



2019

Going Global



LOCARIA

CONTENT

- 3** The Opportunities and Challenges of Going Global
- 4** Online Languages
- 6** An Agile Approach to International Expansion
- 7** Switzerland & Belgium
- 8** Middle East
- 11** India
- 12** Southeast Asia
- 13** Hong Kong
- 17** Localise Your Site—Yes or No?
- 20** How to Localise Ad Copies for PPC
- 21** Summary
- 22** Contact Us

The Opportunities and Challenges for Going Global

Locaria has been localising and creating multilingual content for global brands for over 8 years, and was the first agency to provide localisation and full language support for global search marketing, not just translation.

We realised that translation agencies simply cannot provide and apply the combination of advertising platform and local market knowledge required to ensure that the translation is ready for circulation and doesn't need to be adjusted to ensure it complies with editorial, format and character limit requirements from a platform.

Our linguistic analysts are fully trained in all market and platform conditions within their regional remit and work side by side with search analysts on the optimisation of campaigns. This provides an efficient and scalable workflow that allows us to expand our clients businesses globally.

As a result of our work both in our model and execution, we have managed successful localisation projects and campaigns for some of the worlds largest brands including Hilton Hotels, British Airways, Gucci, ASOS and Net-a-Porter Group.

The experience developed from these campaigns and brands is industry-leading, so we wanted to share some of our case studies and linguistic knowledge for any business considering expanding internationally.

Online languages

We live in a linguistically complex world. Whether online or offline, users encounter a mixture of languages – some with intricate grammatical structures, others with infinite vocabulary, incomprehensible sounds or complex writing systems.

Only 12 languages cover 99%* of all website content. Below is a list of the most commonly used:

English (over 55% of sites) Russian | German | Japanese Spanish | French | Simplified Chinese | Portuguese | Polish Italian | Turkish | Dutch | Arabic

The list of languages with the highest number of Internet users differs slightly:

Polish, Italian, Turkish and Dutch (or Flemish) seem to have more content online but do not qualify as top ten languages in terms of Internet users. This is mainly due to the fact that they either have smaller populations or relatively low Internet penetration rates. However, they are still important languages for many international brands.



Thanks to one of the highest percentages of Internet penetration worldwide, Korean ranks in the top ten in terms of Internet users, but still fewer than 1% of sites use Korean as a content language.

It is also important to note that while at the moment English tops the list of most widely used languages in website content and number of Internet users, its number of Internet users is increasing at a much lower rate than Arabic, Russian, Simplified Chinese and Spanish. As a result of the rapid increase in Internet users across languages, online content will grow quickly and more sites will offer on-site support in a variety of languages.

Major travel aggregator sites such as booking.com and hotels.com offer their services and information in a number of languages, in some cases, over 40.

The following languages generate substantial traffic that results in high conversion rates and considerable revenues, which is why they're generally prioritised in international expansion projects.

THE AMERICAS

English
French
Spanish
Brazilian Portuguese

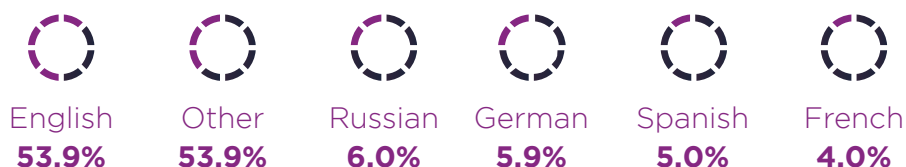
EMEA

English
German
French
Spanish
Italian
Dutch
Swedish
Danish
Norwegian
Finnish
Russian

APAC

Simplified Chinese
Traditional Chinese (Hong Kong)
Korean
Japanese

USAGE OF CONTENT LANGUAGES FOR WEBSITES



* http://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/content_language/all



An Agile Approach to International Expansion

Choosing the right languages for your brand and optimising accordingly can be a challenge in a multi-country and multi-language search landscape. Not to mention the range of different search engines available.

The following provides some examples of intricacies you might encounter in key regions.



Switzerland & Belgium

In Switzerland, for instance, German, French and Italian are all official languages, so which language takes priority for your brand? Is it worth targeting all three? Or are most Swiss people bilingual, with a particular preference towards one?

These are questions that have to be considered when setting market objectives, budgets and building campaigns.

In Switzerland, all three languages are recommended and the difference in the number of native speakers per language corresponds with the differences you see in traffic volumes. German (around 65% of total Swiss population) is by far the most important from a volume perspective, yet equally as important from a conversion rate and overall revenue perspective.

