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Publisher: LingoStar Language Services Inc. - Lenka de Graafova

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GETTING FAMILIAR WITH WEBSITE TRANSLATION

Internationally successful companies have long understood the need to communicate with their customers and users in their native language. Especially with the rise of online business, a multilingual website has become one of the main tools for success in the global market. A well-translated website can help your business grow globally and enter markets that your competitors have not explored yet. After all, web users worldwide are more likely to visit a website available in their native language or specifically adapted for their country (“Survey of”).

By creating a multilingual website, you can engage with these online audiences in their own language and dramatically increase your sales as a result. With a localized website, you can put your web visitors in a cultural comfort zone that will encourage them to buy your products online. Although it may seem like a difficult and expensive task at first, your efforts will be worth it. Successful businesses usually experience a 500% return-on-investment (The SimulTrans Team).



In this document, we provide you with basic guidelines on where to start with creating a multilingual website. If you are looking for more in-depth information with practical advice and detailed tips on how to succeed in the online global marketplace, have a look at [LingoStar's ebook](#). It is a comprehensive guide designed for individuals and small businesses that wish to expand their business internationally and build a strong online presence. It outlines in detail the opportunities a multilingual website offers in the global marketplace and how to build one successfully. You will find specific guidelines on how to translate website content and how to adapt the layout for global audiences. In addition, it will help you with multilingual website challenges as it guides you through the adaptation process with the help of practical worksheets.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

We will look at some of the basic cultural and language barriers that should not be ignored when building a website for foreign cultures. Furthermore, you will find information on which languages to select for website translation and how to adapt the design of your existing website for the target market. Once you have chosen the languages you wish to translate into, refer to [LingoStar's Localization Guides](#) for more information on your chosen languages and countries.

TRANSLATING AND LOCALIZING YOUR WEBSITE EFFECTIVELY

When you start looking into website translation, you will often come across terms such as localization and transcreation.

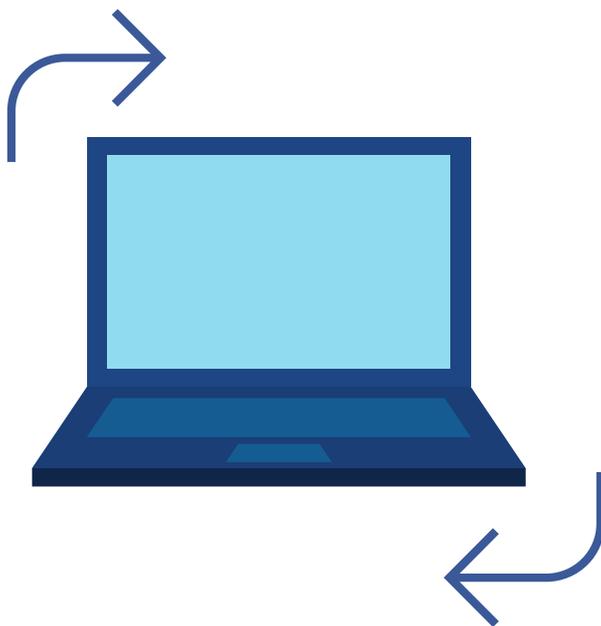
LOCALIZATION

Localization is the process of adapting a website or a product to a target culture. It goes further than translating because many more aspects than words have to be taken into account when localizing. Translation is only part of the process. Website localization involves challenges such as the adaptation of the layout, keywords, images, currencies, languages or cultural aspects. To tackle these challenges efficiently, it is recommended to consult professional translators, web developers and digital marketing experts knowledgeable about the target country and language (“What is Localization?”).

Stay away from relying on online machine translation instead of professional translators. Experienced professionals will be able to localize your website more effectively due to their background knowledge of local culture, traditions, superstitions, consumer preferences or local legislation and finance.

TRANSCREATION

Localization also often goes hand-in-hand with the transcreation of a text. Transcreation is a combination of translation and creation. This type of adapted translation is created to genuinely reflect the style, tone, and context of the source website and creatively adapt the message to another language. Transcreation is important for website translation to ensure that the brand and marketing messages are culturally appropriate for the target audience. This should also be done by a professional, as it requires cultural knowledge of the target market (Phillips).



