



Your International Digital Strategy

Online solutions to internationalising your website

If you are on a platform such as BigCommerce, Magento or WordPress the answer is definitely 'Yes'. If you are using something bespoke then you will have to speak to the developer who created it to see if it can be internationalised. The answer will probably be 'Yes', but it will cost you.

As a standalone service there is [Webinterprets international ecommerce](#) solution. It works by scraping or pulling all the content from your website, putting it into their templated platforms and localising it to over sixty markets. This is fantastic because it's so easy and also 'Free' (Webinterpret is owned by PayPal so they make their money in transaction and currency trading). However, the downside is that it's by no means perfect. The translations are okay but aren't optimised for SEO and returns can be high, especially if the product is fairly technical and needs localising in terms of technical specification. Also there is little or no thought to business processes like customer service; as it is so broad reaching lots of complaints from all over can be a lot of hassle.

As with anything, the more effort you put in, the better your conversion rates are going to be. Webinterpret is broad net approach and it will bring you orders, but if you focus on specific markets and localise you will have more success. In my experience, it is much better to have a more pragmatic approach, research the trends for your specific product and digital landscape for target markets and have a localised approach.

Some platforms make it easy to internationalise. The best and probably most common example I see of this is WordPress. There are lots of extensions that enable either multistore management if you want to go down the country specific domains that enable you to manage product info and orders centrally, or multi-language plugins. Of the latter, one of the most commonly used is [WMLP](#). WMLP tool enables you to create multiple language pages that the search engines can read, with services available ranging from auto translate to crowdsourcing translation from native speakers.

On top of this there are currency exchange modules you can add on as well as IP detection that can identify where a user is coming from, switch the site to the correct currency and ensure they land on the right page.

Magento falls into the category of 'easy to internationalise' platform and I meet lots of clients who are using it. As it's seen as more of an advanced level platform, it has increased management functionality in the backend for product & order management which means you can run multiple storefronts from the same system, so making it easy to have fully localised sites. Again there are alternatives with language and currency switching.

There are other platforms that make it easy for internationalisation such as PrestaShop, ekmPowershop or BigCommerce, so if you are on these platforms look at their functionality sections to see what is possible.

Without naming names, there are platforms that are awful for internationalisation. Beware of platforms that have little support for multiple currencies or languages. There are hacky ways to overcome these, for example by showing different currencies, but when you get to the checkout the system will revert to the local currency and this is a big conversion killer. However, there are new plug-ins available to overcome these issues which I have yet to see in action. If you have internationalised a platform using this kind of plug-in, please let me know how you are getting on.

The third option is to use a third party that 'plugs in'. These specialise in currency and payment focusing more on the transaction side of things, for example local tax, duty and currency payment gateways. These can integrate with your website and localise the payment process. This tech is available but it would still be worth understanding the basics of international payments and having a pricing structure to reflect this.

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The demand is out there. You should be too.
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