French (close to 24.5% of total population) is generally a lot weaker in terms of traffic, but converts at a relatively reasonable rate. Whereas Italian (roughly 5%) trails far behind both German and French, yet still generates enough traffic for well-established brands to see benefits in using it.

Countries like Switzerland and Belgium (official languages: Flemish, French, German) require complex and time-consuming campaign setups. This is to ensure the right languages are targeted with correctly localised copy and keywords, and then optimised accordingly on an ongoing basis.



Middle East

Moving our focus away from Europe and closer to the Middle East, we encounter another region that uses multiple languages. While the number of languages is much lower than Europe, it's interesting to note that each common language used for search has its own writing system. The core languages in this region are: Arabic, Hebrew, and Turkish. Surprisingly, Persian (also known as Farsi) is not included in this list. This is because while Persian has a very high number of native speakers, which in fact exceeds the number of Hebrew speakers and is not far behind Turkish, it is not currently possible to target Persian as

a language in PPC. Therefore Persian ads can't be shown due to advertising regulations set by the Iranian government.

The Turkish speaking population is considered the most monolingual of the three and even though English is rapidly growing as a second language, using Turkish is generally the best way to reach the largest audience.

When considering Arabic and Hebrew, it becomes a little more challenging. Hebrew is by far the most commonly spoken language in Israel – a well-developed country known for its strength in technology. Use of English is very common amongst the educated which is why a mixture of English and Hebrew is often used on search engines in this market.



Hebrew and Arabic do not differentiate the vowels 'u' and 'o' in the brand terms 'ASOS' and 'ASUS' which makes it difficult to analyse pure brand search volume and negative traffic relating to one of them in order to focus just on the other; doing so would reduce wastage.

Arabic is often seen as one single language which might be true when speaking about the written version (MSA - Modern Standard Arabic), however every region has its own spoken variety which in some cases are mutually unintelligible from each other.

What is interesting and important to know is that in search users do not always stick to the grammatically complex MSA format and instead prefer to use their local dialect. Sometimes they will even write in what is called, Chat Arabic, which uses the Latin script in conjunction with Arabic. This combination uses tones that don't exist in other languages.

Spelling also differs from country to country. If we take the brand term 'Gucci' as an example:

When searching for international brands, English is commonly used, but in some cases, when spelling seems difficult (e.g. Burberry, Microsoft, Blackberry, iPhone), the local Hebrew translation is preferred.

Another challenge with the Hebrew and Arabic alphabet is that vowels are more often than not spelled out in writing, or in other cases, indicated vowels can cause ambiguity and therefore refer to different brands in English.

Hebrew		Arabic		Official Version	Egyptian Version	Gulf Version
ASOS	ASUS	ASOS	ASUS	عوشني	جوشني	قوشني
אסוס	אסוס	أسوس	أسوس			

CASE STUDY: Arabic in the Gulf Region

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, English has a very strong presence in the Gulf, especially UAE and Qatar.

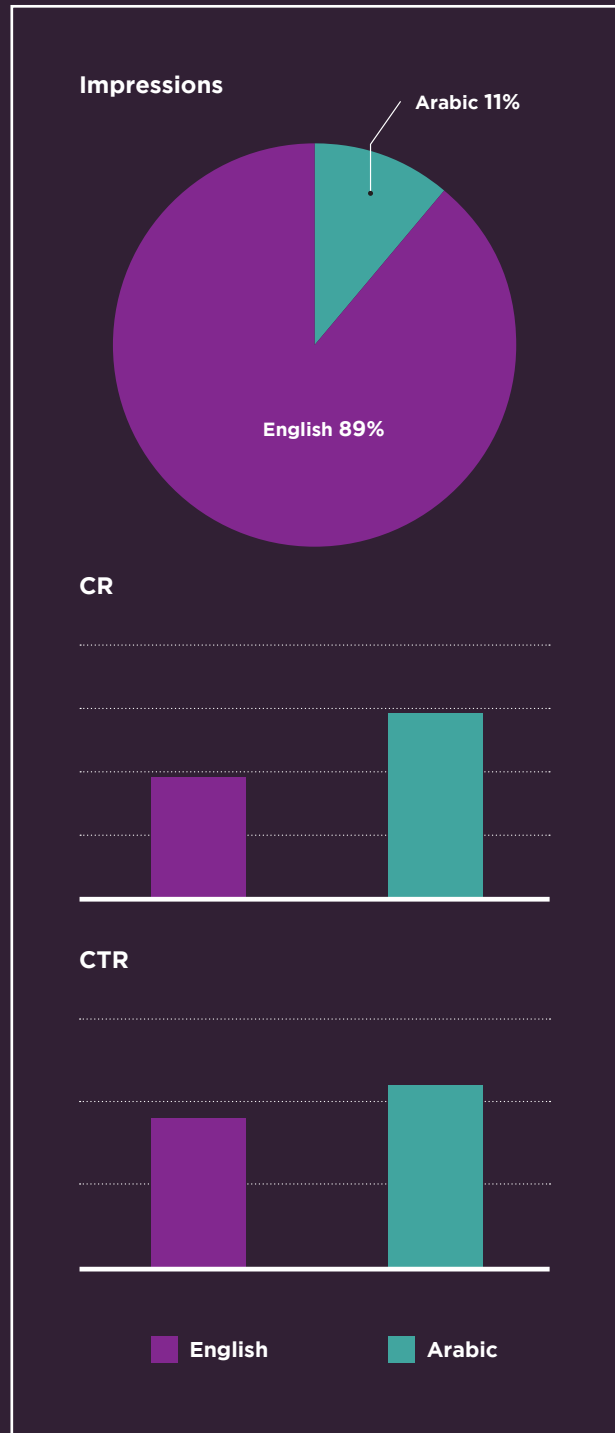
Below is a three month case study, which shows the impact of using English and Arabic keywords and ad copies in the UAE.