CHOOSING TARGET LANGUAGES AND COUNTRIES

When building a multilingual website, you will be confronted with several challenges. The first one will be the choice of languages to translate your website into. Since there are over 7,000 languages in the world, it can be challenging to choose which languages you should localize your website into in order to make it profitable. To reach a decision, analyze your demographics and potential customers abroad, and then compare this information to research that shows which languages are the most spoken in the world or actively used online. Detailed customer research will help you target and reach a wider audience. In the process, figure out which languages are going to help you grow your online business or will have a long-term impact on how you do business abroad.



TOP 5 MOST SPOKEN LANGUAGES ACROSS THE WORLD AND ON THE INTERNET (2020):

Total Speakers	Native Speakers	Languages Used On The Web
1. English 1.13 billion	1. Mandarin Chinese 918 million	1. English 1.10 billion
2. Mandarin Chinese 1.11 billion	2. Spanish 460 million	2. Mandarin Chinese 863 million
3. Hindi 615 million	3. English 379 million	3. Spanish 344 million
4. Spanish 524 million	4. Hindi 341 million	4. Arabic 266 million
5. French 280 million	5. Bengali 228 million	5. Portuguese 171 million

Figure 1: Top 5 languages on the web (Gosh) (“Top Ten Internet Languages”).

Given the data in the table, it is clear that English remains the most influential language in the world online. However, even if your website is already being presented in English, it is recommended to localize it for specific English-speaking audiences depending on where you plan to do business in. Cultural differences vary across Anglophone countries so a certain level of adaptation is required even if your target language is English. For example, the English language spoken in the UK uses different vocabulary than the English spoken in the United States or Australia.



Airbnb (airbnb.ca) is also one of the top 10 multilingual websites in the world. It has doubled the number of languages provided over the last few years.

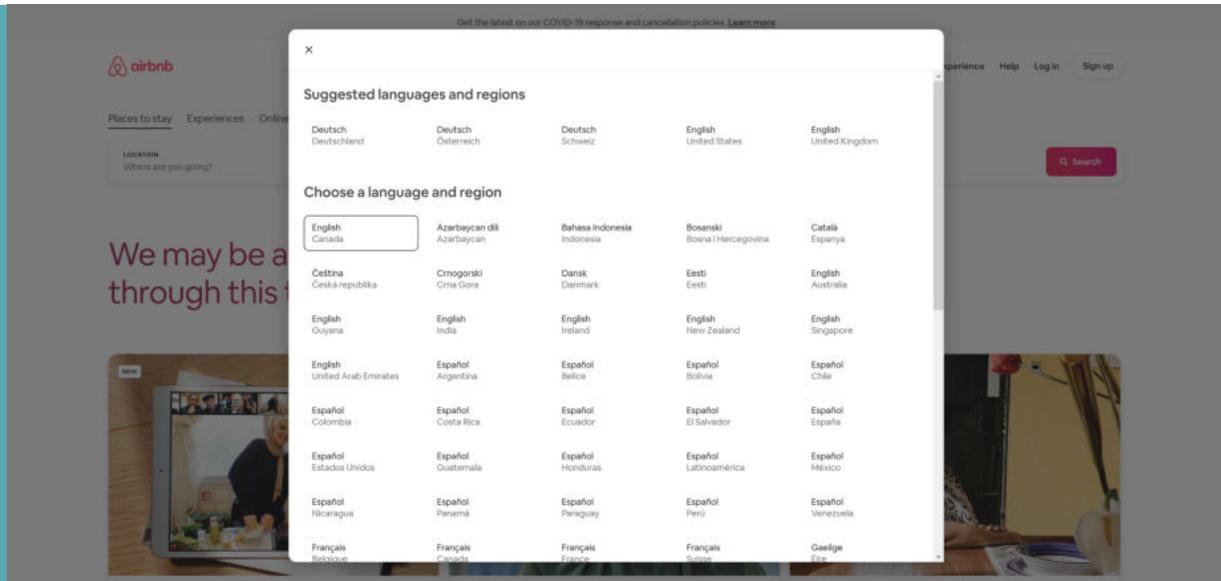


Figure 4: Airbnb; Language selector.

