

Web Globalization Intelligence

February 2007

Did you know...

The number of Web pages using Unicode has grown 500% over the past five years?

A division of General Motors is now licensing its translation memories to other companies?

About Us

Every month, *Global by Design* explores the art and science of Web and content globalization. We cover emerging trends, real-world Web sites, the latest technologies, and innovative vendors.

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Global by Design

ISSN: 1557-9379

Published by:

Byte Level Research LLC

bytelevel / research

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Return on Translation (ROT)

There's more than one way to place a value on translated content

This issue of *Global by Design* is devoted largely to looking at how companies place value on translated content. Because translation costs are expensive and because companies continue to add languages and content, justifying ROI has become more important than ever.

The good news is that there are more ways than ever to assign value to content. Makers of content and globalization management software (including Tridion, which is featured in this issue) are adding “dashboard” features that allow executives to see how much content is being reused, what the translation of this content costs, and what they are saving through the use of translation memory. Also, the TM Marketplace is helping companies resell their translated content, effectively turning a department long viewed as a cost center to a profit center, albeit a relatively small one.

Finally, I'm introducing an ROT model that takes a unique approach toward valuing Web translation: the *Translating for Clicks* Model. This model is built upon the idea that every free click-through that a search engine sends to your translated Web pages has value. And this value can be found in the amount of money devoted to pay-per-click advertising. I'm curious to hear what you think of this model and if it helps you make the business case for more translation resources.

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Return on Translation

Measuring the payback on your translation dollars

“What’s the ROI?”

Chances are you’ve had to answer the ROI question at least once in your business career. Return on investment is a key component to getting the much-needed sign-off from upper management on any major purchase.

But what’s the ROI of translation?

It’s not such an easy number to calculate, particularly when it comes to Web sites, because Web site content may benefit a company in many different and hard-to-measure ways.

Revenue Driver or Cost Cutter?

Ideally, upper management views translation spending as an investment in generating new revenues, much like an advertising campaign. Therefore, it’s no surprise that most executives we speak with prefer to use revenue-oriented metrics. It’s easy to get the management approval if you can say that 5,000 additional Web pages of translated text will result in an extra \$5 million in sales.

But it’s important not to focus purely on direct sales. A localized Web site requires local-language customer support representatives – and the better job a company does of providing translated customer support materials on the Web, the more phone calls and emails are deflected – quite possibly outweighing whatever amount of money was spent on the translation.

This article outlines the major ROI metrics we find companies using to justify their translation expenditures and highlights those metrics that executives have told us are most effective.

Awareness and Perception

Does the translated Web site make people more aware of your company in general and products and brands in particular? And do they view your company positively or negatively? To arrive at these measurements, companies often employ focus groups before and after a localized Web site is launched. Measuring awareness is one of the “fuzziest” metrics employed, and few executives we have spoken with over the years find it to be a reliable way to make the case for investing in translation spending. However, there is the element of “search engine awareness,” which is easily measured through click-thrus and something we will focus on in the next article.

Visits

How many additional unique and repeat visitors is the new translated content generating? **Visits are the most common measurement used by**

executives to track the relative popularity of localized Web sites. To make this metric truly sing, it's important that companies make sure they have built an effective global navigation strategy that ensures that visitors can easily find their local content. Since more than half of all visitors to many Web sites first land on the .com page, a global navigation strategy can make a big difference in how this metric is perceived internally.

TIP: If your .com Web team relies heavily on visitor metrics, they may not want to see visitors pulled away from the .com to your regional and local sites as this impacts their numbers. Work closely with your Web team to ensure that everyone is incentivized to work together to direct users to their localized content.

Lead Generation

Lead generation is by far the most important metric used within the companies we have spoken with. Most marketing teams attach a value to each new lead acquired, which may be someone who registers for the company newsletter, downloads a white paper, or requests a demonstration. The value a company attaches to this lead may range from a dollar to more than \$100, depending on the industry and how "qualified" that lead may be. Lead generation can also be used to decide which new markets should be targeted with localized Web sites.

TIP: Plan for lead generation on a newly localized site as early as possible. All you need to offer is a "sign up to be notified when new content is posted" email form. This type of information could be passed along to local sales and marketing teams to illustrate immediate ROI. And keep a count of how many leads are being generated by week or month.

Ecommerce

For online retailers, direct sales is the essential metric. But combining lead generation with direct sales is even more important – as it captures the sales cycle from initial lead generation to eventual sale.

TIP: Revenue that comes in through the localized Web site may come at the expense of revenue that comes through the .com site. It's important to understand how a localized Web site will affect sales to the .com site. Also note that localized Web sites, like the .com site years ago, take time to develop an audience. For example, bilingual consumers may continue to order from the English-language site and resist using the localized site. The localized site may be perceived as a "lesser" Web site.

Multi-channel Commerce

Tracking a prospect through all channels (such as retail, Web, print catalog) is the ultimate goal of most marketers and the most challenging to achieve. And only companies that have developed holistic Web localization strategies that take into account these many