Current Trends in Cultural Customization and the Ecommerce Experience

By

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Abstract

The Internet is continually evolving and new access mediums have expanded its reach, connecting people all over the world. This has allowed businesses unparalleled access to consumers, propelling ecommerce to becoming a greater source of revenue for businesses of all sizes. Previous web design standards endorsed localization as a key requirement for a company's Internet success. However, with the rise of a new Internet culture, localization does not appear to be prevalent nor does it seem to be a requirement for success. This thesis explores concept of user experience as it relates cultural customization, current trends in localization, and more current principles to be considered with localization.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Before coming to work at a company with global brand recognition, I had never taken the time to consider or explore their online presence. After taking the position as User Experience Manager in their digital department, I discovered each international branch of the company had its own website with its own distinct design. I began thinking about the possibility of combining them into one experience with language translations for each. To this end, I researched the principles of localization in web design. Most of the information I found was dated 2007 or earlier. Because the Internet evolves so rapidly, I wondered if global brands were still as focused on localization or even if they should be.

1.2 Goal and Scope of the Thesis

This thesis will explore the relationship between culture and the digital user experience. The goal is to examine top global ecommerce companies, how they currently manage their web presence in relation to various cultures, and to develop updated principles for cultural customization.

1.3 Relevancy of Topic

With the increasing percentage of the global population accessing the Internet and the rising popularity of online shopping, brands need to be highly strategic about their site's experience and usability. The web has leveled the playing field between the consumer and the company. In addition, the Internet has allowed different nations of people to intermingle more than ever, creating greater and more frequent exposure to other cultures. These interactions have the potential to shape consumers' expectations for the site, as well as influencing the global brands' ecommerce experiences.

2 CONTEXTUAL RESEARCH

2.1 The Communication Process

Communication is at the core of every interaction. It is the bridge between two entities that conveys a message to facilitate further transactions. It's important, however, to understand the intricacies of the process to see where the communication can break down.

Using the Shannon-Weaver Model for communication shown in figure 1, a message leaves the source and is encoded into a suitable format for interpretation. The message is sent over a channel, but inevitably noise will come in to play thus distorting the message. Before the message can reach the receiver, it is first decoded from its original form. For meaningful communication to take place, feedback must be sent back to the source to assure them that the message was received (Shannon and Weaver 1949).
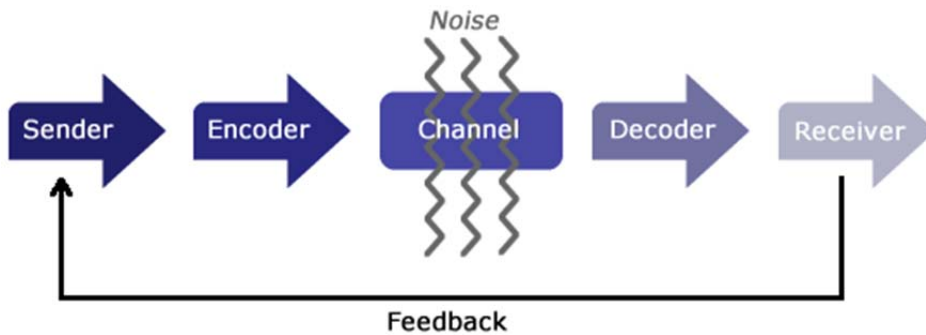

Figure 1 (Shannon and Weaver 1949)

At the heart of the communication process is the message. While the information contained in the message may be the overt message, the subtext is the subconscious messages being communicated through the different layers. The medium is the form through which the receiver accesses the information, for example print or online. Once the medium has been accessed, the receiver must then understand the navigation of the information to find the data. After the information has been found, the receiver needs to understand the presentation of it. Presentation is made up of elements such as font, color, and graphics, and should effectively clarify and focus the receiver on the information (Coe 1996).
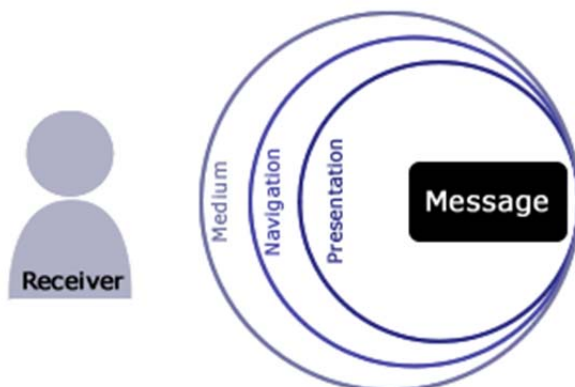

Figure 2 (Coe 1996)

