirme su idioma de preferencia

English

Español

Southwest Airlines detects that the web browser is set to prefer Spanish and yet provides a visual language gateway overlay so users can select their preferred language. This is a smart approach, not only for helping users stay in control of their language settings but also for learning what languages users prefer. The data you will collect based on user selection can go a long way in understanding user behavior and language preference.



A word of caution: Before you test language identification, be sure you have an effective visual global gateway in place, ideally located in the header of every web page, as shown here with GoDaddy.

A visual global gateway ensures that users can easily change their language settings at any given time.

4

HELP USERS SELF-TRANSLATE CONTENT

The rise of services such as Google Translate and Bing Translate has empowered users to self-translate content for themselves. And your website has likely been translated by these services.

The good news is that these services effectively unlock the content of your website for vast numbers of new potential customers — for free. The bad news is that you have no control over the quality of the translations.

But what if you were to provide users with machine translation software that you controlled? Instead of relying on Google Translate, you could host software that provided a higher degree of quality along with usage statistics that informed your ongoing translation efforts. A small but growing number of companies are doing just this.



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Nov 1, 2014

Issue:
When you try to install Navisworks Service Pack 1, the program tries to open *roamer.msi* and cannot proceed.

Translate this Page

English

Translate

Use this language while I browse
This is [machine translation](#).

Related Articles

Shown here is how Autodesk is using machine translation with its content knowledgebase. Note the green “Translate this page” button followed by a language pull-down menu. Also note the “This is machine translation” disclaimer link below the menu; if you do use machine translation, be sure to let users know as well.

By managing the machine translation process itself, Autodesk can better manage translation quality and also learn what languages and what content is of most importance to users. Autodesk could, for instance, detect what content is most visited and in what languages — and then prioritize this content for professional translation at a later time, improving its translation workflow.

And, most important, Autodesk is unlocking vast amounts of content for users across a significant number of languages. While users would prefer professionally translated content, machine translated content is far better than no translation at all.



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5

SOME LINKS MAY BE BETTER LEFT UNTRANSLATED

Suppose you've translated 25% of your website. This means you have numerous web pages that remain in the source language, most likely English. And, by extension, your website is probably littered with links to these English-language web pages.

Typically, when a web page is translated, all text on that web page is translated, including the links. But what if those translated links take users back to English-language content? Users may rightly expect a translated link to take them to a translated web page.



Shown here is an example of how Autodesk handles this dilemma. At the bottom of the left column of this French-language web page is a link to English content — notice the “anglais” text that lets users know this before they click on the link. This bit of text is a very nice way of managing user expectations and may be automatically inserted via content management software (CMS).



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There are two general approaches to managing language expectations for this particular situation:

1 **Manage language expectations within the links themselves**

This is the Autodesk approach. For links that take users to English-language content, add an icon or text to let users know the intended web page is not in his or her language. If your content management software can't easily manage this, you might be better served with the next approach.

2 **Any text that links to untranslated content should remain untranslated**

By leaving these text links alone, it should be evident to users that the content on the other side of the link has not been translated. As target web pages are translated, it's important that the links also are translated, a process that would also benefit from a CMS solution.

This degree of link management may seem like a minor detail, but imagine the collective experience for users who may traverse 20 or 30 links in a given visit, only to be met with non-translated content when they expected it to be in their language. This “minor” detail can become a major detail very quickly.

Managing language expectations can also help users manage bandwidth usage. For example, if you offer PDF files on your website, you’ll want to let users know what languages these PDF files are in before users take the time and trouble to download them. In many parts of the world, users pay dearly for bandwidth used and will not appreciate downloading a file they cannot read.