English takes the lion's share in terms of impressions regardless of what language has been targeted.

However, when comparing Arabic ad CTR (Click-Through Rate) and CR (Conversion Rate) in Arabic targeting to English ad CTR in English targeting, Arabic wins with an up to 20% higher CTR and over 30% higher conversion rate despite the fact that the landing page is only in English. This clearly shows that users in the UAE do not mind an English site especially when they search for international brands.

Conversion rates from traffic targeting English can be lower since there is a huge number of international business travellers in the UAE who search in English but often prefer to buy from their home country.

Always ensure that you have English and Arabic keywords - both with Arabic ads only in your campaigns targeting Arabic and have fully built out English campaigns with English ads with English targeting.



India

With a population of 1.2 billion and a rapidly increasing rate of internet penetration, India is a key growth market for brands to keep front of mind in the coming years. A key part of the growth is coming from mobile internet users with a 450%* predicted increase between 2012 and 2015, whilst desktop use is only estimated to increase by 160%*.

In terms of search engines, Google has 90% market share in the country with Yahoo, Ask Network and searches on Facebook making up the 10%. As Internet penetration grows, it'll be important for brands to monitor search behaviour relevant to their business as India has the largest** age demographic for 15-24 year olds of all the BRIC countries (rapid growth countries including Brasil, Russia and China); this age group will have a high level of sophistication with technology, impacting the way they discover and search for products and brands.

* http://www.avendus.com/Files/Fund%20Performance%20PDF/Avendus_Report-India's_Mobile_Internet-2013.pdf

** http://www.avendus.com/Files/Fund%20Performance%20PDF/Avendus_Report-India's_Mobile_Internet-2013.pdf

In terms of language use, India is the unrivalled winner. English, followed by Hindi, then Telugu and Tamil are the most searched for languages; each with their own unique alphabet.

Only very few global e-commerce sites offer support in Hindi, Telugu or Tamil. The latter two are mainly popular in the Indian movie industry and searches are focused around that area. It is also important to note that you currently cannot target Telugu or Tamil in your AdWords campaigns.

Hindi is the only language which is used by some brands in campaigns targeting India, but hardly any sites use it on their website. Looking again at global travel aggregator sites only one (Agoda) offers a fully localised site in Hindi, the language with the most native speakers in India.



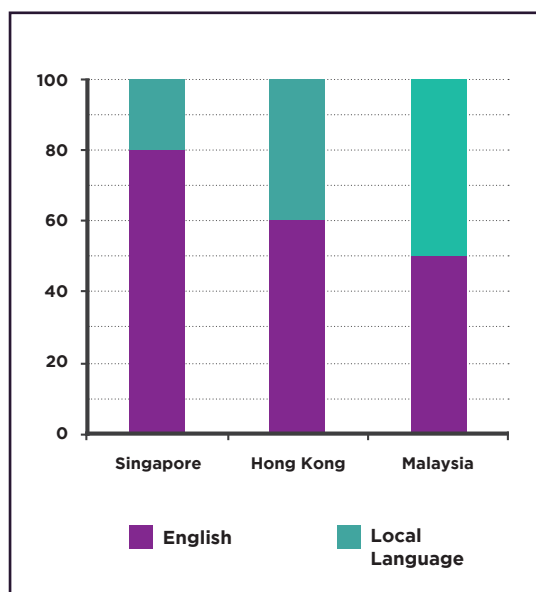
Southeast Asia

Moving on to East and Southeast Asia, we find a mix of countries that each have their own official language. The most popular ones in search - namely Chinese, Korean and Japanese - bear hardly any similarities in grammar, writing systems or pronunciation.