In addition, there are various levels for how the message can be communicated. The highest and most basic is at a global level where a message is conveyed using real objects or photographs. The next level of a message is internationalization, which involves diagrams or signs such as the pamphlet on a plane explaining emergency procedures. The most specific message is a localized message. With this type, the message is completely translated into the receiver's native language and dialect.
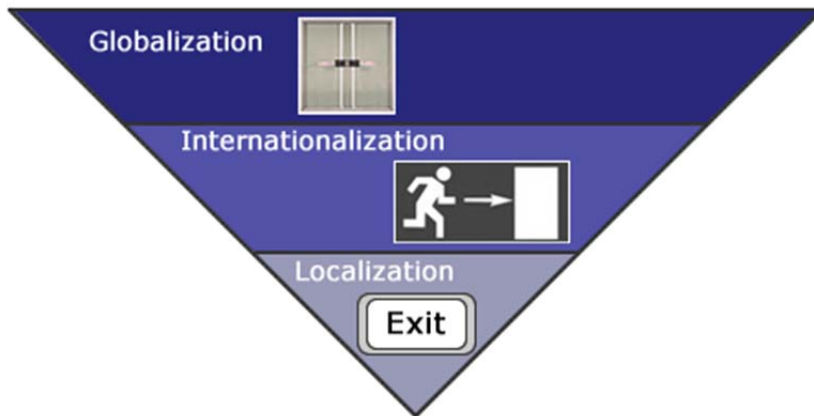
Figure 3

In addition to various communication levels, a message contains a combination of multiple signs, or discrete units of meaning. Signs are all the ways in which information can be communicated in a message and come in forms such as words, images, gestures, and sounds. According to Charles Peirce, a sign consists of three parts: the representation, the object that is being signified, and the interpretant or meaning of the object. Because humans can't help but assign meaning to what they sense in the world, sign making is a natural disposition (A de Souza 2012).

Figure 4 (A de Souza 2012)

2.2 Understanding the User

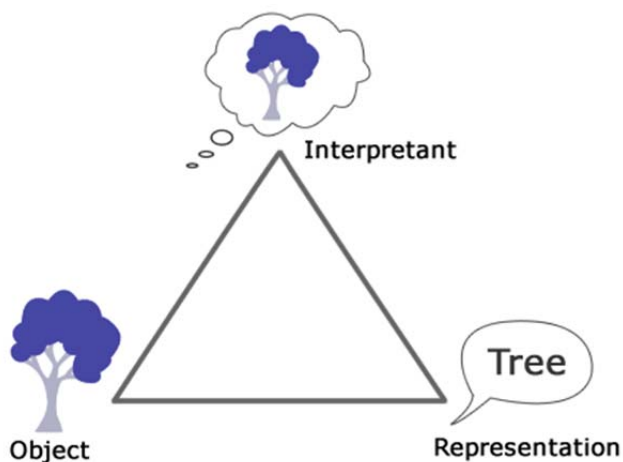A message must pierce the three different levels of frameworks that affect how a user experiences the world: individual, social, and cultural. Individual frameworks are personal, based on experience, and constantly changing schemas. Second, social frameworks are often centered around interpretive communities, or people who share the same interpretive strategies on the meaning of things. Finally, the cultural framework is the most basic armature of understanding and perception (Robinson 1994). As displayed in figure 4, a message is interpreted through all three level frameworks.
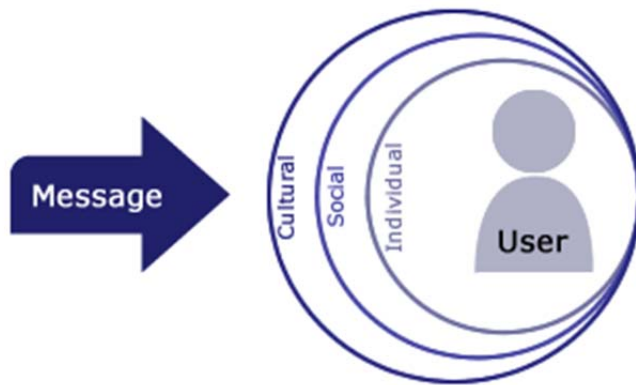

Figure 5 (Robinson 1994)

2.2.1 Individual Framework

The individual framework is made up of internal cognitive processes that affect how a user interprets a message. These processes consist of sensation, perception, problem solving, learning, and memory.
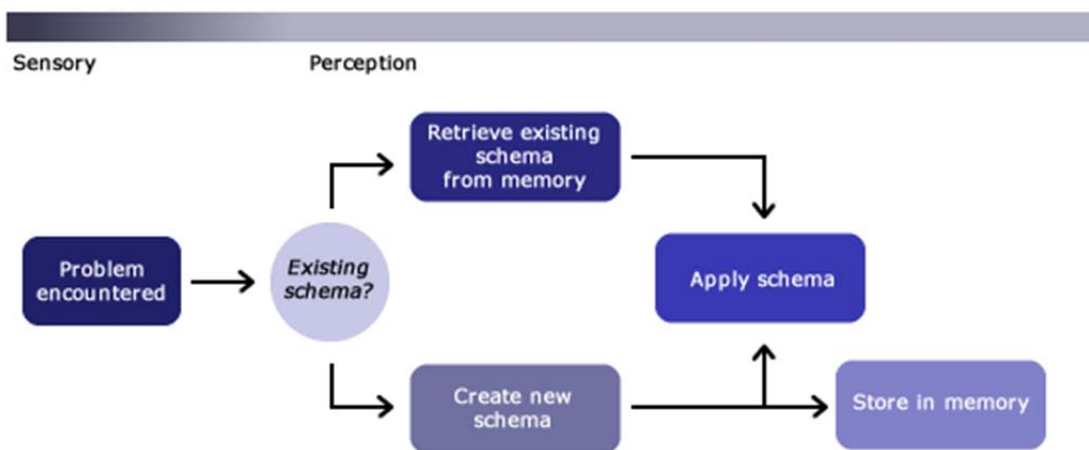

Figure 6 (Coe 1996)

Sensation and perception form the continuum on which data is accepted, interpreted, stored, retrieved, and applied. The process begins with sensation which is a physical process where data is collected from the environment. Perception is the result of the sensory input and the psychology of what is done with the data (Coe 1996).