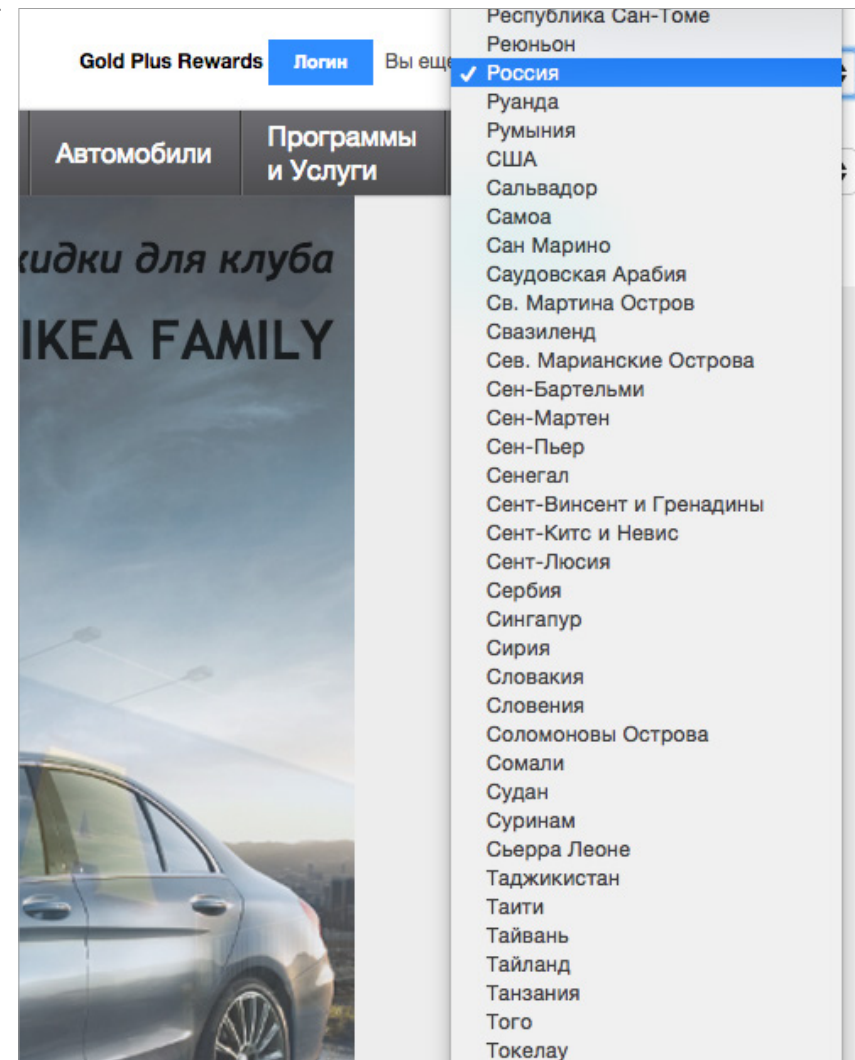
6

DON'T OVERTRANSLATE YOUR GLOBAL GATEWAY

Imagine that you arrive at a website that is not in your language and you click on the global gateway menu to find a link to your local website. Imagine that you encounter a global gateway menu such as the one on the right:

This is a global gateway menu that has been fully translated into Russian. So even though the link to your country is probably on this list, if you don't understand Russian, you probably won't find it.

Why do companies overtranslate menus like this? This is usually a well-intended mistake. The translation company was likely tasked with translating the entire web page and viewed this menu as just another menu in need of translation.



However, the global gateway is a very unique element in need of special treatment. Below is an example of the correct way to localize a global gateway menu:

This site in other countries/regions:

Algeria - Français	Gulf - English	Panamá - Español	Uruguay - Español
Argentina - Español	Honduras - Español	Paraguay - Español	Venezuela - Español
Australia - English	Hong Kong SAR - English	Perú - Español	Việt Nam - Tiếng việt
België - Nederlands	Hrvatska - Hrvatski	Philippines - English	Ελλάδα - Ελληνικά
Belgique - Français	India - English	Polska - Polski	Беларусь - Беларуская
Bolivia - Español	Indonesia - Bahasa Indonesia	Portugal - Português	България - Български
Bosna i Hercegovina - Hrvatski	Ireland - English	Puerto Rico - Español	Казахстан - Русский
Brasil - Português	Ísland - Íslenska	República Dominicana - Español	Россия - Русский
Canada - English	Italia - Italiano	Republica Moldova - Română	Україна - Українська
Canada - Français	Jordan - English	România - Română	עברית - עברית
Česká Republika - Čeština	Latvija - Latviešu	Saudi Arabia - English	العراق - العربية
Chile - Español	Lebanon - English	Schweiz - Deutsch	المملكة العربية السعودية - العربية
Colombia - Español	Lietuva - Lietuvių	Singapore - English	ليبيا - العربية
Costa Rica - Español	Magyarország - Magyar	Slovenija - Slovenščina	مصر - العربية
Crna Gora - Srpski	Malaysia - English	Slovensko - Slovenčina	دول الخليج - العربية
Cyprus - English	Malta - English	South Africa - English	ไทย - ไทย
Danmark - Dansk	México - Español	Srbija - Srpski	대한민국 - 한국어
Deutschland - Deutsch	Morocco - Français	Sri Lanka - English	中国 - 简体中文
Ecuador - Español	Nederland - Nederlands	Suisse - Français	台灣 - 繁體中文
Eesti - Eesti	New Zealand - English	Suomi - Suomi	日本 - 日本語
Egypt - English	Nicaragua - Español	Sverige - Svenska	香港特別行政區 - 繁體中文
El Salvador - Español	Nigeria - English	Tunisia - Français	
España - Español	Norge - Bokmål	Türkiye - Türkçe	
France - Français	Österreich - Deutsch	United Kingdom - English	
Guatemala - Español	Pakistan - English	United States - English	

Notice how the country/region names are in their native languages. Instead of “Germany” we have “Deutschland.” And, although many web users may not understand what “Ελληνικά” means, its intended audience (Greek speakers) most certainly will.

