International SEO

Free SEO Forever
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International SEO, how to conquer the web?

Main Topics:

- Multilingual/regional Keyword research
- Content Strategy
- Technical SEO (How to structure our website)
- Link building

Keyword research

- Use regional search volumes (not global)
- English is not the only foreign language
  - What are the other high potential languages?
  - Why English has high potential/competition?
- Research the keywords in the local language
- Some countries are multilingual
  - Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, etc.
- People speak more than one English language
  - US, UK, CA, AU, IN, etc.

Tools for international keyword research

- Translate function in Google sheet
- Google translate live on chrome
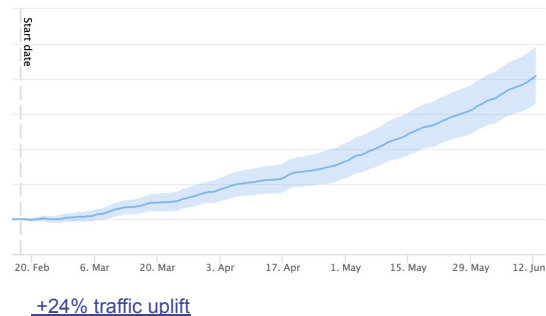- Chat GPT
- Ahrefs
- Google Ads

Content Strategy

- What are your target languages?
- What are your target countries?
- Do you need translation and/or localization?
- Do you need to translate/localize all pages?
  - Your keyword research plays an important role here!
- Local SERP Analysis
- Make sure you comply with the local legislation

https://searchengineland.com/the-dangers-of-brainstorming-your-international-content-marketing-strategy-153824

Localization pro tips

- Localize the essential information on your site
  - Contact details
  - Customer support
  - Terms and conditions
- Keep in mind the language differences (e.g. US vs UK)
- Localize the user experience
  - Currency
  - Payment methods
  - Customer expectations
  - Cultural preferences

+24% traffic uplift

Multilingual vs multi-regional

- A *multilingual* website is any website that offers content in more than one language. For example, a Canadian business with English and French versions of its site. Google Search tries to find pages that match the language of the searcher.

- A *multi-regional* website is one that explicitly targets users in different countries. For example, a product manufacturer that ships to both Canada and the United States. Google Search tries to find the right locale page for the searcher.

- Some sites are both multi-regional and multilingual: for example, a site might have different versions for the USA and for Canada, and both French and English versions of the Canadian content.

https://developers.google.com/search/docs/specialty/international/managing-multi-regional-sites

Technical SEO Requirements

- Make sure the page language is obvious (use only one language on each page)
- If you have more than one languages on your site > recommended to implement hreflang tags
- If you have more than one language (translations) of the same page > must implement hreflang tags
- Avoid redirect by IP or language settings
- Avoic dynamically change content on the page based on IP or language settings
- Let the user choose the language on your site
- Consider adding hyperlinks to other language versions of a page
- Google doesn't support HTML lang tag
- Automatic translations could be viewed as spam

Targeting site content to a specific country (geotargeting)

URL structure options		
Country-specific domain `example.de`	✓ **Pros:** • Clear geotargeting • Server location irrelevant • Easy separation of sites	🚫 **Cons:** • Expensive (can have limited availability) • Requires more infrastructure • Strict ccTLD requirements (sometimes) • Can only target a single country
Subdomains with gTLD `de.example.com`	✓ **Pros:** • Easy to set up • Allows different server locations • Easy separation of sites	🚫 **Cons:** • Users might not recognize geotargeting from the URL alone (is "de" the language or country?)

Targeting site content to a specific country (geotargeting)

Subdirectories with gTLD `example.com/de/`	✓ Pros: • Easy to set up • Low maintenance (same host)	🚫 Cons: • Users might not recognize geotargeting from the URL alone • Single server location • Separation of sites harder
URL parameters `site.com?loc=de`	Not recommended.	🚫 Cons: • URL-based segmentation difficult • Users might not recognize geotargeting from the URL alone

How does Google determine a target locale?

- Country-code top-level domain names (ccTLDs)
- hreflang statements, whether in tags, headers, or sitemaps.
- Server location (through the IP address of the server)
- local addresses and phone numbers on the pages, the use of local language and currency, links from other local sites, local business

Generic TLDs (without local effect)

gTLD. **Examples:**

- .com
- .org
- .edu
- Etc.

Generic regional top-level domains:

- .eu
- .asia

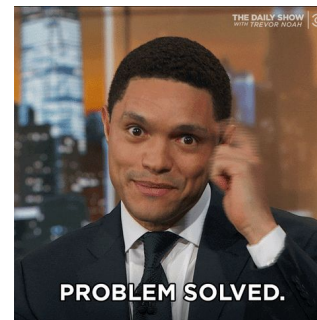**Generic Country Code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs)**

- .ad
- .ai
- .tv
- .bz
- .cc
- .cd
- .co
- etc

How to tell Google about localized versions of your page

Why it's important?

- We want to rank on our target locals/languages
- We want our users to land on the most related page from Google
- Translations and localizations could be considered as duplicate content and removed from index

Solution > Implement **hreflang tags** to tell Google about the variations of your content

What is hreflang?

Methods for indicating your alternate pages

There are three ways to indicate multiple language/locale versions of a page to Google:

- HTML
- HTTP Headers
- Sitemap

```
<link rel="alternate" href="https://example.com/en-gb" hreflang="en-gb" />
<link rel="alternate" href="https://example.com/en-us" hreflang="en-us" />
<link rel="alternate" href="https://example.com/en-au" hreflang="en-au" />
<link rel="alternate" href="https://example.com/" hreflang="x-default" />
```

Guidelines for all methods

1- Each language version must list itself as well as all other language versions.

2- Alternate URLs must be fully-qualified, including the transport method (http/https), "https://example.com/foo", **not** "//example.com/foo" or "/foo"

3- Alternate URLs do not need to be in the same domain.

4- If two pages don't both point to each other, the tags will be ignored. This is so that someone on another site can't arbitrarily create a tag naming itself as an alternative version of one of your pages.

5- Consider adding a fallback page for unmatched languages, especially on language/country selectors or auto-redirecting home pages. Use the the x-default value:
<link rel="alternate" href="https://example.com/" hreflang="x-default" />

6- Each alternate URL should be self canonicalised and indexable

```
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="lang_code ✏" href="url_of_page ✏" />
```

Let's see it in action

Different Global setups:
- Recharge.com
- Flixbus.com
- Amazon.com

Ahrefs in Action:
- (international) keyword research
- (international) SERP analysis
- (international) Competitive analysis

Discover more here:

- https://www.lumar.io/office-hours/hreflang/
- https://ahrefs.com/blog/international-seo/
- https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/international-seo
- https://rockcontent.com/blog/international-seo/

Link building pro tips

- Get links from local ccTLDs
- Get links from gTLDs supporting your target language
- Get links from websites that have organic traffic in your target market

Let's read together:

https://ahrefs.com/blog/international-link-building/