

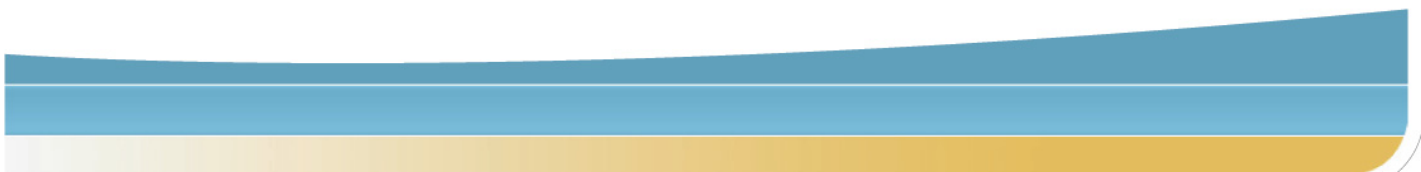


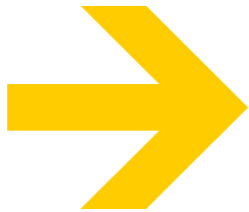
White Paper

Building a Global Web Strategy

Things to Consider When Developing your International Online Brand

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At a Glance

Projecting a globally viable, coherent brand on the Web is not a trivial proposition and requires much coordination, planning, structure, and resources.

Executive Summary

It is well documented that the Web is now a global phenomenon, requiring companies to adapt Web strategies to regional audiences. For example, in January 2008, the Asia Pacific region had more than 300 million Internet users accessing the Internet from work and home computers. This represents an increase of 14 percent versus a year ago and makes Asia Pacific the largest of the five worldwide regions. Latin America and Middle East-Africa have also experienced above average audience growth during the past year.¹ In this age of social networking and global blogs, prospective customers from around the world will find your company whether or not you target them directly.

As you expand further and faster into these global markets, you must adapt your Web presence to target key populations in their native languages. The shift to a truly global audience compels companies to adopt a Web strategy that conveys information in the cultural, linguistic, and business context of the target audience — a concept known as Web globalization.

Creating a global presence for your Web site requires extraordinary efforts to keep your brand strong. Reflecting the growth in the worldwide audience, companies are providing content in more languages, even as the typical number of pages on a commercial Web site has exploded. Today, it is no longer a question of whether to globalize your Web site, but how to improve the online experience for every prospect and customer.

This white paper provides an overview of Web globalization. It presents the Lionbridge perspective on standards you need to adopt to develop a globally viable site that will deliver exponential revenue growth for your company.

¹ [comScore](http://www.comscore.com), Inc., www.comscore.com, March 18, 2008

Web Globalization — Issues and Challenges

Asia now accounts for 36 percent of global Web usage, with Europe at 28 percent, and North America at less than 22 percent.² In a global economy, it is vital to reach different geographical segments in a manner they perceive to best meet their needs.

In 2008, Google and Wikipedia rank as the number one and two Web sites in The Web Globalization Report Card.³ The report based its rankings on the following:

1. Languages: How many languages does the Web site support?
2. Global Navigation: How quickly can visitors find local content?
3. Global Consistency: Does the Web site use a global design template across all locales?
4. Localization: How relevant is the Web site to the Web user's culture and country?

With almost 170 million Web sites competing for attention,⁴ you cannot afford to alienate your audience by slowing them down, forcing them to seek translation assistance, or inadvertently violating local norms and mores. Providing translated versions of your Web site enables a diverse audience to access information about your company quickly and easily.

Top Ten Languages Used in the Web (Number of Internet Users by Language)					
TOP TEN LANGUAGES IN THE INTERNET	% of all Internet Users	Internet Users by Language	Internet Penetration by Language	Language Growth in Internet (2000 - 2007)	2007 Estimated World Population for the Language
English	30.1 %	379,529,347	18.8 %	167.3 %	2,022,629,545
Chinese	14.7 %	184,901,513	13.6 %	472.4 %	1,356,701,170
Spanish	9.0 %	113,463,158	25.4 %	359.7 %	446,648,991
Japanese	6.9 %	87,540,000	68.7 %	85.9 %	127,433,494
French	5.1 %	63,761,141	15.6 %	422.7 %	407,819,872
German	4.9 %	61,912,361	64.2 %	123.5 %	96,403,511
Portuguese	4.0 %	50,828,760	21.4 %	570.9 %	237,003,607
Arabic	3.7 %	46,359,140	13.2 %	1,575.9 %	350,965,119
Korean	2.7 %	34,430,000	47.6 %	80.8 %	72,346,515
Italian	2.6 %	33,143,152	57.0 %	151.1 %	58,178,115
TOP 10 LANGUAGES	83.7 %	1,055,868,572	20.4 %	221.4 %	5,176,129,939
Rest of the Languages	16.3 %	206,164,125	14.4 %	534.8 %	1,430,840,227
WORLD TOTAL	100.0 %	1,262,032,697	19.1 %	249.6 %	6,606,970,166

Source: [Internet World Stats](#)

² [Internet World Stats](#), www.internetworldstats.com, March 2008

³ [Byte Level Research](#), The Web Globalization Report Card, 2008

⁴ [Netcraft](#), www.netcraft.com, March 2008 Web Server Survey

As the previous chart makes clear, while English-speaking Web users still make up the largest component of Web traffic, other languages are experiencing a much greater rate of growth. That requires businesses to expand the number of languages they support with their Web sites.