Fully localised search campaigns and landing pages, which sound original and natural, as opposed to just offering a direct translation from English, are paramount if you want to reach the target audience in China, South Korea and Japan.

There are a few markets where English is very popular or has the status of an official language, these are mainly in Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia

Taking travel and fashion brands as an example, the average % splits between English and the local language in terms of traffic are shown in the graph on the right:



Singapore is the clear winner in regards to English usage. Most people are bilingual or at least speak English well enough to participate in business conversations. For search in particular, English seems to be the preferred language and click-through rates on English ad copies are mostly higher than on any other local language in Singapore. However, the influence from Mainland China means that the use of Simplified Chinese is growing, especially for generic terms. Singaporean-Chinese speakers quite often tend to use Simplified Chinese or mix Simplified Chinese characters with English.

It is not commonly known that Malaysia has quite a strong level of English amongst its native population. Its sole official language is Bahasa Malaysia, which is often disregarded in search when targeting Malaysia because conversion rates are significantly lower than in English. Nonetheless it is worth testing Bahasa Malaysia because traffic is significant and it will continue to grow brand awareness within the market as a whole.



Hong Kong

Hong Kong can be a challenge in search, not only because it has two very strong official languages – English and Traditional Chinese (Hong Kong version), but also because of two major search engines with almost equal split in terms of market share.

Too often the focus of global brands is purely on English under the assumption that Traditional Chinese does not generate enough traffic at a reasonable conversion rate and ROI. This perception is misleading and if set up correctly on both engines, Traditional Chinese (Hong Kong) could add important revenue to search campaigns.

There is one major point to remember. It's imperative that Simplified Chinese (Mainland China), Traditional Chinese (Hong Kong version) and Traditional Chinese (Taiwan version) are not mixed up.

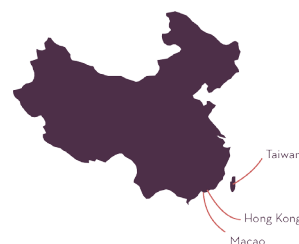
Often Simplified Chinese ads can be found in Hong Kong or Taiwan, targeting Traditional Chinese speakers. The majority of Taiwanese and Cantonese people are proud of their Traditional Chinese writing system and strongly oppose the use of Simplified Chinese, as it is often seen as a threat to their identity.

In addition, it's important to not confuse the different versions of Traditional Chinese used in Hong Kong and Taiwan. They bear syntactical, lexical and character differences which are all mutually intelligible but important to be respected if you want to target one market in particular.



EXAMPLE OF FASHION AND RETAIL:

English	Simplified Chinese (China)	Traditional Chinese (Hong Kong)	Traditional Chinese (Taiwan)
Dress	连衣裙	連身裙	洋裝
Wallet	钱包	銀包	錢夾
Store	专门店	專門店	門市

