LIONBRIDGE

5 BEST PRACTICES FOR SOFTWARE LOCALIZATION

WHAT IS LOCALIZATION?

Localization is the process of adapting a product or content to a specific locale or market. Creating "global-ready" software ensures that key functional features — interface, metric units, graphics, and navigation — were designed specifically for target market, regardless of language, culture, or location.

In short, localization is a key factor for user satisfaction.

THE STANDISH GROUP ESTIMATES THAT:

User involvement is **23%** of the true cost of an IT project.

20% of features and functions provide the true value of the project.

In today's competitive software landscape, localizing increases market relevance, delivers greater value to more users, and improved ROI without added risk.

$608B The global software market is valued at more than half a trillion dollars and growing across all sectors.

KEY LOCALIZATION ELEMENTS

A number of considerations come under the localization umbrella — some of which might not be top of mind. Yet, each is just as important as the next.

Adapting graphics to meet target markets.

Modifying content to suit the tastes and consumption habits of other markets.

Adapting design and layout to properly display translated text.

Converting to local requirements (such as currencies and units of measure).

Using proper local formats for dates, addresses, and phone numbers.

Addressing local regulations and legal requirements.

APP LOCALIZATION
The app localization process is similar, yet more challenging due to interface limitations and other constraints. Developing and localizing the app first you can help minimize errors and delays.

AGILE LOCALIZATION
Agile localization enables you to localize an app or software program as it's being developed. This helps you launch live and localized software that's ready for user testing sooner.

THE BASICS: 5 BEST PRACTICES FOR GLOBAL-READY SOFTWARE

1 **DESIGN WITH LOCALIZATION IN MIND.** To minimize schedule delays and cost overruns, develop a localization friendly design from the start. Your design should feature source code and structure that helps prevent common localization and translation errors.

2 **PLAN FOR TEXT EXPANSION.** When translated into other languages, words and phrases can grow longer (English to German) or shrink (English to Asian languages). At a minimum, plan for 30% expansion.

3 **USE ICONS WITH CARE.** Icons require less translation and can reduce cost. However, not all symbols are universal or neutral. For example, a US-style mailbox doesn't translate to many other cultures.

4 **TEST YOUR SOFTWARE'S LOCALIZABILITY.** Pseudo-localization is a localizability testing technique that replaces localizable test with automatically generated "dummy" translations. This helps to reveal potential problems before you invest in translation services.

5 **WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK AN EXPERT.** Your localization service provider (LSP) can provide you with insights and optimized processes that will save you time, money, and rework. Reach out with questions early in the process to ensure your development is localization-ready.

From the simplest mobile app to complex multi-user systems, all systems can benefit from the fundamentals of localization, but there are a few additional details every developer should know before getting a strategy started.

GET MORE SOFTWARE LOCALIZATION TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES.

LEARN MORE