A schema, or mental framework, is used to understand and interact with the world. When faced with an encounter, a schema is either created or modified. A problem is come across when there is a goal with no schema to reach it. Problem solving is the process of creating an attainment strategy to reach a goal never reached before. Learning is the continuous process that results from these encounters and changing of the schemas (Coe 1996).

Memory is a natural outcome from learning and is where schemas are stored. There are three stages to memory: sensory registers, short-term memory, and long-term memory. Sensory registers is the shortest stage of memory and involves taking in sensation and passing it to the short-term memory. Short-term memory has finite storage and is where memory processing takes place. Long-term memory is where data lives indefinitely (Coe 1996).

In addition to the cognitive processes that embody a user's world, a user must also access a message through three layers of subtext surround it: medium, navigation, and presentation.

2.2.2   Social Framework

Humans are fundamentally social creatures with most ordinary days filled with social interaction. This interaction, however, isn't purely verbal and consists of non-verbal cues such as body language. In addition, humans are remarkably sensitive to the behavior of those around them. These social cues provide material for inferences, planning, and action (Erickson 2011).

The social framework of the user is made up of interpretive communities that collectively construct particular ways of understanding the world. The communities to which a person belongs impacts their specialized knowledge, tools, and approach to messages and interactions (Robinson 1994). Most communities contain a common body of knowledge that can be related to facts and problem-solving schemas. They also display certain patterns of authority, communication, and memory in dealings between members within the communities. Interpretive communities typically arise through less rigid indicators of education or training and more through informal associations. In addition, the user may

belong to many interpretive communities but a hierarchy of importance usually exists (Zelizer 1993).

2.2.3 Cultural Framework

Culture has many definitions but is broadly defined as a set of shared values and patterned thinking that exists among a group of people. It is the most widespread framework and influences various aspects of how the user interprets messages and interacts with the world. In addition, it guides a person's preferred mode of conduct and expected outcomes. One's culture even influences consumer motivations and product choices (Singh and Pereira 2005).

There are three layers to the cultural framework. The outer layer is most observable and consists of explicit products and artifacts. It is made up items such as food, buildings, monuments, fashion, and art (Trompenaars 1994). The most central and most noticeable artifact, however, is language. Language influences how people encode and store information. It creates a unique cognitive-cultural system through which people categorize, process, and interpret their environment. With language, the mind forms particular styles of planning, strategizing, and problem-solving based on inherent patterns of organized information (Singh and Pereira 2005).
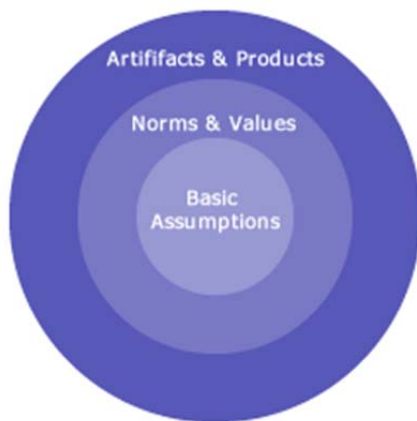
Figure 7 (Trompenaars 1994)

The second and middle layer of culture is norms and values. Norms are a mutual sense of right and wrong. They can be developed on a formal level in the shape of laws or informally as social control. Values are closely tied to norms in that they determine the definition of good and bad. Norms prescribe how something should be while values counsel what should be desired. Values can be complex to identify in that they can only be fully understood through social interactions (Trompenaars 1994).

Basic assumptions are the core layer of culture. Because the most rudimentary value people strive for is survival, these assumptions have developed out of the way groups have organized themselves to solve problems and challenges (Trompenaars 1994). Although this is a less noticeable manifestation of culture, it is extremely important due to its influence on learning, which is a piece of the individual framework. Because learning is a contextually influenced process that develops over time, studies have shown that there are consistent patterns of learning by culture. Analytic processes, deductive rules, inductive schemas, and casual analysis have all been shown to have variations across culture (Faiola and Matei 2009).

Culture, as a whole, is inseparably tied to communication. Culture controls behavior in a deep, persistent way that is often outside the conscious awareness of the person. Because culture influences everything from learning to cognitive organization, it is impossible to communicate a message without the impact of culture. In addition, culture affects the expectations around how a message should be delivered and the detail contained within it (Missana 2004).