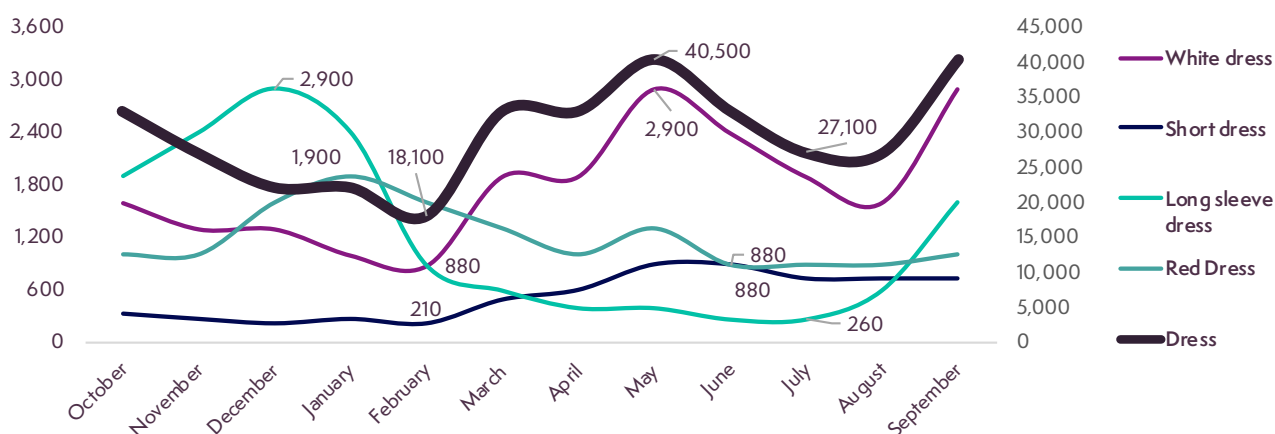


EXAMPLE OF TRAVEL:

English	Simplified Chinese (China)	Traditional Chinese (Hong Kong)	Traditional Chinese (Taiwan)
Hotel booking	预订宾馆	訂酒店	預訂飯店/旅館
Cheap flights	打折/特价机票	平價機票	便宜機票
Dubai hotels	迪拜酒店	杜拜酒店	杜拜飯店

BRAND VARIATION EXAMPLES—CHINESE:

Keyword (Bike)	Taiwan		China				Hong Kong	
	Google	Yahoo	Baidu	360	Sogou	Shenma	Google	Yahoo
自行車/自行车	218,574	86,462	557,400	222,960	21,600	6,000	590	7,220
腳踏車/脚踏车	185,556	291,475	60,900	24,360	9,010	900	320	3,019
單車/单车	174,298	9,805	314,700	125,880	4,550	2,400	14,800	24,710
bike	9,900	18,050	28,830	11,532	420	3,000	150,400	144
bicycle	3,600	8,557	27,750	11,100	390	2,400	73,600	247

KEYWORDS EXAMPLE—[DRESS: 洋裝] [RED DRESS: 紅色洋裝] [WHITE DRESS: 白色洋裝]
[SHORT DRESS: 短洋裝] [LONG SLEEVE DRESS: 長袖洋裝]



As you can see from the above examples, many things need to be considered when expanding into regions with multiple languages. Background research, ad copy variations and careful small-scale testing of different keywords helps to provide a clear picture of what works best for brands and helps

to make the right decisions before full expansion into another market.

English vs Traditional Chinese on Google and Yahoo

A large percentage of Hong Kong's population is almost perfectly bilingual in Cantonese (Traditional Chinese Hong Kong version) and English. English is a mandatory language from early on in education and

a number of subjects in school are taught in it.

In addition, expats and international travellers, mostly in English, carry out a very large percentage of searches in Hong Kong.

Apart from language, the other challenge to tackle is Yahoo Hong Kong which has over 40% of the search engine market share.

The questions many brands ask are: Is it worth targeting Traditional Chinese? Does it make sense to expand to Yahoo Hong Kong and if so what language is preferred?

Answers to such questions can be found in the next case study.

CASE STUDY:

English vs Traditional Chinese (6 Months Data)

