

Translate



motionpoint

Website Translation: **Evaluating the Top Three Approaches**

Discover how a fully turn-key solution minimizes operational complexity and cost of website localization projects.

Introduction

Finding the right approach to translating your website for global customers may seem daunting. The solution you choose should do more than expand your organization's market reach and optimize the on-site customer experience. It should also play well with your current content management system (CMS) and easily scale to meet future needs.

This guide takes a close look at the top three approaches that companies use to translate their online content, and compares their advantages and drawbacks.

As part of this evaluation, **we also discuss an enhanced iteration of the third approach**, which leverages the code and content of your main website to minimize the cost and complexity of translating, deploying and operating one or more multilingual websites.

Let's get started.

Global Reach: The Case for Website Translation

To remain competitive in today's global marketplace, it's more important than ever to optimize your online experience for prospects and customers around the world. This isn't just about competing effectively in mature international markets; your organization can be among the first to tap into unmet demand for products and services in emerging markets, too.

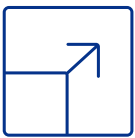
The first step in serving these buyers is to deploy international websites in local languages.

Offering localized web content is important for several reasons:

- ✓ The use of English on the Internet is declining as other languages, notably Chinese, Arabic and Spanish, rise in popularity. When you force your global customers to navigate and transact on an English-language website—or a partially translated site—they'll usually become frustrated, and leave.
- ✓ Technical or specialized products and services require translation of data, diagrams and documentation so global customers can fully understand them.
- ✓ Your industry may be subject to national or regional laws and regulations that make it mandatory to provide information about products or services in local languages.

First Things First

When selecting a website translation solution, make sure it's compatible with your existing CMS and other platforms, and meets strategic business and technological needs, such as:



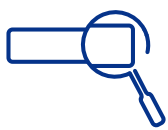
SCALABILITY

For high efficiency, the solution should allow you to add localized sites without increasing complexity—or your overhead.



MULTI-DEVICE SUPPORT

Your company should be able to seamlessly deliver the same localized customer experience across all device types, which can vary dramatically by region.



OPTIMIZATION

Optimizing the localized site to drive organic traffic, increase on-site user engagement and conversions, and more.



OMNICHANNEL CONTENT

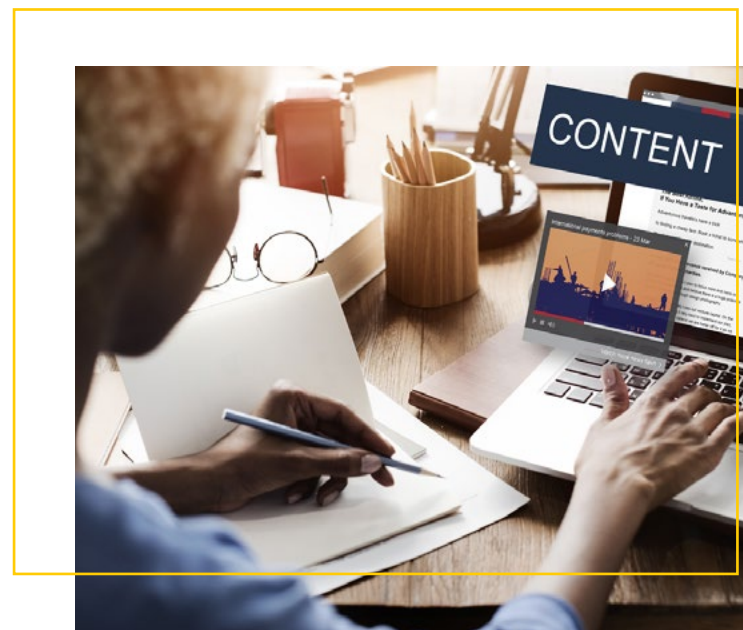
The ability to repurpose translated web content across all other communication channels.

3 Approaches to Website Localization

Now, let's examine the top three ways that organizations can translate their websites, including a fully turn-key version of the third approach.

We'll consider how effectively each one handles the important task of helping companies extend their global reach to achieve business goals, such as:

- ✓ Growth
- ✓ Competitive advantage
- ✓ Customer access and satisfaction
- ✓ Brand awareness and loyalty
- ✓ Regulatory compliance



1. Parallel Sites and Microsites

In years past, companies built translated websites using a technique called “the parallel site” approach.

