



# Top 10 Tips for Website Translation

Take your website across cultures with these actionable tips

Preparing a website – including programming, copy, flash and video – for a new language market is no small feat. But with the right planning, approach and execution, your website will reach across borders and motivate your target audience to interact with your brand. Here are our top-10 tips for avoiding common online localization pitfalls:

1. **Align your site and global business strategy.** Is your site supporting local offices in each market, or is your international presence online only? Look at your business infrastructure to ensure it can support the multilingual site objectives – and vice-versa. Items to consider include local legal requirements, local marketing, local customer support (email, call center), payment processing, sales fulfillment systems and more.
2. **Strategize your multilingual navigation.** An important but often overlooked aspect of successful web localization include helping people find your site, such as geo-targeting, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), user settings and clear user navigation methods (e.g. pull down menu or splash screen with languages).
3. **Use a Content Management System (CMS).** Maintaining site content becomes more complex as you add languages. If you have a large and frequently changing site, use a global-ready CMS to manage the content. Important features include:
  - a. Ability to easily export and re-import content in a localization-friendly format such as XML
  - b. Filtering and workflows for new/updated content
  - c. Support for all targeted languages
4. **Stick to standards and Unicode.** Adhering to generally accepted coding standards (for scripting and middleware, as well as HTML) is part of best practices in general, but also benefits localization in particular. Use Unicode for any applications handling content and encode files containing localizable text (e.g. HTML and XML) as UTF-8. Make sure to include your charset declaration in the file.
5. **Get ready for text expansion and contraction.** Keep in mind that localized text will generally be longer than English, although many Asian languages require less space than English. Check your design and code to ensure that different text lengths are supported. A common issue-prone area is the horizontal navigation bar, which needs to be able to accommodate varied text lengths.
6. **Get your graphics and Flash ready.** Graphics and Flash can play an important part in your website. Be aware, however, that complex graphics and Flash elements in particular can slow down the localization process if not set up for localization at the outset. Examples include externalizing text that will need translation in Flash or graphics and anticipating culturally appropriate imagery in advance.
7. **Consider global, regional and local site content.** Determine what content is global and can be translated for all countries (e.g. corporate messaging and product descriptions) and what content is specific to particular regions or markets (e.g. local press and legal). Design the site and workflows to accommodate these content types.
8. **Plan for updates and maintenance.** How frequently do you plan to update your site? Maintaining daily updates across languages will require a highly automated process between your CMS and your provider. If the updates are less frequent (monthly or quarterly) you may not need to invest as much in automation.

9. **Build a matching source site.** If you are planning to localize only part of your website, it is best to build out that new partial website first before you hand off files for localization. This will enable a review and sign-off on the localization content by your local offices, as well as ensure that the partial website is functioning correctly. It also creates a matching source site to test the localized sites against during linguistic QA.
10. **Consider multilingual search.** Don't expect that just translating the site will bring a rush of international customers. You need to optimize for search. This includes all the same elements of your domestic search campaigns including creating local domains, using relevant keywords for the URLs, metadata and content, link building etc.

A successfully localized website can drive your business into new language markets. Partnering with an experienced localization partner will save both time and costs in the long run—and ensure that your project launches on time. Visit us today at [www.acclaro.com/website-translation](http://www.acclaro.com/website-translation) to learn more about our approach to website localization.

**About Acclaro:** Acclaro is an international translation and localization firm that helps the world's leading brands succeed across cultures. We translate websites, marketing campaigns, documents and software to give clients an authentic voice in key language markets.

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