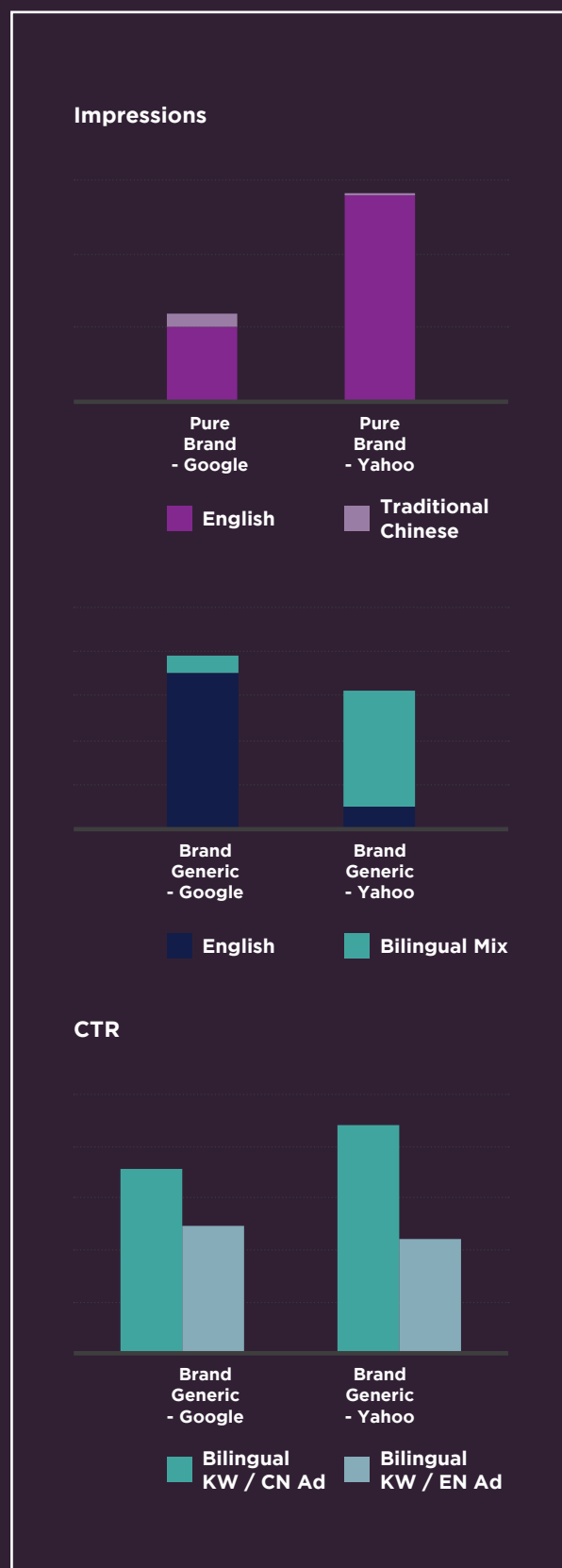
In terms of the pure brand terms of international brands, English drives significantly more traffic than Traditional Chinese on both search engines. The reason being that it is quite often harder to think of the right Chinese characters to spell out the brand than just using the English version. In some cases there is no version of the brand term in Chinese Characters, in other cases there are several and an English search will ensure the user gets the correct results.

When it comes to 'Brand + Generic' variations, pure English variations are still stronger on Google. However on Yahoo, bilingual versions of writing the brand in English and the generic terms in Chinese, are considerably more common. The reason for this is that Yahoo is more popular among Cantonese native speakers, whereas Google is the search engine of choice for most English speakers.

When using bilingual keywords, users will click on a Traditional Chinese ad on both search engines, but Chinese, on average, has a significantly higher CTR on Yahoo than on Google. This indicates that users on Yahoo are generally more focused on Cantonese than English.

The recommended solution for Hong Kong is:

- **Google:** English Keywords, English Ad, English targeting
- **Google:** Traditional Chinese Keywords, Traditional Chinese Ad, Traditional Chinese targeting
- **Google:** Bilingual Keywords, Traditional Chinese Ad, Traditional Chinese targeting
- **Yahoo HK:** English Keywords, Traditional Chinese Ad, target all languages
- **Yahoo HK:** Traditional Chinese Keywords, Traditional Chinese Ad, target all languages
- **Yahoo HK:** Bilingual Keywords, Traditional Chinese Ad, target all languages



Website Localisation

Localise Your Site —Yes or No?

***"Everybody understands English, right?
So why should I allocate resource, time
and money to localising my site? "***

These sorts of questions and statements around the importance of English as a global language are commonplace.

The number of second language English speakers is rising at a very fast pace across many countries worldwide. However, even in markets where English has been a dominant second language for many years and gained popular support amongst younger generations, it has not managed to overshadow other major official languages, especially in everyday conversations.

Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, UAE, Qatar, Belgium, the Netherlands, Hong Kong and many more are all known for the high level of English spoken amongst their native populations. Therefore, sending traffic from localised ads to an English site is definitely possible and converts reasonably well, however, expecting it to perform equally to a localised site would be unrealistic.

On the following pages there are 2 case studies that show the business value in localising your site for a given market your business is active in.



CASE STUDY:

Engagement of Localised Brand PPC to an English Language Site (6 months)