2.3   The Digital Experience

2.3.1   Evolution of the Internet

The Internet has always facilitated information-sharing and is used by people for many difference purposes such as communication, research, and leisure. Its greatest impact, however, is that is has become a significant equalizer for people, organizations, and businesses in that everyone's voices can be heard regardless of their background or status (Gong 2009). All these aspects have helped facilitate the Internet's rapid adoption among the general public over the past two decades. It is estimated that currently 34% of the global population is now accessing the Internet (ITU 2011). By 2015, it is projected that at least 40% of the world will be using it with much of this growth occurring in the Middle East and Asia (Programmica 2012).
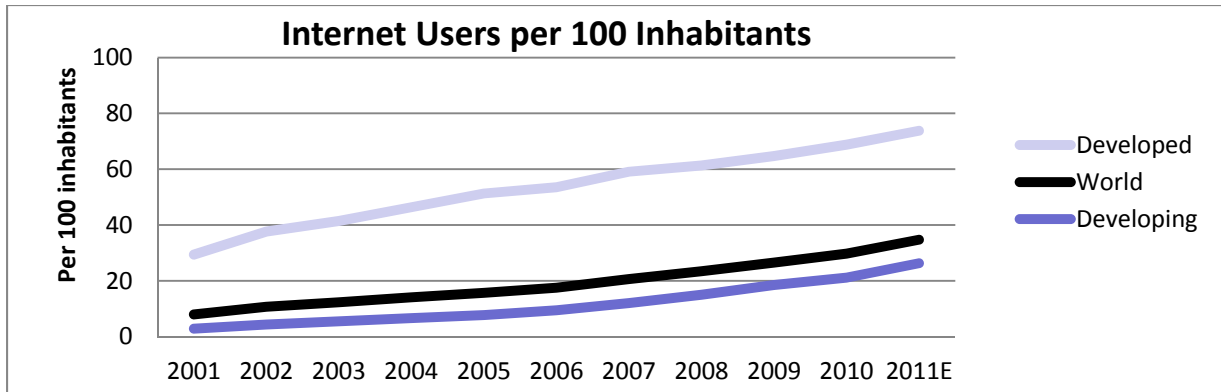
Internet Users per 100 Inhabitants

Figure 8 (ITU 2011)

Because of the Internet, ecommerce has rapidly changed the way people conduct business all over the world. It allows companies of various sizes instant global reach and the ability to immediately find customers anywhere in the world. In addition, ecommerce provides businesses a variety of savings including reduced advertising costs, while still maintaining direct access to customers, and eliminating the need to invest in the expense of a brick and mortar locations (Alnaami 2011). However, this availability also means that customers have increased exposure to product information and a wider choice of alternatives, putting pressure on companies to compete for consumers in a variety of aspects (Singh and Pereira 2005).

It is estimated that ecommerce sales will reach $963.0 billion by 2013, increasing at an annual rate of 19.4% (Khan 2011). Analysts predict that by 2016, online sales will account for 9% of all retail sales (Woo 2012). This growth in ecommerce is driven not only by the deregulation of industries and expanding middle class, but also by the spread of free markets and the increase in computer availability in developing countries (Singh and Pereira 2005). In addition, with millions of online products, consumers are showing increasing interest in new varieties of goods other than traditional online purchases like books and digital products (Gong 2009).
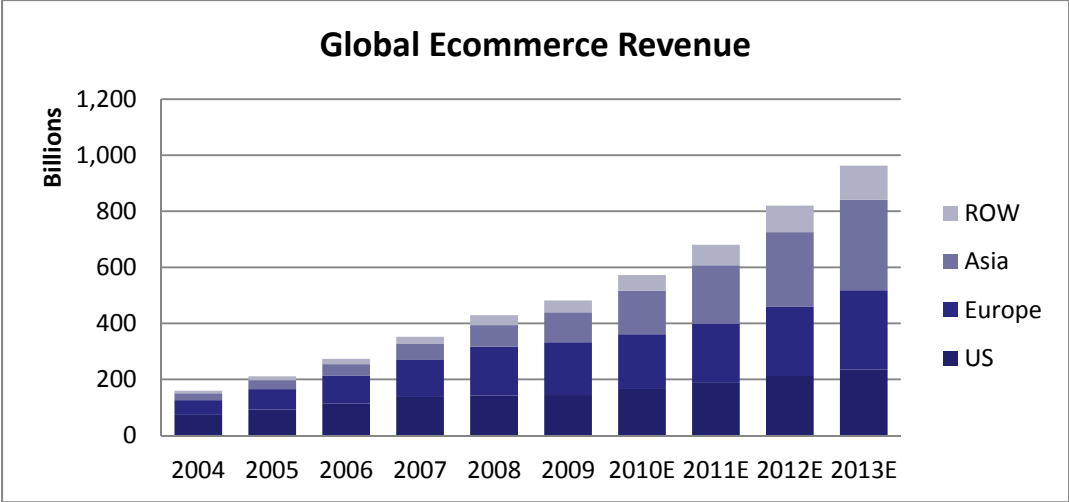
Global Ecommerce Revenue

Figure 9 (Khan 2011)