Translation of Large Sites

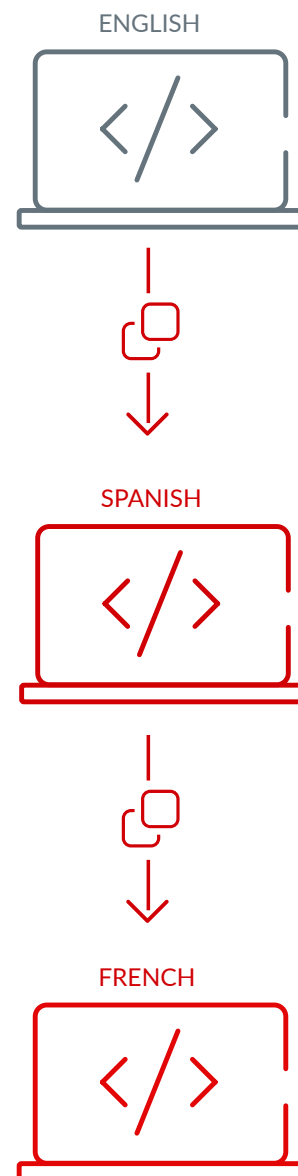
This involved developing an entirely separate website for each international market—from scratch—and manually maintaining it, often through the raw HTML code. This work was typically performed by local marketing teams. Most companies quickly realized the parallel-site approach was prohibitively costly and resource intensive.

Translation of Microsites

A more common riff on this approach is used to localize microsites. Instead of fully duplicating the company’s origin website, microsites deliver a much smaller scope of content and capabilities. They’re often used to highlight a single family of products, or a special promotion.

In theory, this makes site-wide translation much cheaper and easier to manage. But the risks often outweigh the benefits. Studies reveal that global customers want their local websites to have *content parity* with

Parallel Site Approach: Developing Entirely Separate Websites



websites in larger markets. They're often disappointed when they visit a translated microsite, because they're receiving a highly compromised customer experience.

From a management perspective, it's still quite challenging to operate a translated microsite.

Overburdened teams often experience long delays when updating the microsite's content, causing major disconnects between what's on the company's origin website and localized microsite. The result is a subpar "mixed language" website that often sends global customers packing.

Putting Content on Lock-Down|

The only practical, cost-effective way to offer translated parallel sites and microsites is stasis. That means keeping the content frozen, with no ongoing updates. This isn't much of a solution at all. Websites that can't change aren't valuable to most companies.

The huge effort needed to keep an ever-changing multilingual site updated using the parallel-site approach does not make economic sense.

Scorecard for Parallel Sites and Microsites

THE UPSIDES

- ✓ Provides full internal control—by corporate or regional marketing teams—over deployment, ongoing translation and operation
- ✓ May be useful for very small or highly focused sites

THE DOWNSIDES

- ✗ For cost-effectiveness, static content is essential, which greatly reduces the value of the localized site
- ✗ Expensive and complex to translate and launch
- ✗ Hard to scale because each translated site is created from scratch
- ✗ Local microsites deliver compromised user experiences, alienating customers

The Takeaway

Parallel sites and microsites have serious operational drawbacks that restrict their use to static, highly focused content.

2. The Conventional CMS Approach

In recent years, conventional content management systems (CMSs) have been enhanced with multilingual capabilities, delivered through connectors, cartridges or plugins. This functionality offers important benefits:

- ✓ They're compatible with the operator's existing CMS, and are designed to be integrated into existing systems.
- ✓ Once integrated, a connector's interface is often identical to the operator's CMS, which provides a familiar experience.
- ✓ Some CMSs can populate a workflow queue, providing a starting point for the translation process.

CMS Challenges

When faced with the rigorous day-to-day operation of international websites, which requires content to be rapidly translated, added, updated and removed, conventional CMSs can fall short.

Because conventional CMSs do not have multilingual and multi-site functionality built into their platforms, they often underdeliver in key ways:

- ✗ **Compromised look and feel:** CMSs may not provide live views of how translated content—which can be longer or shorter than the original—will appear on the page. Design adjustments must be made manually. (See the section on “word growth,” later in this document.)
- ✗ **Slow change process:** Few CMSs have powerful change-detection technologies for automatically notifying managers and translators when new content is published on the company's origin website. This can create multi-week delays in translating and publishing content for global customers.
- ✗ **Missing content:** A CMS can only provide translations for content stored in its database, which can miss important content residing in applications, or on other servers and platforms.
- ✗ **Poor scalability:** Creating, translating and managing large multilingual sites with hundreds (or thousands) of pages is a complex, costly and time-consuming process for most CMSs. It often requires hiring additional people to manage these new sites.



Concerns Over Connectors

Most companies rely on connectors (also called cartridges or plugins), which are integrations that allow a translation service to transfer translated content into and out of the customer's CMS. But connectors are built for typical use cases. If the CMS has been customized, the connector may not work initially, or it may “break” after a platform update.

OTHER CONNECTOR DRAWBACKS:

- ✗ They focus solely on translation and do nothing to optimize a localized site for organic traffic or on-site engagement.
- ✗ They do not process content outside the platform with which they are integrated.
- ✗ They often increase total cost of ownership, due to increased management requirements.