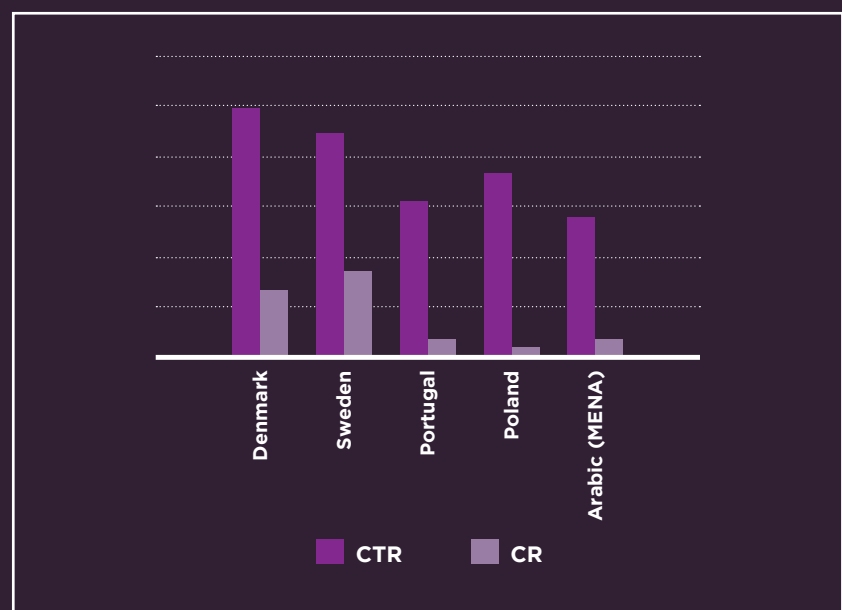
The adjacent data presents CTR and Conversion Rate (CR) for Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, Poland and MENA (Middle East & North Africa).

Denmark and Sweden experience more than twice the conversion rate of Portugal, Poland and Arabic (MENA) where English usage is much less widespread.

Traffic from Portuguese, Polish and Arabic still converts, but at a much lower rate, especially in Poland where English has considerably less strength amongst locals than in Nordic and most Western European countries.

Knowledge of English in the Arab world depends on the region. Levels of English in countries like Morocco, Egypt (North Africa) is considerably lower than in the wealthy Gulf region, in particular United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman.

If your aim is to only target UAE and Qatar, then an English site will mostly suffice, but it should definitely be a consideration to provide localised landing pages when expanding to Saudi Arabia or other Arabic speaking countries.



CASE STUDY: Before and After Site Localisation

So what is the impact of localising your site in strong English markets?

In the first graph, campaigns were switched to Swedish landing pages within the first three months of 2013. When comparing the period of May to October 2012 to the same period in 2013, we can see an increase of more than 23% in conversion rate.

For the Portuguese market, the new and fully localised site went live around second quarter of 2013. Since then conversion rate has grown by over 90% when compared with the first quarter of 2013.

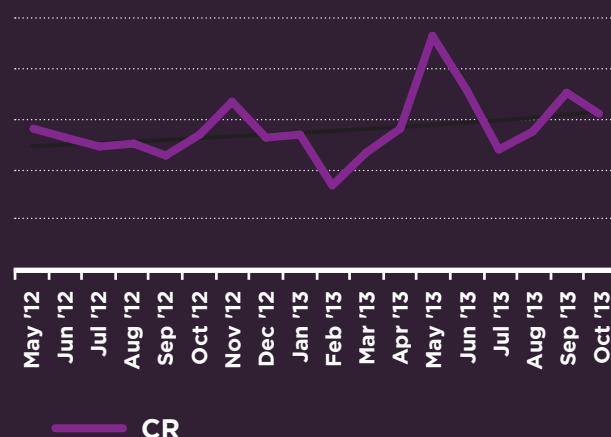
Based on the adjacent examples, providing localised support in non-English markets, regardless of the strength of English as a second language, will have a clear positive impact on your business.

This does not mean that for every country you need to have a fully localised site from the very start. Instead, we recommended building localised PPC campaigns, first targeting your English site to gauge brand awareness and opportunity.

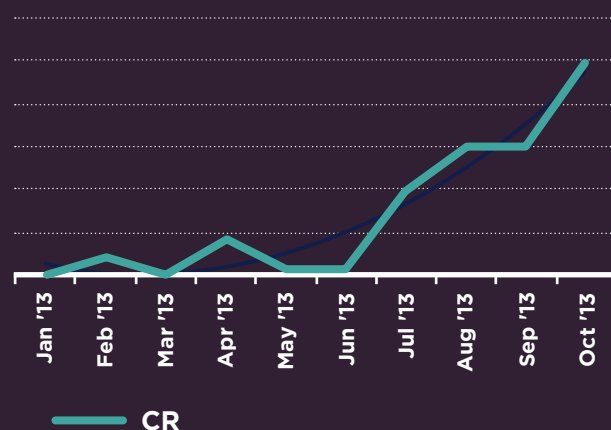
Then after a few months when new markets with potential have been identified and if budget and time allows, always try to localise your site or at least provide a localised landing page.

This landing page should include a purchasing guide and offer/promotional information.

