



WHAT IS INTERNATIONALIZATION? HOW DO I KNOW IF MY COMPANY NEEDS IT?

If you're thinking about taking your product to global markets, you should give some thought to internationalization. Can your product be easily adapted into the language of your target markets? Can it be done without additional engineering?

Internationalization (often denoted as i18n because of the 18 letters between the 'I' and the 'N') readies your product for global markets and ensures it can be localized easily.

If your product is not internationalized, barriers may exist that will require code changes before localization can begin. If you're not sure if your product is internationalized, you can work with your Language Service Provider to determine and define the i18n tasks that are necessary to enable your product for global markets. An important note: if you start localization and your product is not internationalized, you will most likely encounter schedule delays and cost overruns.

What is Internationalization

Internationalization is the designing and re-engineering of a product so that it can be localized easily for global markets. For example, if you're planning to release your product into the Japanese market, it's important to know if your product can handle double-byte Asian characters, local currencies, dates, addresses, and time formats.

Some of the key areas addressed during i18n include:

- ➔ Externalization of localizable data
- ➔ Number, date, and currency formats
- ➔ User interface design
- ➔ Sort and Search functionality
- ➔ Multi-byte character support (Asian languages)
- ➔ Bi-directional or Right-to-Left support (Arabic & Hebrew locales)

Five Ways to Tell if You Need I18n

It's important that you complete i18n before localization begins; otherwise, you may need to re-engineer your product in parallel with localization. This will be more costly and will inevitably lead to schedule delays.

If you're wondering if i18n applies to you, read through the following statements. If any of them are true, you may need to internationalize.

1. You are launching your product/service globally for the first time
2. You are currently in the design phase for a new product/service and you want to ensure your product will work globally
3. You are looking at expanding your product/service into new markets
4. You have already gone through a painful localization process because of i18n issues uncovered while localizing your product/service
5. Your product/service has language specific functionality that needs to be addressed for new markets

What you Should Know

1. I18n should be completed before localization begins
2. I18n especially applies to web, software, and UIs
3. I18n can help reduce the time required for the localization cycle and increase your time-to-market
4. I18n is an upfront cost that will help reduce the costs of localization
5. I18n can ensure your product will work in your target markets without endless bug-fixing and re-engineering post localization

For an introductory webinar on internationalization, visit the Lionbridge website at <http://bit.ly/9qzN83>

About Lionbridge

Lionbridge (Nasdaq: LIOX) is the leading provider of translation, localization, and testing services. Organizations in all industries rely on Lionbridge language and testing services to increase international market share, speed adoption of products and content, and ensure the integrity of their global brands. Based in Waltham, Mass., Lionbridge operates across 26 countries, and provides services under the Lionbridge and VeriTest® brands.

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