Another factor contributing to the growth of ecommerce is the dissemination of mobile phones. 87% of the world's population now owns a mobile phone with 20% of those users being able to access the Internet on them. In developing countries, this is often the only method of Internet access available to people. The purchase of Internet-enabled phones has risen 45% annually over the past four years boosting online behavior further (ITU 2011; MobiThinking 2012) . While on average only 5% of mobile usage is currently used for retail shopping, it is predicted that there will be $119 billion worth of goods and services purchased via mobile phones by 2015 (Robles 2010). However, this new channel for ecommerce also presents a new set of opportunities and challenges for global businesses. Although a company's products and services can now reach an even broader audience, the mobile web is a relatively new medium with its own rules and constraints that businesses will need to establish their brand presence and continually monitor.
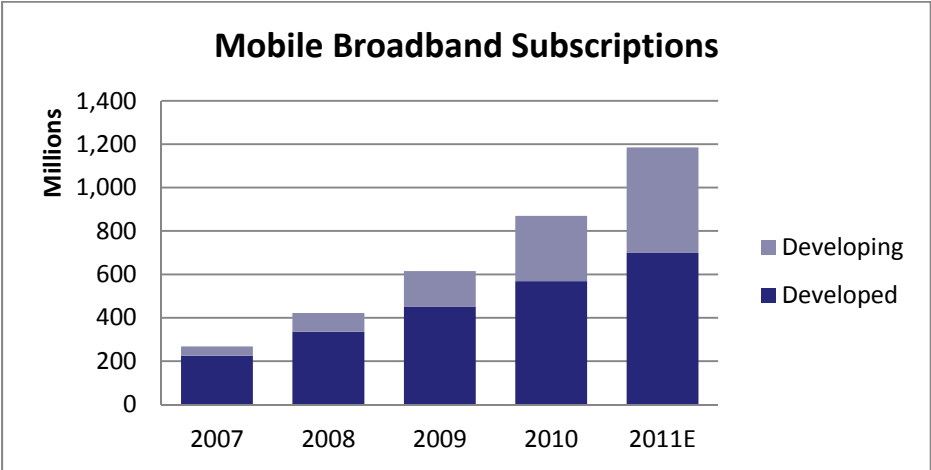
Mobile Broadband Subscriptions

Figure 10 (ITU 2011)

Besides new modes of access, changes in underlying technologies are also affecting the growth of the Internet. The most recent progression of the Internet, commonly referred to as Web 2.0, has redefined its focus and use. Web 2.0 emphasizes user-centered design to create a rich, dynamic experience encouraging user interconnectivity and interactivity via web applications, social networking sites, video sharing sites, blogs, etc. (O'Reilly 2005). The shift to a more interactive user experience rather than one built for information sharing has also created a need for new technologies to support it such as HTML5. HTML, or hyper-text markup language, provides the building blocks of all webpages and gives web browsers instructions on structuring the page. The standards of HTML have evolved over the years with HTML5 being the most recent and drastic advancement. HTML5 introduces a number of new elements making it easier to insert multimedia and graphical page content in addition to optimizing the user experience for mobile devices (Wikipedia 2012).

2.3.2   Customization in Web Design

Website elements and design directly contribute to a user's positive engagement with a site. In fact, almost half of all consumers believe the visual design of a site is the most important criteria in judging the site's credibility and perceived quality. Information design/structure came in second (Fogg, Soohoo et al. 2003). With the increase of ecommerce competition, creating instant credibility has become vital for global businesses. However, building trust requires a user experience appropriate for more diverse cultural audiences (Marcus and Gould 2000).

The terms standardization, globalization, internationalization, and localization are often discussed in relation to cultural customization. Standardization promotes a consistent experience across countries regardless of culture. Globalization is the process of communicating in a more global way across multiple cultural contexts and includes both internationalization and localization. Internationalization refers to the development of a product that can be easily adapted for various languages and regions. Localization is the process of adapting an internationalized site for a specific culture and typically refers to changes in the visual design and terminology on the site (Hoft 1995). There are various levels of localization that have varying effects on the user experience with the most basic being the influence of language on comprehensibility (Shen 2000).
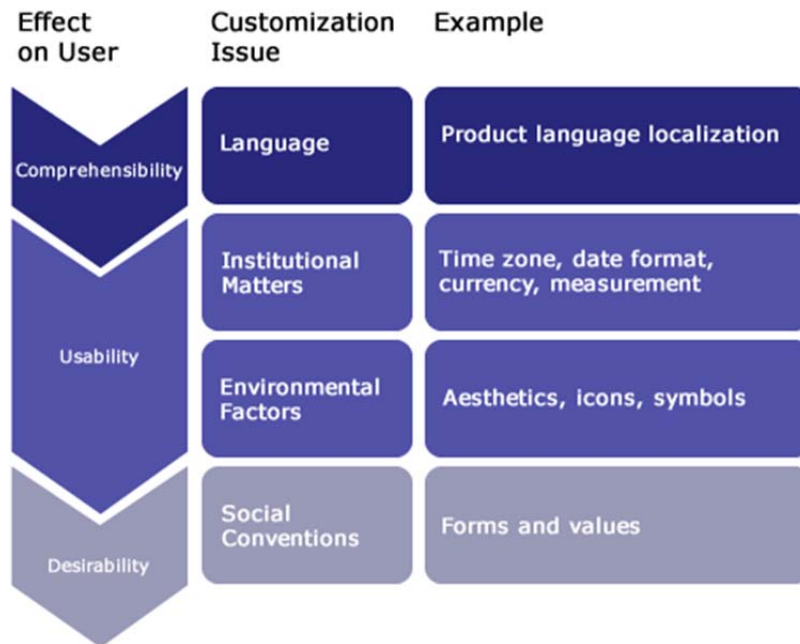
Figure 11 (Shen 2000)

Many components affected by cultural customization. Typically the following website elements require particular consideration in a cultural context and are usually impacted by localization efforts:

- o *Language* is one of the most distinctive aspects of culture and is crucial to a user understanding the information on a website.
- o *Layout* is placement of elements on a webpage. It is key to giving the user a contextual structure for the information displayed.
- o *Navigation* provides a clear, facilitated path to information and the website structure.
- o *Symbols* are metaphors denoting actions to the user and their understanding is directly influenced by culture and context.
- o *Branding elements* such as logo and color are important elements of a company's identity that can influence a user's trust in website.
- o *Content* refers to information, features, and services offered on a website. It represents a form of communication and interaction between the user and company.