RESPECTING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Once you have decided on languages, make sure to consider cultural differences, which are crucial when localizing a website. Culturally sensitive websites will gain customers' trust and make them feel respected. In addition, some countries have deeply rooted customs and superstitions which pose a strong influence. Some colours, images, topics or signs should be avoided in certain cultures so as not to offend customers. For example, the number 4 should not be used for a Chinese audience since it is an unlucky number in their culture, whereas the number 13 is unlucky in many Western

cultures. Furthermore, different cultures also have different values. For instance, politeness and professionalism are extremely important in Chinese culture while reliability and punctuality are essential in German culture. It is important to do some cultural research, as these cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings and interfere with the message you are trying to convey. In terms of creating a website, your website content has to be culturally adapted for each target market. It is best to consult cultural experts or copywriters to ensure you are using appropriate content.





In 2020, Nivea (nivea.com) was listed as having one of the best multilingual websites in the world (Yunker). It was localized in various languages and for several countries. The screenshot below shows the English Canadian website (nivea.ca/en-ca) promoting #sharethecare in May 2020. This message is related to events during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 and shows the company's initiative in not only adapting to the culture of the target audience, but to staying updated with current events and relevant news. Advertising for this #sharethecare campaign can be found on many of Nivea's different website localizations.

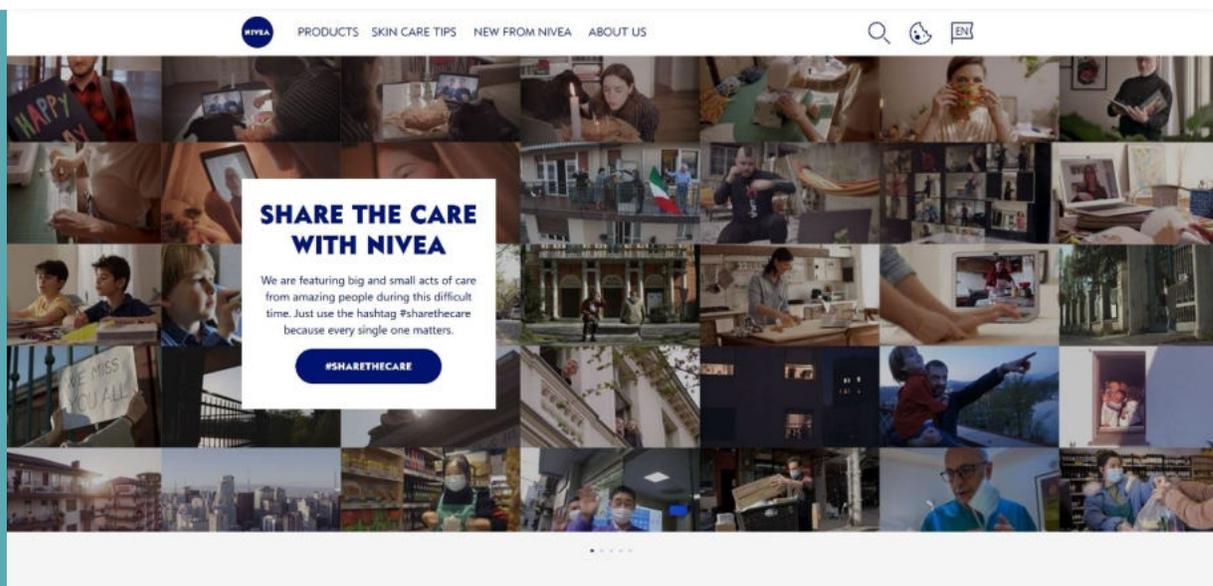


Figure 5: Nivea; Canadian homepage.

Nivea is also promoting different products depending on which products are most popular in these countries. In Canada, it was promoting a body lotion.