Most companies with global markets have developed solutions that serve specific markets, but the level of support varies greatly. After a Web site launch from headquarters, for example, there are often significant reverberations within the local country offices as users struggle with things like inconsistent branding, fragmented localization, and inappropriate content.

The explosion in the number of Web pages is phenomenal. Google stopped publicizing the number of Web pages in its index after it exceeded eight billion— although various ad hoc search calculations have pegged the total at as much as 25 billion. A substantial amount of that growth is due to the upsurge in different languages supported by Web sites.

There are now 1.2 billion people around the world with Internet access. To reach 85 percent of the total Web-based market requires supporting more than 20 languages, according to [The Web Globalization Report Card](#). Furthermore, that same report says the leading global Web sites each now support, on average, more than 40 languages.⁵

Managing the Globalization Effort

For most companies, international markets experiencing the fastest growth rates provide the greatest opportunities for growing revenues. But projecting a globally viable, coherent brand on the Web to exploit those opportunities is not a trivial proposition.

Developing and managing a strong Web globalization effort is a vital undertaking. It requires solid planning to leverage the four foundational components of Web brand management: Strategy, User Experience, Content, and Technology.

Strategy

Typically, companies without a strong globalization strategy adopt one of two approaches: they assume that their corporate Web site, simply translated, will work as effectively in other parts of the world; or, they give their local offices the freedom to create customized sites.

Both approaches are problematic. Translated corporate Web sites will seldom engage regional customers and prospects adequately. The distributed approach often leaves local offices struggling to manage the efforts in the absence of well-defined guidelines, often producing their own site versions with widely divergent form and content; sometimes, the only common element may be the company logo and the result is audience confusion and a weakened, runaway brand.

The best approach to Web globalization is a hybrid model that creates a centrally-managed program that brings together corporate and in-country representatives from the outset. Groups

⁵ [Byte Level Research](#), The Web Globalization Report Card, 2008

that normally work at arm's length must cooperatively discuss the Web site rollout plan, agree on goals for each country, and establish common metrics and delivery timetables. Getting early buy-in from all stakeholders will be at the core of your program's success. Through centralized localization, corporate marketing departments ensure brand preservation, while regional marketing teams are empowered to develop local programs that not only resonate with their intended audiences, but also comply with corporate goals and standards.

User Experience

Companies must define their global online strategy as an extension of an overall marketing and sales strategy. It is important to methodically define and manage the key elements such as brand, content, look-and-feel, and control.

Many companies do not have global brand guidelines for the Web, which can result in design inconsistencies and cultural insensitivities. Content, for example, often looks much different in another language. On average, an English sentence, when translated, is 30-40% larger in some European languages (and could be as much as 200% for a particular word). With Asian languages, text may shrink by 30-50%. Text expansion and shrinkage can directly and negatively impact the user interface if care is not taken to allow for "elastic" scaling of the menu items containing text, icon names, and the like.

Images should be appreciated, valued, and recognized in the global markets where your company has a Web presence. Companies must pay attention to areas of cultural sensitivity such as ethnicity, gender, dress, and gestures. For example, MySpace members in Germany need to be able to see Germany-oriented events and advertisements, without prohibiting them from viewing content from other countries.

The user experience planning exercise provides a foundation for supporting the global brand. It should address color scheme, imagery, editorial tone, and fonts. When looking at user experience, there are two components to consider: (1) visual and (2) information architecture. The site's "look-and-feel" is what gives a global user the first (visceral) impression.

Content

Content is often written from a single-market perspective, which limits its usefulness for a global audience. Global companies need a global content model to govern the processes around global content creation and management — for authoring, reviewing, approvals, as well as costs and scope for localization.

Oftentimes, companies do not formally separate different levels of content scope. We define content scope as an area (geographical or business) to which this particular content applies. The typical areas of scope are:

- Corporate — content that applies to the company as a whole in all regions
- Regional — content that is specific to a region (for example, North America, Europe, Asia)
- Local — content specific to a particular country (France, Japan, United States, etc.)