There are pros and cons, however, to each cultural customization approach. Standardization can be the most cost-effective way to produce an experience, but to make it successful, thorough user analysis needs to be performed. Depending on the product, it could be virtually impossible to create one that can satisfy the needs of all user types. Internationalization enables localization, but requires careful planning and architecting of

the product to ensure core information is separated from international variables. While localization can increase sales and overcome inherent product resistance, it also has problems that can't be avoided. Localization inevitably adds cost due to additional design considerations of graphics and color in addition to translation costs. Translation of source text alone can cost anywhere from $50 to over $200 per page. With translation, though, there are also hidden costs around training the translation staff and the time spent managing them. In addition, the re-engineering, contextual design, and translation efforts needed for complete localization can add months to the development cycle (Hoft 1995).

2.3.3   The Impact of Culture

The significant impact of culture on user experience has been well documented. In addition, numerous studies exist around dimensions of culture, but none as widely explored in user experience research as the one performed by Geert Hofstede in the 1970s and 1980s on social and organizational behavior (Zahedi, Pelt et al. 200; Marcus and Gould 2000; Callahan 2006; Blodgett, Bakir et al. 2008; Faiola and MacDorman 2008; Kim and Belio A. Martinez 2009; Kashman and Large 2010). Hofstede wanted to explore the differences among people around the globe in order to form a structure that can serve as a basis for mutual understanding. Through interviews with IBM employees from 53 countries, Hofstede conducted a statistical analysis from which he found four dimensions on which to compare cultural differences and similarities: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, femininity vs. masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. A fifth dimension of long-term vs. short-term orientation was later added through additional research performed by Michael Bond (Hofstede, Hofstede et al. 2010). These five dimensions are habitually applied throughout cross-cultural user experience research to interpret findings.

Conversely, there still remains criticism around Hofstede's finding with the most common one being that the study was only performed on IBM employees who may not necessarily represent all social classes and cultures within a nation. Questions also arise on whether the data collected 30 years ago is still valid. In addition, other research suggests that the five dimensions are too broad and a different breakdown of dimensions is needed with some suggesting as many as 29 dimensions (Baumgartner 2003). Regardless, the fundamental premise of Hofstede's work is agreed upon in that culture is an underlying factor that affects how people interpret the world.

Additional research has been performed specifically on the impact of culture on website usability. One of the most well-known studies was done by Wendy Barber and Albert Badre in which they studied website usability in regards to cultural markers, or interface design

elements that are predominant within a cultural group. In particular, they indicate colors, spatial organization, fonts, shapes, icons and metaphors, language, sounds, and motion as both cultural markers and design elements that directly affect the way a user interacts with a website. Through their work, they argued the effect of cultural markers is so great that cultural and usability issues should be addressed together under a new area called "culturability" (Barber and Badre 1989). This and subsequent studies helped further drive the trend of localization due to emerging patterns demonstrating cultural practices and preferences in the user experience.

Barber and Badre, however, noted that design and cultural constraints leading to localization would be overcome some day (Barber and Badre 1989). This supports newer studies that suggest that the need for localization may no longer be required for a website to succeed internationally. Recent research has shown that users don't necessarily have any greater trust or satisfaction with a localized website for a company than the foreign site (Cyr, Bonanni et al. 2005). In addition, the rapid technological changes in the past decade have increased the dissemination of cultures worldwide, which is often downplayed in localization research (Sapienza 2006). The Internet's ability to transcend time and place constraints has enabled a transnational context that is developing into a new online community with its own patterns and cultural codes.

More current research argues that the Internet culture currently has an emerging set of transnational values that are widely shared by the international audience. The enormous and frequent intercultural exchanges allowed by the Internet are leading to a new cultural identity with world-minded values that affect preferences and behaviors of users. With the Internet community expanding, tendencies towards globally designed websites will continue to grow as users progressively internalize this culture (Martinez-Lopez, Sousa et al. 2011). While content will still differ across cultures, studies have validated the early stages of global web design homogenization in regards to functionality, navigation, and presentation (Robbins and Stylianou 2003).

2.3.4 Online Branding in a Global Economy

In addition to creating a new culture, the Internet has also created a new "global consumer" segment that displays similar consumptive qualities. This new sector is comprised of common beliefs and tendencies toward globally shared consumption-related symbols such as brands and product categories (Zhou, Teng et al. 2008). The global image of a brand can often lead consumers to choose a global brand over a local one even though the quality and value may not be superior. In addition, perceived brand globalness can be a heavy predictor

of perceived quality and purchase intention (Do Young, Kwon et al. 2011). Because of this, companies have begun to take advantage of this by altering their brand portfolios in favor of a more global image.