The Problem with ‘Word Growth’

Finally, CMSs are regularly challenged by a translation phenomenon called *word growth*.

Some languages require more words or characters to articulate a point than others. This “word growth” (sometimes called “text expansion”) is especially common when translating content from English to a Romance language.

Spanish content tends to be 25% to 30% longer than its English counterpart, for instance.

Since most websites are designed by English speakers for English speakers, these longer translations often wreck the look and feel of meticulously designed website templates. Pages can appear disjointed or broken. This is a liability for any brand.

The risk is especially high for companies using a conventional CMS, which may require translators to manually upload translated text.

When they discover that it “breaks” the design of the webpage template, they must adjust the translation until it fits properly. This iterative process is costly and inefficient.



Painstaking Process

Without powerful translation workflow and workbench features, internal teams must constantly monitor their multilingual sites for required changes and updates. With some approaches, they must then execute a multi-step process that often looks something like this:

STEP 1: Identify new or updated translatable content and manually extract it from the CMS.

STEP 2: Send content to translators in offline files.

STEP 3: Wait for that content to be translated, edited and approved.

STEP 4: Extract the translated content from offline files and import it into the appropriate international CMS fields.

STEP 5: Query and edit translated content to correct context and layout problems that appear only after the content is viewed on a webpage.

STEP 6: Repeat each time content is added or changed.

Scorecard for Conventional CMSs:

THE UPSIDES

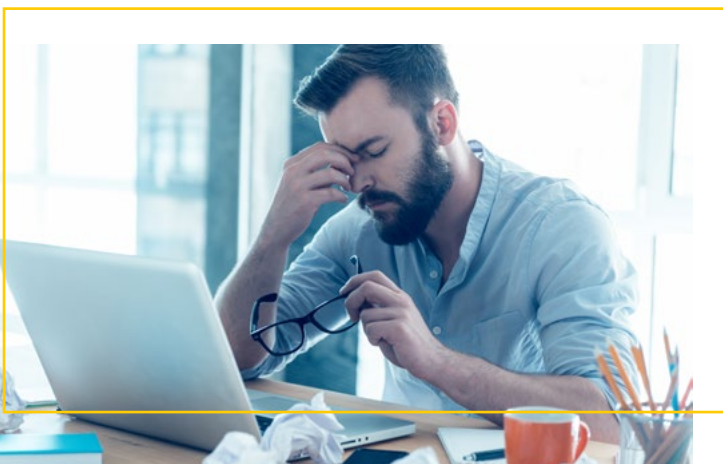
- ✓ Secure, stable and developer friendly
- ✓ Familiar environment for content creation
- ✓ Connector-friendly and compatible with the existing CMS

THE DOWNSIDES

- ✗ Inefficient and expensive translation and QA processes
- ✗ No support for third-party content (such as syndicated feeds and customer review platforms) and single-page applications
- ✗ Does not include resources such as hosting, graphics and web engineering
- ✗ If translation connectors work at all with a customized CMS, they'll likely break after platform updates

The Takeaway

A CMS is an excellent platform for managing a domestic-market website, but its lack of translation and content synchronization features can add significant costs and effort.



3. The Proxy and Turn-Key Proxy Approaches

The “proxy approach” eliminates the technology and personnel challenges of localizing online content for international markets. This platform-agnostic solution leverages the code and content of your website, enabling linguists to translate, deploy and continuously operate multilingual versions.

The best proxy solution providers have intelligent systems to swiftly detect changes on your origin website as they occur, without requiring notification from your organization. As content is added or updated on the origin site, this change-detection system identifies it and automatically schedules it for translation. Similarly, when content is removed, the solution deletes the corresponding information from the localized site.

With this approach, your team can focus on managing your origin website content, while the proxy technology automatically presents the translated content on multilingual websites on an ongoing basis.

Benefits of the proxy approach:

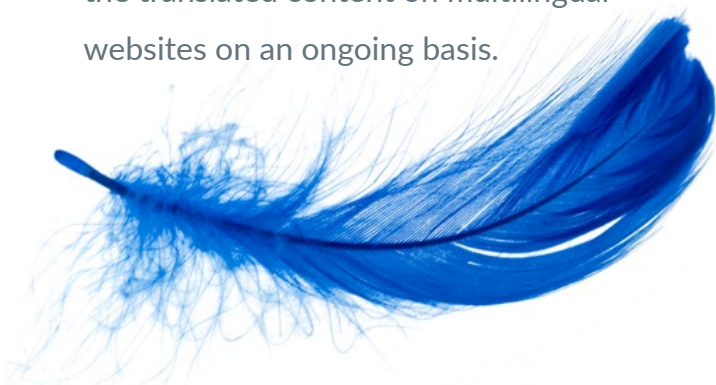
- ✓ It avoids duplication of effort required to host and operate separate, localized websites.
- ✓ It supports third-party content, graphics, multimedia and applications.
- ✓ The technology includes translation tools and management capabilities.
- ✓ It works independently of your CMS and other web management technology, making it easier to update or replace a backend system.
- ✓ For security, the best proxy solutions never collect data from end users.