I call this a “universal” global gateway because it is localized for all target audiences, not just one audience. The nice thing about this gateway is that it can be used across all local websites. And you will save a few dollars on translation since you don’t have to re-translate the gateway for each language. But keep in mind that if you don’t support translated content for a given country website, you might want to leave the link in English so as not to create expectations among users that the website has been translated.



7

ABOVE ALL, BE TRANSPARENT

It's natural to want to avoid telling your customers that you have not yet translated major parts of your website. But being open and honest with your customers may actually result in a more positive experience.

Consider Hyatt. Shown here is the Hyatt global gateway menu. Notice the “abridged” localized websites in Russian and Portuguese. Instead of pretending that these two sites were as full-featured as the rest of the localized websites, Hyatt took a more transparent approach — and this is wise.

After all, users are going to figure out for themselves if you don't give them all the localized content that they want, but by managing their expectations early on, you help to ensure that users will return to the localized website in the future as you continue to add content.
























8

DON'T LET BUDGET LIMIT YOUR CREATIVITY

Budget limitations can sometimes result in new and creative solutions — like crowdsourcing.

Google, in its early days, successfully relied on volunteers to rapidly translate its search interface. Facebook, Wikipedia, and Twitter all rely (to varying degrees) on the generosity of their users to supply translated content and quality feedback. Shown here is the current status of volunteer translations into Spanish of various Twitter products.

Translation Projects	
 AV Player Completed	 Cards Completed
 Emails Completed	 Microsites Completed
 Mobile - Feature Phones Completed	 Mobile - Smartphones Completed
 Notifications 97% completed	 Platform Completed
 support.twitter.com 97% completed	 TweetDeck Completed
 Twitter for Android Completed	 Twitter for iOS Completed
 Twitter for Mac Completed	 Twitter for Windows Phone Completed
 Twitter Mirror iOS Completed	 Twitter Music Completed
 Twitter.com 99% completed	 Vine API Completed
 Vine for Android Completed	 Vine for iOS 98% completed
 Vine for Windows Phone Completed	

That said, translation crowdsourcing shouldn't be viewed as an easy way to acquire free translations. In fact, the process of managing crowdsourcing is in itself a resource commitment. Furthermore, you need to have content that your users view as "translation-worthy." Users generally want to translate interface content to make a product more useful for their culture and country rather than customer support documentation, which you'll most likely require a translation agency to manage.

But the larger point is this: Don't let limitations hinder your ability to go global. You might discover that you have trusted partners or customers who are willing to help you localize for their markets. Always be open to new approaches and ideas as you expand into new markets.



9

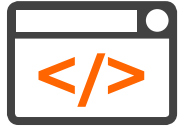
EXPAND YOUR POINT OF VIEW

Perhaps the best skill you can have when localizing your website is the ability to look at your site through the eyes of users from different countries and cultures, using different computing devices with different bandwidths. This insight will give you the understanding you need to help make your website more welcoming, regardless of how much translated content you offer.

We should always strive to give web users around the world the same level of content and support users in our domestic markets receive. But we should also be practical when expanding into new markets and do the best we can with the resources we have, which often means doing more with less (translation). But assuming you've considered your local users' language expectations, you can still achieve a degree of success with your localized websites.



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EBOOK

Linking to Country-Specific Pages Optimizes Global SEO

Global SEO does not mean simply translating your standard SEO content into the preferred languages.



WEBINAR

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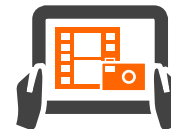
Consumers are more likely to purchase from companies that provide relevant content in their native languages.



WEBINAR

How to Avoid the Pain of Internationalizing Your Website

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GLOBAL BUSINESS GUIDE

Creating an Optimal User Experience for Global Website Visitors

The faster visitors become aware that they can engage with your brand in their native language, the better.



About the Author

John Yunker (@johnyunker), co-founder of **Byte Level Research**, consults with many of the world's leading global companies, providing web globalization training and benchmark services. He has authored 10 annual editions of The Web Globalization Report Card, an analysis of the world's best global websites. He is author of *The Art of the Global Gateway*, *The Savvy Client's Guide to Translation Agencies*, and *Beyond Borders: Web Globalization Strategies*.

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