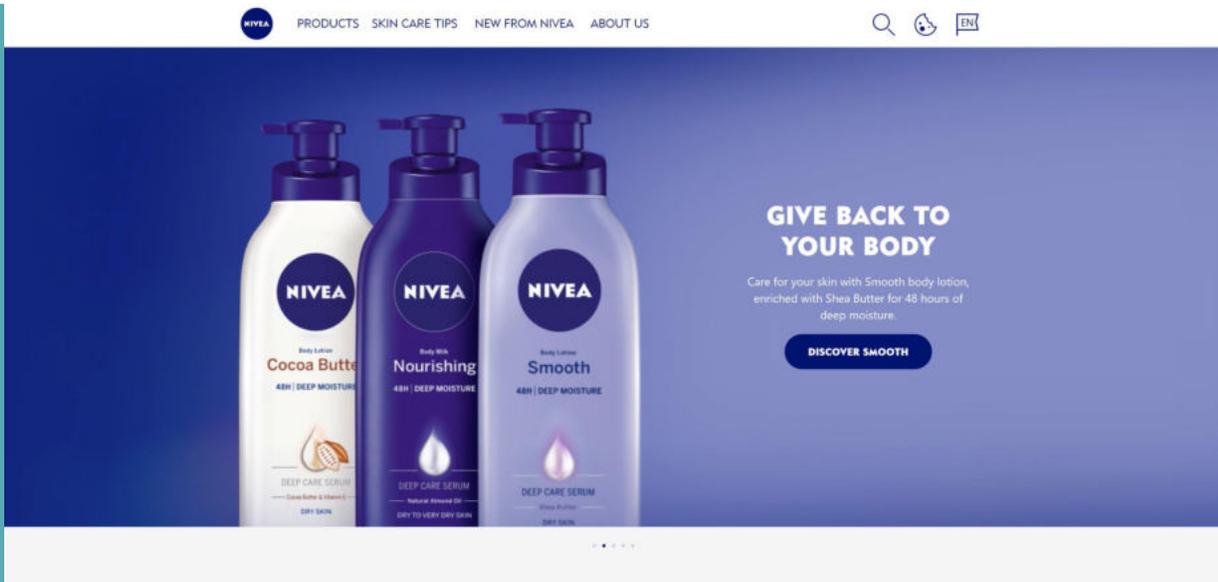


Figure 6: Nivea; Canadian homepage.

The German website (nivea.de), on the other hand, was promoting sunscreen. This is likely because German summers can get quite hot and people buy a lot of sunscreen.



Figure 7: Nivea; German homepage.

On the [Chinese website \(nivea.com.cn\)](http://nivea.com.cn), Nivea was promoting oil lotion and hand cream with rose, vanilla and cherry blossom.



Figure 8: Nivea; Chinese homepage.

You can find more information on specific cultural information in [LingoStar's Localization Guides](#), which deal with various countries and cultures.

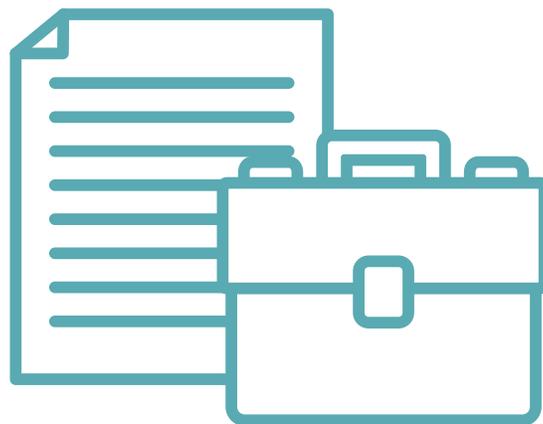
INVESTING IN TRANSLATION AND LOCALIZATION

When building a multilingual website, you will need to consider the various costs for translation and editing, copywriting, website development and maintenance, hosting and domain, and online marketing and managing SEO. Using relevant platforms, web tools and hiring professionals will be beneficial for building your global website.

Generally, translation cost is based on a price-per-word model. Translation rates vary per country, depending on various

factors such as the origin of the translators and their level of experience, the language pair and the rarity of the language. It is also recommended to have any translations checked by editors in order to get the most accurate and well-written texts.

You can also hire professional copywriters or marketing staff in different countries to produce quality marketing content in the target language and culture. Copywriting costs depend on the nature of the text and the level of adaptation required.



