

Going Global by Going Local-How Website Localization and Translation Can Break the Internet Language Barrier and Contribute to Globalization

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Abstract : With 6,500 spoken languages all over the world but 80 percent of online content available only in 10 languages - English, Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, Arabic, Portuguese, German, French, Russian, and Korean - language represents a barrier to the universal access to knowledge, information and services that the internet wants to provide. Translation and its related fields of localization, interpreting, globalization, and internationalization, remove that barrier for billions of people worldwide, unlocking new markets for technology companies, mobile device makers, service providers and language vendors as well. This paper gathers different surveys conducted in different regions of the world that demonstrate a growing demand for consumption of web content with distinctive values and in languages others than the aforementioned ones. It also adds new insights to the contribution of translation in languages preservation. The idea that English is the language of internet and that, in a globalized world, everyone should learn English to cope with new technologies is no longer true. This idea has reached its limits. It collides with cultural diversity and differences around the world and generates an accelerated rate of languages extinction. Studies prove that internet exacerbates this rate and web giants such as Facebook or Google are, today, facing the impact of such a misconception of globalization. For internet and dot-com companies, localization is the solution; they are spending a significant amount of time to understand what people want and to figure out how to provide it. They are committed to making their content accessible, if not in all the languages spoken today, at least in most of them, and to adapting it to most cultures. Technology has broken down the barriers of time and space, and it will break down the language barrier as well by undertaking a process of translation and localization and through a new definition of globalization that takes into consideration these two processes.

Keywords : globalization, internet, localization, translation

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