

## *Chapter 8:* **Localization Issues Not Related to Language**

When localizing a site there are many considerations to consider. Most are related to legal and usability issues.

### **Legal considerations**

Although it is beyond the scope of this book to get into legal considerations, I want to mention some areas where you have to proceed with caution. You may want to consult a lawyer who is familiar with the laws of the relevant countries.

Different countries have different laws. Issues that affect Internet marketing include:

- Advertising claims
- Return policies
- Sweepstakes
- How prices are presented. For example, some countries may require that taxes be included in the price

You cannot control who comes to your website or which version they come to. Therefore you may be required to add notices. For example, if you have websites in the USA and in other countries, the FDA in the USA may require that you add a notice on non USA sites. If your site has a ccTLD of a particular country, then you may be more exposed to those local laws and regulations.

Shipping or allowing digital files to be downloaded in a particular country may also increase your exposure.

## Medical devices and medicine

Medical devices and medicine can have additional website regulations that other products do not require. In the USA, the FDA is active in controlling what expressions you can use on your website. You may need one website for the world and one for the USA. Otherwise, you will have to use the same restrictive language for everyone.

If your site is in English, there are many options. A good strategy is to:

- Use the .com for the world. Since the .com is not country specific, it is a good choice for a website targeting the world
- Put the USA site on a subdirectory: usa.yourcompany.com. Other options are to use a folder or a .org or other general TLD. However, this may be more confusing to the user, and you have to check that your solution meets regulatory requirements

## Currency

If you have local sites, you probably use the local currency on the website. If you have only one website and one shopping cart:

- It is best to add an option to choose local currency
- If you cannot do that an easier solution is to link to a currency convertor

If your website is organized by language and not by country, then consider offering currency choices for people who speak a particular language. For example, a website in Spanish can include currencies used in Spain, Mexico, and other Central and South American countries.

## Measurements

Different countries use different measurement systems. Most countries use the metric system. However, if you want to sell to the USA, you need to consider their system of measurement: pounds, feet, quart, etc. And if you are a USA company, do not forget to consider the metric system.

Additional measurements that change in different locations:

- Clothes and shoes
- Temperature
- Rating system for adult content, e.g., for movies

## **Dates**

Most countries use day/month/year. In the USA it is month/day/year.

In many instances a mistake cannot be caught by proofreading software since 3/1/2031 and 1/3/2031 are both legitimate dates. Therefore, you must be extra careful in displaying and asking for dates to be input by your users. One solution is to spell out the name of the month to avoid confusion.

Google uses this solution on Google Analytics. When you specify a date range you must spell out the first 3 letters of the month. You can also click on a calendar which also solves this problem.