In addition, a web developer will help you create a well-designed website according to specific country preferences. Web development cost depends on the web management system and automation level. There may also be software costs, such as paying for plugins to speed up your site, optimize images, process online payments or run your website platforms. These are usually one-time purchase costs or yearly subscriptions.

Furthermore, you will need a hosting provider to store the files on your website and make them visible on the internet. The costs of hosting and buying a domain are usually low but can increase as you create and consequently store more foreign language data.

Once a multilingual website has been created and launched, it is recommended to invest in online content marketing and ongoing SEO management in the localized languages. The foreign versions of your website will need to be updated regularly. To manage these foreign language updates, you may need to hire professionals in the target country, such as translators, editors and multilingual SEO specialists.

CREATING A MULTILINGUAL WEBSITE

Once you are ready to start creating a multilingual website, you will need to make visual and linguistic choices based on your chosen target country, language and culture. These will determine which colours, images, videos or cultural references you should use or avoid for each target audience.

WEBSITE DESIGN AND LAYOUT

The first step is to deal with website design for your foreign language pages. User-friendly design is an important step when creating a website because the look of your foreign language pages will influence your visitors' first impression. Besides being adapted for the target market, consider adjusting the web layout to fit different devices such as computers, smartphones and tablets. This feature, which is called responsive design, will ensure that your website visitors can use mobile phones to purchase from your mobile site securely and easily. Recently, mobile device use has increased significantly for making online transactions ("101 Mobile Marketing Statistics"). Therefore, ensure your web visitors have a pleasant online shopping experience from both desktop and mobile devices.

When designing a web layout, it is all about making the user's experience on your site as convenient and pleasant as possible. Prepare your website for use in other languages, as the layout might differ from one language to another. Consider which fonts, images and videos to use for each country. Make sure that images have a purpose. They should be related to your content or illustrate it. Choose colours that create contrast for easy readability. Overall, make your website readable and easy to navigate. If your target audience has difficulty reading the information you provide, they will most likely leave.

The website irishwrecksonline.net, in the example below, embodies everything to avoid when designing a website. The colours do not complement each other. Images are too small and unclear. The website content is not easily readable or easy to navigate. For these reasons, web users would likely leave right away. The outdated and unappealing design makes this website seem untrustworthy.