Swedish – Strong English Market



Portuguese – Weak English Market



How to Localise Ad Copies for PPC

Localising PPC ad copies is a notoriously difficult process to maintain unless local market linguistic analysts are utilised. Unfortunately, ad copies directly translated from English, or even using translation tools such as Google Translate and Bing, can result in considerable grammatical mistakes, which will have an impact on CTR that the advertiser will experience.

Large-scale campaigns in multiple languages have another element of difficulty to localising PPC; optimising quickly and efficiently, with up-to-date content. Such tasks require a team of native speakers, experienced in copywriting and PPC, as well as a strong understanding of the offering from the client.

In the majority of cases, PPC teams dedicated to one account lack multilingual expertise and therefore simply use translation agencies.

Another major issue is that translation based on English source does not work well in PPC,

in particular for languages that require much more space than English, which are syntactically more complex or culturally totally different.

Languages such as German and Finnish have much longer words and more complex grammar than English, which requires restructuring of content and omitting certain words in PPC ads that you might be able to add in English. But how can a translator understand all of the intricacies of PPC, style requirements of the client while managing to strike a balance between both?

Only a content specialist experienced in PPC and dedicated to the relevant account will be able to tackle such challenges to determine the right method of generating target content and this will all depend on language and search engine requirements.

Localising your ads for PPC, which means first translating them from the English source and then modifying the target in accordance with client and search engine requirements, is one way of doing it.

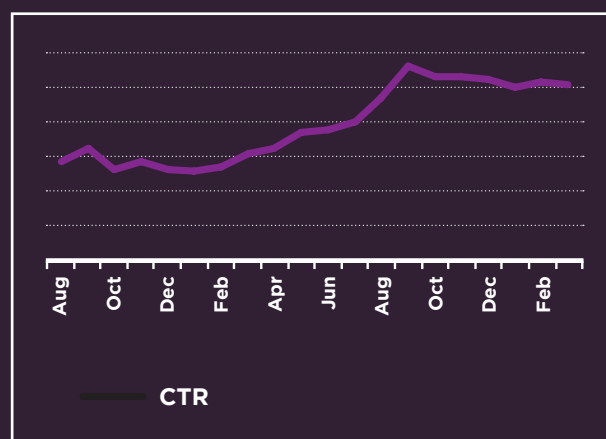
The best way of creating your content, however, is to originate content in the target without source language interference.

CASE STUDY: Turkish: Localised vs Originated Ad Copies

Starting from March localised ad copies were replaced with fully originated Turkish ads. Origination was completed by September and since then CTR jumped by over 40%.

Content origination requires significantly more time than localisation. Therefore it will not be always possible to have fully originated ads, especially when deadlines are tight. For large-scale build-outs it is recommended to use a PPC localisation approach first and

then at a later stage, high traffic campaigns should be identified and prioritised for origination.



Summary

The search engine landscape and consumer behaviour are constantly changing and with this languages continue to evolve at a rapid pace.

We believe that the contents of this whitepaper and the summary points below cover off some of the key challenges any advertiser will face when going to market in a new region and language.

1. Testing before full site localisation

Unless you know that you definitely want to be in a particular market and you have enough data to support full expansion, start off with a localised PPC market scoping test to gather information about market opportunities, competition and an understanding of volume. Based on the results, you can make a decision on what markets to prioritise and what localisation strategy to use for your site (full localisation, partial localisation, site origination)

2. Consistency in site and search content

Advertisers can often fall into the trap of choosing general translation agencies for their website localisation and a digital marketing agency to optimise the site and manage search. This causes confusion as each agency is working in isolation and not with the required considerations for the other. It's important to use agencies that fully understand localisation and how to merge it with your search activities in a way that complements each other.

3. Set the right strategies for each language

It is great if your English content is fully optimised and performs efficiently. However unfortunately this doesn't mean that you can directly translate it into other languages and expect the same performance for all target languages. There are similarities between some languages, but cultures and consumer behavior differ in most cases and that has to be reflected accordingly in your target content.

4. Use the correct method of content generation

Translation works sometimes, but rarely for search content. Your content needs to be generated with your target market in mind, which requires market understanding and background research.

This also solves any issues of language interference which occurs when translating content into a pre-existing structure.

5. Ensure the use of high quality search content service

Translation experience alone will not be enough to provide the optimised target content. You need content specialists, who are native in their languages with copywriting and search experience, in order to create content that is linguistically accurate and fully optimised for the requirements of the target channel.



Contact Us

Locaria is a pioneering digital language service provider, and the only LSP certified with the world's major search engines.

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