Because every chance to personally interact with a brand can influence a consumer's decision to buy, the specific online branding is extremely important to a company. With more than half of all Internet users also making purchases online, every visit to a website could easily turn into a transaction. If the experience is positive, more than 60% of those buyers will return to that site again (Egner 2010). The challenge for retailers is to understand that their online presence can't just be an extension of their product brand, but that they must also develop a service brand. In services branding, close attention must be paid to the system that governs the process that produces a result for the consumer which, in this case, the website is a key piece. Therefore, the value proposition to consumers is the quality of service they can receive because in most instances they can find the same product in other channels (Tate and Johnstone 2011).

3   ANALYSIS

3.1   Method

To answer this question, research will be devoted to examining the ecommerce sites of Amazon, Staples, Apple, and Dell, the four top global retail companies as reported in 2011 by *Internet Retailer*. This report provides a list of the top 500 e-retailers ranked by annual sales (Retailer 2011).

Because the site home page is the front door to the brand and user experience and is also typically the first page a user sees, it will be examined for each specific country on both a computer and mobile phone. The United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, and China were chosen because of the spectrum of language and cultural differences. In addition, these companies had a site for each of these countries. The URLs shown in Table 2 were accessed on April 2nd using a laptop computer and an iPhone 4.

The study will focus on examining the core elements most commonly affected by localization: language, layout, navigation, symbols, branding elements (branding colors and logo), and content (products featured and the promotion of company services). The conclusions from this study will be used to assess if global ecommerce sites are continuing to focus on localization, in addition to creating principles for cultural customization.

3.2 Exploration and Interpretation

Figure 12 summarizes the results of the site comparisons for each country for the full-version website. The homepage for each company were evaluated on whether differences were found in each of the core elements across each country.
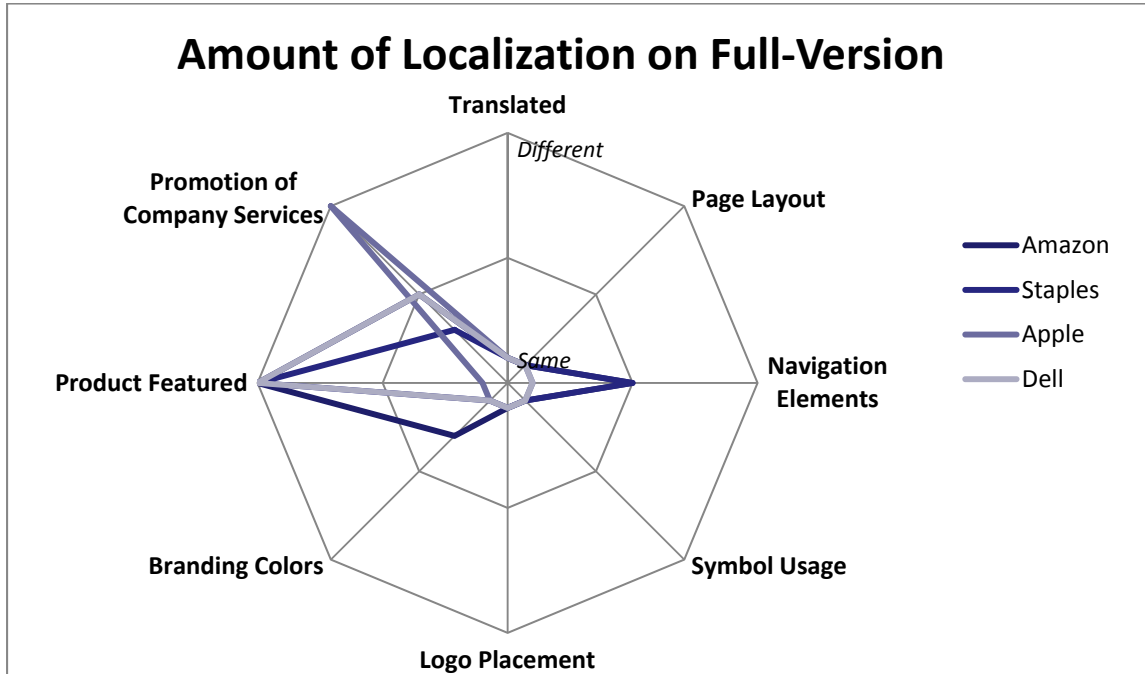

Figure 12

The results show that besides translation, each company's full website contained very little localization in regards to layout, navigation, and symbol usage, which are core elements related to user experience. In addition, any deviation was typically found only on the website for China which may suggest a slightly stronger merging between American and European user expectations.

Core page functions such as site search, cart status, account login were in the same place for each company across every country. Similarly, the location of help and order status links were in the same locations. The companies, however, did promote different products and services for each country on a majority of the sites. This implies that cultural specific considerations were taken into account when prioritizing these areas, although these promotional spots appeared in the same place across all countries on each company's site.