By formally identifying the scope, a company can begin to develop a global content model. The structure of that model should clearly separate global content from regional content and local content.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is another area that is often overlooked by global marketers as an opportunity to differentiate your company globally. Companies often spend thousands of dollars optimizing their site for local search engines and then translate that content with no regard to search engine lift in target languages. Any global search engine optimization is done locally by interested marketers with little coordination with corporate marketing.

Technology

Operating more efficiently in a global environment is a key requirement for today's companies, and technology infrastructure or outsourcing services play a large role in efficiently meeting that requirement.

As applications move on-line, your user population instantly becomes global, spanning employees, contractors, clients, and prospects. Maintaining control in this environment requires that you have a responsive management process that can add and remove access at the pace of your global business.

Companies moving toward a global Web solution need to internationalize the infrastructure. Internationalization has two goals:

- Ensure that the Web site is functional and accepted in international markets
- Ensure that the Web site can be readily localized for specific markets

Translation Web Services

A Web Services-based approach to Globalization Management enables third parties to integrate translation into their content repositories automatically.

The Lionbridge approach delivers Globalization Management System (GMS) functionality as part of the localization service to help clients get the most out of their repositories without requiring additional software purchases and integration. Clients connect their repositories directly to the translation process using the repositories' own workflow, Application Programming Interface (API), and Translation Web Services.

By connecting the repository to the Lionbridge backend via Web Services, the Lionbridge platform standardizes the way content and project-related information are submitted into the translation process. Rather than instructions being written into an email, data such as translation languages required, expected return dates, and contact information are sent in a structured way, and posted straight into the Lionbridge project management application.

The Web Services solution functions as a remote extension of the repository, enabling a full lifecycle of submission, monitoring and retrieving of translation jobs and quotes, along with house-keeping calls of getting a list of languages, users, and so forth. The status of translation jobs is tracked from within the repository via Web Services. When translation is complete, the content is pulled from Lionbridge and placed back into the repository in a seamless workflow.

Global functionality should be implemented in accordance with general and framework-specific best practices, coupled with a clear, logical global strategy that addresses a specific international business case. Companies considering global Web solutions for sites with reasonably fast-changing content must evolve their home-grown content management system (CMS), or invest in a third-party CMS to support the needs of global content creation and publishing.

Given the dynamic, fast-changing nature of most sites in today's business climate, the link between content creation and content localization processes must be as friction-free as possible. There are four typical models of linking content management and localization processes:

- **Translation within a CMS:** Best for environments with third-party content management systems, where translation is done in house, with no reliance on best practices such as translation memory (stored text translations) or terminology management.
- **Manual exchange of files:** The most widely used method for exchanging assets with a localization vendor, using FTP or email for transmission. This works best for larger, less frequent updates, because of the overhead involved, and the need for manual process.
- **Globalization Management System:** Third party systems that allow companies to manage the full localization lifecycle. These are very costly systems that are best for companies that want to make translation management their core competency.
- **Direct CMS/Localization Link:** Emerging standards in the localization industry (XML, XLIFF/Web Services) enable establishment of a frictionless content exchange to automatically send and receive assets for localization, and import them into a CMS. This approach connects a company's content repository directly with a localization vendor. Among global sites, timeliness of updates can be especially critical if they relate to key corporate announcements, simultaneous shipment of product, or have legal or compliance implications. Typically, a direct relationship between source content and localized content ensures appropriate synchronization.

Certain content modules lend themselves more naturally to automated exchange processes than others. For example, logo, icons, and imagery are not likely to change too often, and can be sent in a manual mode (using FTP, or a portal) as part of bulk localization. But product descriptions, services descriptions, eLearning materials, and marketing campaigns change more often, and may require a quick turnaround more suited to an automated link.

Conclusion

Ultimately, a successful Web globalization project is built on a comprehensive strategy that fuses globalization best practices with your specific branding and technology needs. Governance is also critical and should be dealt with early, since the issues of ownership and control can manifest into a struggle between corporate and in-country influences.

Creating an inclusive, open process, and bringing the right parties — marketing, business, technology and in-country representatives — to the table is paramount to the success of your Web globalization effort. Getting buy-in from the stakeholders early will pave the way to success.

Lionbridge welcomes the opportunity to explore the value our Web Globalization solutions can bring to your organization and we invite you to contact us for an initial discussion about your global objectives and how we might be able to help you achieve them. Visit us at www.lionbridge.com/web

Contact Information

About Lionbridge

Lionbridge Technologies, Inc. (Nasdaq: LIOX) is a leading provider of translation, localization and testing services. Lionbridge combines global resources with proven program management methodologies to serve as an outsource partner throughout a client's product and content lifecycle – from development to translation, testing and maintenance. Global organizations in all industries rely on Lionbridge services to increase international market share, speed adoption of global products and content, and enhance their return on enterprise applications and IT system investments. Based in Waltham, Mass., Lionbridge operates across 26 countries and provides services under the Lionbridge and VeriTest® brands.

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