

APPENDIX 3: Website localisation

Technical hints and tips checklist

Hints and tips

The more you put in, the more you get out. Remember, plan for translation and website localisation by:

- Thinking ahead
- Understanding the type of publication or material you are working on, and its audience
- Being clear about your objectives, and communicating throughout
- Checking and finalising your draft copy and content
- Selecting the most suitable supplier for the project
- Proof-reading the final text
- Being fully involved throughout the process

Design and content

Some elements of an international website demand particular attention during the localisation process.

- Dialogue boxes and field lengths
- Date and time formats
- Colours, icons and graphics
- Company names and strap lines
- Weights and measures
- Number and currency formats
- Font and page orientation

If you are committed to using your web presence to enable expansion, then the following measures will give you a much higher chance of success.

- A separate and unique web site for each target market
- Optimum localised content written for each particular market
- Either direct navigation or browser recognition – the visitors' origin is recognised and they are taken to their dedicated area
- Names of the target languages rather than country flags (recognising that languages in the world are often spoken in more than one country – and that in each country, several languages may be spoken)

- Unique domain name in the language of the target market, and registered domain suffix of the target market, such as .de (Germany), .es (Spain) and so on
- Hosting in the target country
- Optimisation for search engines in each target country
- Culturally appropriate design and content
- Design in the target country by designers from that country
- Link popularity with sites hosted in the target market

Clearly many of these have further implications for other systems – for example your ability to do transactions on-line (or otherwise) in different currencies.

Key pointers

Do ensure that there is room for adaptation in the word count. Some languages can take up to a third more space than when the copy is typeset in its original form.

Don't forget the international dialling codes for telephone or fax contact. It's quite often the smallest things that get overlooked!

Certain cultural subtleties need to be observed, such as presenting the male on the left in Asian family pictures and showing only one child in Chinese advertising.

Choice of colours can also have a major impact on how you are perceived. Green represents the Muslim religion in Islamic countries and is often used for holy purposes. Black is seen as the sombre colour of mourning in many cultures, but in Japan that colour is white. In Korea, names written in red mean that the person is dead.

What language does your target audience speak? This might seem an obvious question but it can easily be overlooked. Many countries have more than one native language.

Information travels very quickly via the Internet so do be sure you and your advisers are completely happy with your site before you go live. Also, be sure you have the resources and company infra-structure to supply increased demand!