WEBSITE LOCALIZATION
BEST PRACTICES
www.idmspot.com
Website Localization
Best Practices

This guide is a collection of best practices and tips for multilingual and multi-regional websites, including URL formats, language selection, country selection, and global branding considerations.
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Translation

- Your Key marketing content should be professionally translated and/or transcreated.
- Translate as much of your key marketing materials as possible.
- Machine translation can be appropriate, for non-marketing related texts, high volume texts or for content requiring rapid turnaround time.
- Take advantage of Translation memory to reduce translation cost over time and to stay consistent with your translations.

IBM • French website • www.ibm.com/fr-fr/
Global Gateway

- Provide a global gateway to let users choose the preferred country

*McDonald’s* • International website • [corporate.mcdonalds.com/mcd/country/map] • Global Gateway

- Use the English version of country names together with their native translation.
  
  Example: Germany | Deutschland

*H&M* • [www.hm.com/entrance] • Global Gateway
Language Selection

- Use a globe icon to indicate language options

E.ON • [www.eon.com/en](http://www.eon.com/en) • Language Selection Trigger

English Ford Motor • [www.ford.com](http://www.ford.com) • Language Selection Trigger


- Place the trigger in the main navigation of all pages. The best place is the top right or top left corner.
- Use the translated versions of language names to put inside the selection.
  Example: Spanish / Español
- For the language trigger, when using a Language short-code follow ISO 639-1.
  Example: EN for English or DE for German

Nokia • [www.nokia.com/en_int/choose-your-language](http://www.nokia.com/en_int/choose-your-language) • Language Selection

Choose your language

Some content is only available in English.
Country Selection

- Use a globe icon or a country flag to show where a country switcher or country selection trigger is located.

Toyota Motor • www.toyota.co.jp • Country Selection Trigger

Syngenta • www.syngenta.com • Country Selection Trigger

Marks & Spencer • www.marksandspencer.com • Country Selection Trigger

Cigna • www.cigna.com • Country Selection Trigger

Starbucks • www.starbucks.com • Country Selection Trigger

- Place the trigger in the main navigation. The best place is the top right or top left corner.

- Use translated versions of country names to put inside the selection. Example: Italy | Italia or Austria | Österreich

- If you are using country short code, follow ISO 3166-1 standard www.iso.org/obp/ui/ or Wikipedia
Redirection

- Instead of automatically redirecting a user, it's recommended to suggest the best available language or country option based on the user's language settings in the browser or operating system.

Example: “You have landed on our US site from a UK location, would you like to go to the UK site or stay on the US site?”

Adobe Systems • www.adobe.com
URL Format

- Acceptable URL formats include
  - ccTLD (country code Top-Level Domain)
    Example: amazon.com / amazon.in / amazon.es
  - gTLD (generic Top-Level Domain) with subdomain or subfolder
    Example with subdomain: be.yahoo.com / vn.yahoo.com
    Example with subfolder: fedex.com/tr

- Use ISO codes in the subfolder or subdomain to indicate language (ISO 639) or country (ISO 3166).
Social Media

- Place icons/links to your official social media accounts on your website.
- The best location for icons is in the footer or in the top left of the header.

**Starbucks • US website • [www.starbucks.com](http://www.starbucks.com) • Social Media Icons**

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**McDonald's • International website • [corporate.mcdonalds.com/mcd/country/map](http://corporate.mcdonalds.com/mcd/country/map) • Localized Social Media**

- Localize social media accounts for the countries you operate in.
• Create accounts in local social media such as Weibo in China or VK in Russia. Not all countries are using Twitter and Facebook.
International Access

- Make sure your website can be accessed from outside of the US, unless you have specific reasons to block certain countries.

**Costco Wholesale • US website • [www.costco.com](http://www.costco.com)**

Access Denied

You don't have permission to access "http://www.costco.com/" on this server.
Brand Consistency/Design

- Follow a global design template for best brand consistency.

**Volvo Group • Russian & Chinese websites • volvogroup.ru & volvogroup.com.cn • Global Design Template**

**Lenovo Group • Polish & Japanese websites • lenovo.com/pl & lenovo.com/jp • Global Design Template**

Your website’s versions should not be drastically different across regions. You can localize images, even use different company names and slogans, as long as your main brand assets such as color, logo, typography etc. are used.

If the global brand uses the same logo, key colors, and other branding elements, then the translation and transliteration are perceived as retention of the global brand name.

Example: Chinese version of the Coca-Cola’s logo contains the company’s name translated and adapted for the Chinese audience. Coca-Cola in Chinese means “bite the wax tadpole”. But an adapted version called 可口可乐 (kě kǒu kě lè), what translated as “can be tasty, can be happy”. It sounds quite similar to Coca-Cola, at the same time giving to the brand a happy essence.
Coca-Cola • Chinese website • www.icoke.cn • Consistent logo with translated brand name

McDonald’s • Chinese website • www.mcdonalds.com.cn • Consistent logo with translated brand name
IDM Spot

IDM Spot [International Digital Marketing Spot] reviews and collects tips, secrets and strategies for international digital marketing, conducts reviews of the best international websites and provides insights into the best practices of digital globalization.

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