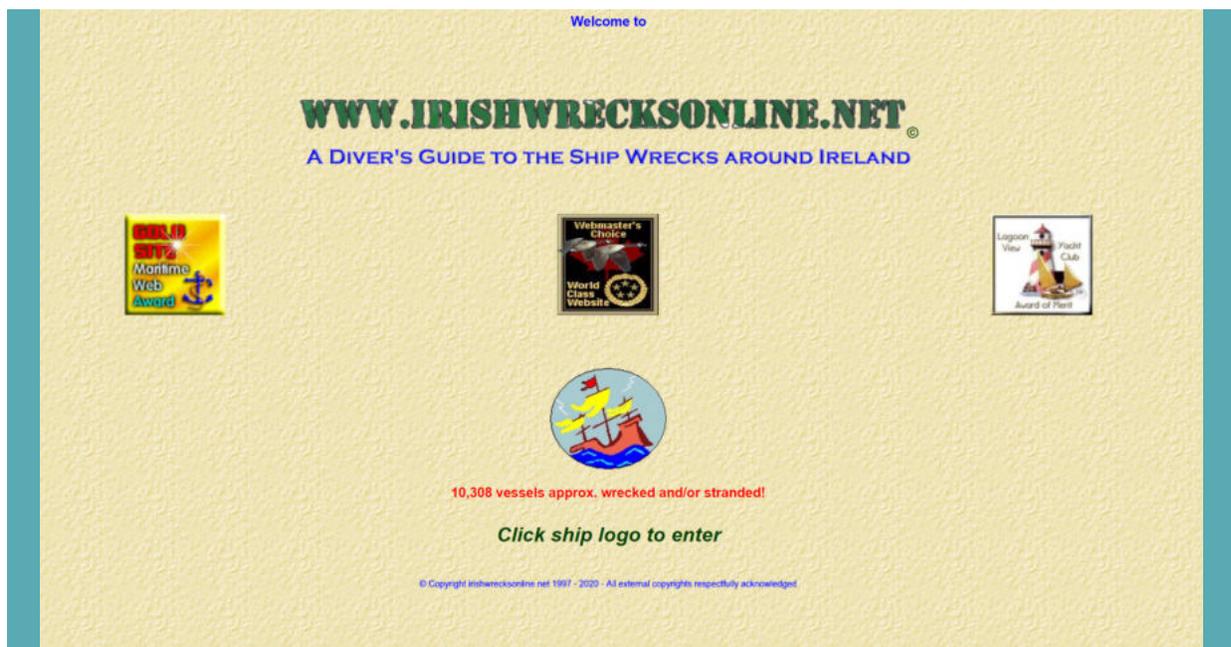


Figure 9: Irish Wrecks Online; Homepage.

DOMAINS AND URLS

When web visitors arrive at your site, there are a few different ways they can reach their relevant localized webpage. For one, they can be automatically redirected to a relevant localized version depending on their region if the browser detects their geolocation.



Alternatively, they can select their preferred language in a language selection menu. For this purpose, you can introduce a language switcher. Research various website platforms and content management systems (CMS) to effectively handle your multilingual digital content.

There are several options available on how to set up your domains and URLs for individual foreign language versions. You can opt for an in-country domain, a subfolder, URLs with query parameters or subdomains. Research all available options as the domain choice has a long-term impact on your website development and maintenance.

[LingoStar's ebook](#) provides more detailed information on how to create a successful multilingual website and all the steps involved.



WEBSITE CONSISTENCY

Consistency is key and your website should be consistent across different language versions by using the same writing style as well as design. Fonts, colours, forms, menus, and other design elements should convey a similar message in all foreign language pages. The same goes for measurement units, dates or the use of digits, and address formats. To maintain consistency, establish a style guide that offers guidelines for text style writing and design, so any website contributors can refer to it when building your site.

As you can see on Suzuki's website, the French version's design (suzuki.fr/landing) is very similar to the Italian (suzuki.it) and German ones (suzuki.de). The colours, forms, and menus are the same. The main difference is in the images, as different cars are being offered and advertised in each country. It is likely that Suzuki used a style guide to establish the consistency of their brand across different regions and languages.



Figure 10: Suzuki; French homepage.

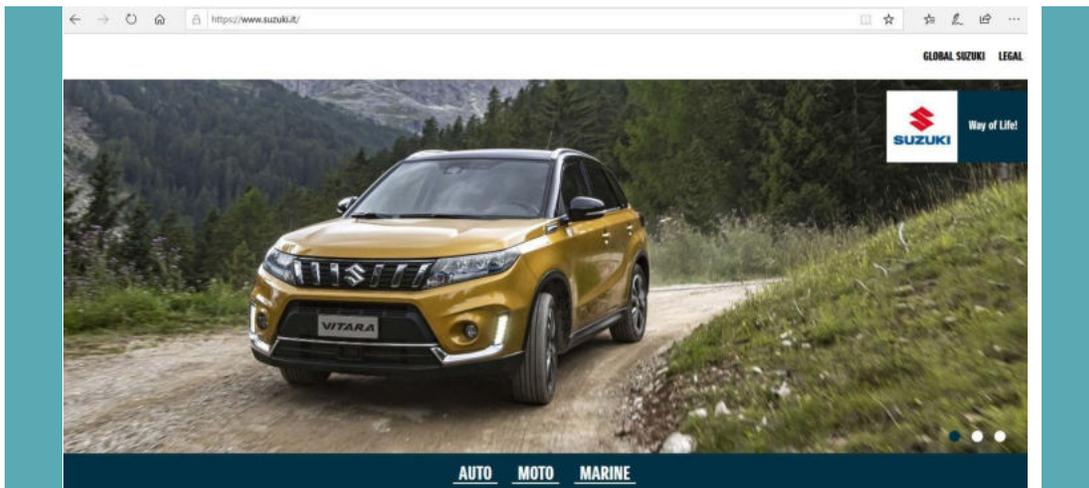


Figure 11: Suzuki; Italian homepage.