Under the Hood

How does a typical proxy solution work?

When customers visit your origin website, their interactions—from the URLs they type to the links they click—send requests to your web servers. The servers swiftly assemble webpages, pulling content from databases, templates, third-party sources, graphics and more. The pages are then sent to the visitor’s device.

The proxy approach replicates this database-driven assembly process. When global customers interact with a proxy-powered multilingual site, their clicks and commands



are first routed through a special separate translation server, which identifies the proper translated content to route back to the user.

On the way “back” to the user, your website code and translated content are merged into a localized webpage. All content—including graphics and text, alt tags and even metadata—is replaced. **This process happens instantly.**

Since this approach uses a separate translation server to store, parse and assemble localized content, it’s not integrated into your website technologies or CMS. It communicates with your technology like any other user, making IT integration and IT development unnecessary.



Perfecting the Proxy

Proxy solutions vary widely in their ability to ease the burden of technical and operational complexity and costs associated with deploying—and operating—multilingual websites.

Some proxy solutions eliminate the burden of translating and deploying a localized website, but then shift all the effort back to the customer for daily operation.

This is a big problem because most companies do not have sufficient staff, the right technologies and the specific expertise needed to cope with the challenge.

The Turn-Key Proxy

The best proxy solutions are fully turn-key throughout the lifecycle of your localized website—at launch and ongoing. By combining advanced proxy-based technology with additional services and capabilities, a turn-key proxy solution relieves your team from doing the work of launching and operating one or more localized websites. Fully turn-key solutions are built with the specific purpose of minimizing operational complexity for customers.

These approaches transcend translation by using innovative technologies designed to handle all of the under-the-hood complexities that make website translation such a burden for your IT team. All personnel, processes and technologies are provided by the vendor.

It's not uncommon for website translation vendors, some even touting proxy solutions, to present pricing models that actually *maximize* your translation spend, not reduce it.

Look for solutions that provide operational efficiency, cost savings, speed to market and flawless performance.

Leading turn-key proxy solutions cover all the bases:

Translation

Automatically identify relevant content and offer a range of world-class human and machine translation options.

Deployment

Use the code from your origin site to quickly create localized instances so you can target multiple markets.

Operation

Manage, monitor and host your multilingual sites, and automatically update and serve translated content on an ongoing basis.

Comprehensive Capabilities

Top turn-key proxy solutions also offer other important tools and capabilities that help you get the greatest value from your localized sites:

- ✓ Customized content called *localizations* provide market-specific messaging, which generate customer trust and more on-site conversions
- ✓ Automatic application of international SEO best practices
- ✓ Immediate detection of language preference, to optimize the user experience
- ✓ Cost-effective reuse of translated content for social, mobile and offline channels
- ✓ APIs for integration between the proxy solution and corporate content databases for omnichannel translation

Key Benefits of a Turn-Key Proxy

SPEED TO MARKET: A localized site can be deployed rapidly (in as few as 30 days), and content updates are localized and published typically within one business day.

SCALABILITY: You can expand the number of localized sites without adding staff or other resources.

TECHNOLOGY INDEPENDENCE: The proxy can be used with any tool, handle any site and read any programming language. It does not affect updates or changes to your CMS.

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSLATION: Turn-key proxy solutions automatically find and translate appropriate text found in the origin website's content and code—including images, multimedia files, third-party content and single-page applications.

API: The best solutions provide APIs, enabling content integrations between a database of your project's translated content and your technology ecosystem—such as your e-commerce solution, product feeds for virtual marketplaces and much more.

Scorecard for the Turn-Key Proxy

THE UPSIDES

- ✓ Flexible, scalable, secure and stable
- ✓ Localized sites are launched quickly, often in mere weeks

- ✓ Platform-agnostic, compatible with existing and upcoming CMSs and other systems
- ✓ Equipped with robust translation tools for higher efficiency, translation quality and cost-effectiveness
- ✓ Compatible with third-party content and single-page applications
- ✓ Eliminates all translation, development and integration effort at launch and ongoing
- ✓ Helps deliver increased organic traffic and on-site engagement via automatic application of international SEO best practices
- ✓ Omnichannel-ready
- ✓ APIs and flexible management processes grant you full control of the project, enabling you to be as hands-on, or hands-off, as you wish

The Takeaway

By accelerating your entry into international markets, a turn-key proxy solution helps you **maximize your global reach**—without all the daily headaches associated with website translation.

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