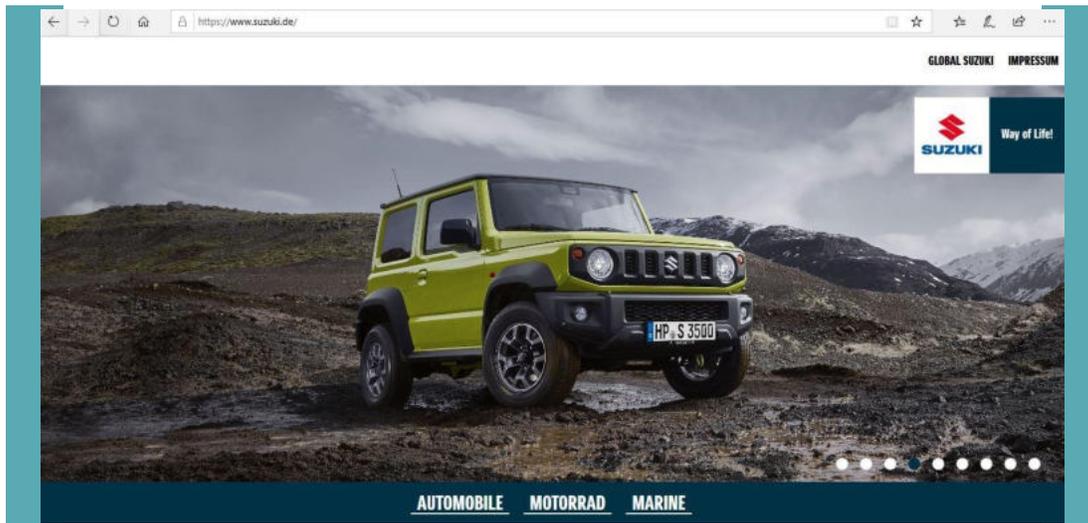


Figure 12: Suzuki; German homepage.

WEBSITE CONTENT

Quality web content does not rely only on translation, but also on text adaptation. In order to adapt your multilingual texts, work with qualified human translators, copywriters and in-country marketing professionals. They will help you write concise foreign language content, as a lot of thought will go into the messages you want to convey to your foreign customers.

When creating website content, try to balance out the use of text, images and videos. Keep in mind that some languages may need more space because they use longer words and sentences and thus take up more space on the screen. Moreover, some languages use right-to-left writing. As a result, this can change the layout of graphics.



A multilingual website deserves a great logo and a tagline that convey your marketing message clearly in the target language. A tagline should clarify what a company is about. Usually, it is a catchy slogan which is easy to remember. At the same time, your brand name might need to be culturally and linguistically adapted throughout the translation process. When brainstorming your brand name in another language, try to create a name that will communicate something meaningful to your customers. In addition, just like your slogan or tagline, your logo will contribute to the first impression users will have of your website. Try to create a logo that is clear, simple, and functional. At the same time, choose a design with a timeless look that will be in style for at least ten years.



MULTILINGUAL SEO AND ONLINE MARKETING

In terms of website positioning, building a well-designed website is extremely important for your search engine optimization (SEO), as some design elements affect SEO. When writing foreign language content, research frequently used foreign-language keywords and incorporate them into your translated texts. Well-researched terms will help bring visitors to your site. Write your content using common keywords specific to your industry field. Multilingual SEO is important because it increases your website's visibility in foreign search engines and makes it rank higher.

Also keep in mind that you can reach a broader audience by blogging in different languages and sharing your articles on social media. Develop an effective strategy for regularly posting multilingual content that provides added value for your web visitors.

EXPLORING E-COMMERCE

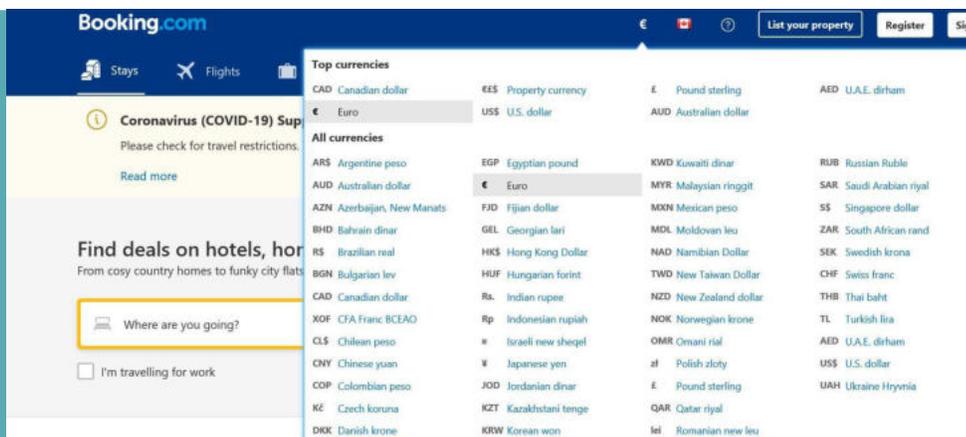
By considering the various elements involved in multilingual website building, you will be able to create a great e-commerce website that helps you sell your products and services in foreign markets.

LOGISTICS

Research and use tools that will make the selling process easier so you can effectively sell both digital and physical items, manage shipping, taxes, currencies, payment methods, and other workflow processes. Currencies, payment methods and processors will differ from country to country so set up your foreign language sales pages accordingly. For example, [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) (amazon.com) offers the possibility to shop and pay in more than 60 currencies.



Figure 13: Amazon; Currency options.



Booking
(booking.com) has
payment options in
around 50
currencies.

Figure 14: Booking.com; Currency options.

[LingoStar's Localization Guides](#) provide more detailed information on preferred payment methods in various countries.

You can also form strategic partnerships with well-known and established shipping or logistics companies in the target markets to gain credibility and trust from potential customers. When calculating the product price, make sure to account for package labeling, insurance, tracking, customs declarations and forms, tariffs, taxes, and duties.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

To support online sales in other countries, you may consider setting up customer service in the target market to help you serve your audience more efficiently. If you are providing a call service, make sure to use the right code for each country (e.g. +39 for Italy, +44 for the UK, etc.).

Be aware of the different time zones around the globe. It is recommended to have a customer service representative based in the target market in order to answer customer questions. It is also advisable to hire employees in different time zones in order to work around the clock and be able to provide fast response times.

WEBSITE TESTING BEFORE LAUNCH

Before launching an e-commerce multilingual site, check its functionality and user experience from the perspective of a foreign customer. It is recommended to test and ensure that the purchasing process goes smoothly, that the multilingual content and visuals are suitable for the chosen target audiences, and that your website is ranking high in online searches.

[LingoStar's ebook](#) provides more detailed information about e-commerce logistics, e-commerce products and services, customer service and the launch of a multilingual website.

IN A NUTSHELL

Undoubtedly, website localization is essential in growing your business and expanding its reach. As we have covered in this document, familiarize yourself with the target country's culture and try to learn from other businesses with multilingual websites. Some good businesses to learn from include the world's biggest brands such as Wikipedia, Google, Microsoft, Nike, Amazon, Nivea, Philips, 1234

Suzuki, Airbnb and many more. A multilingual e-commerce website opens up new opportunities and brings you closer to worldwide operations. It allows you to reach a wider audience around the world and make your business go global. This ultimately results in higher revenues and customer base expansion across different foreign markets.

Why limit
yourself to a local market?



We hope that this introductory website translation guide has provided you with some basic, useful ideas on how to adapt a website for global audiences and how to grow your business globally. To help you achieve your goal in building a successful multilingual website, partner with LingoStar.

For more information, get in touch via e-mail at info@lingo-star.com or by phone at +1-604-629-8420. You can also request a [free quote](#) and [subscribe](#) to our newsletter. For a very detailed guide on how to linguistically and culturally adapt a website for global audiences, refer to [LingoStar's ebook](#).

If you are interested in learning more about website translation into foreign languages and for particular countries, consult our [Localization Guides](#) for Bengali (Bangladesh), Chinese Mandarin (China), Dutch (the Netherlands, Belgium), English (Canada, UK, USA), French (Canada, Europe), German (Germany), Hindi (India), Italian (Italy), Japanese (Japan), Malayalam (India), Punjabi (India), Spanish (Argentina, Spain), Vietnamese (Vietnam) and more.



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