Three of the four companies had accounted for mobile optimization of their websites. Only one company, however, had mobile-optimized websites for all five countries while the other two companies only had mobile-optimized sites for the US and UK.
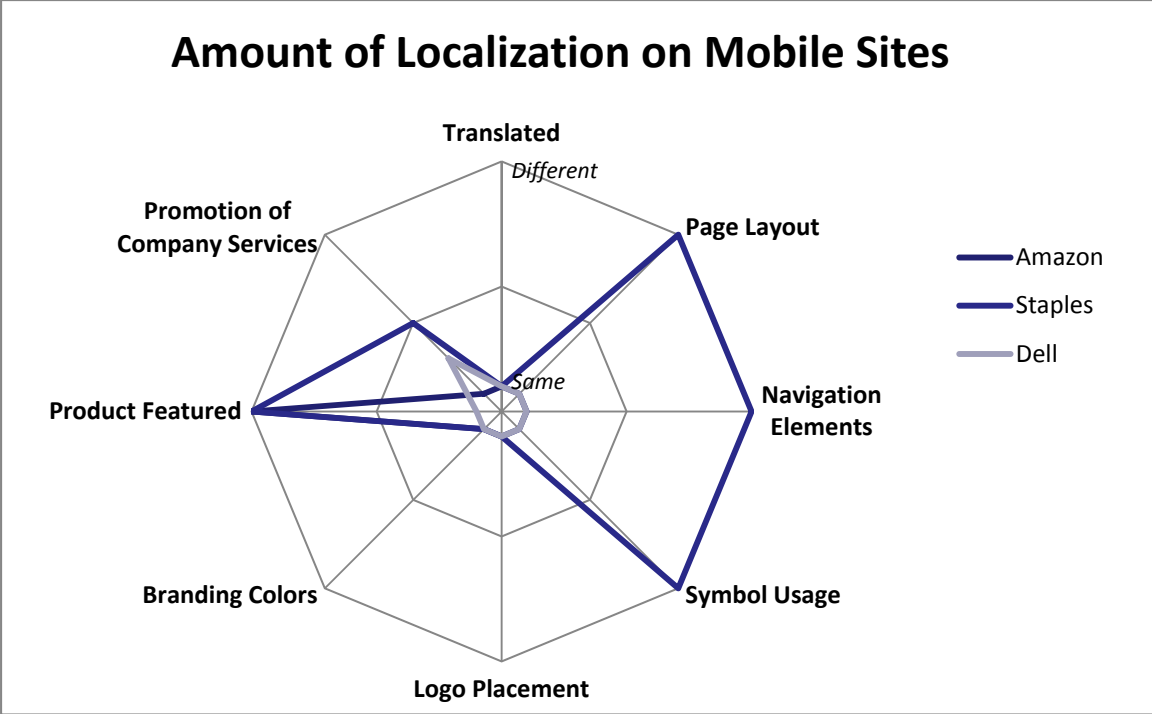
Figure 13

For the company that had mobile-optimized websites for all five countries, there was no localization other than language in the core elements with the exception of a search symbol used for China. Otherwise, each site used the exact same navigation, layout, and symbols. The sites, however, did feature different products for each country. Nevertheless, because of the low number of sites for comparison, the findings can't be concluded as significant.

Because the page layouts for the full sites were the extremely similar across countries for all four brands, a comparison was made across all brands. There is an apparent homogenization in regards to page layout and placement of major page elements. All contained global site navigation at the top with the company logo on the far left. All but one site contained further site sectional navigation on the left along with the site search functionality. All account and cart links are in the upper-right of the pages as well.
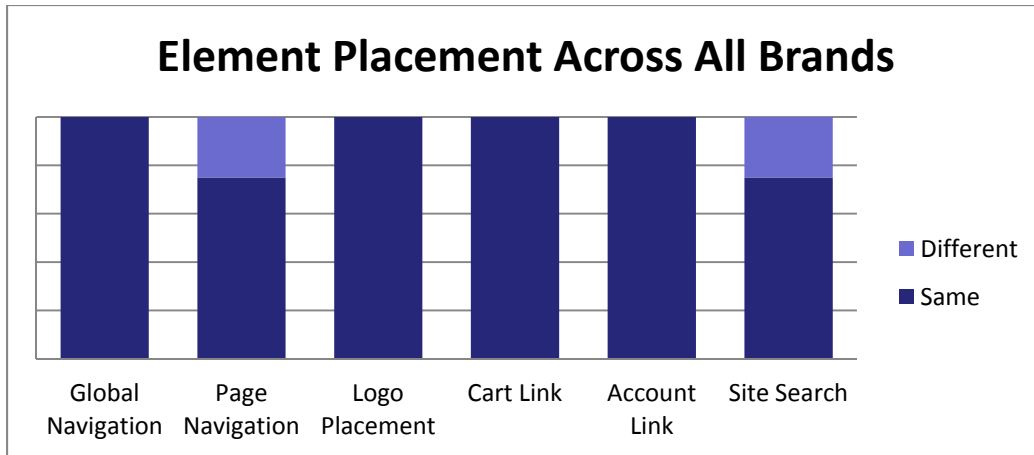
Element Placement Across All Brands

Figure 14

In addition, the colors used for each brand across all the countries were the same with the exception of one site for one brand. This site is for the country that the company is headquartered in which suggests that the brand could be undergoing rebranding efforts and applying them to its principal site first. With the importance of maintaining a recognizable global brand, however, changing any colors associated with brand is no longer an expectation for localization.

Overall, it is clear that the top global companies no longer seem to be applying complete localization techniques to their websites. Instead, they are opting for translation and changes in featured products and services.

4   CONCLUSION

4.1   Implications for Practice

This study has shown that the concept of full localization isn't being practiced by top-earning web retailers. However, there are still some guiding principles that these sites are using and should be considered when designing a website for a global brand.

Target audiences should be identified to determine what additional cultures and countries, if any, should be considered when designing. This will also help decrease unnecessary costs associated with customization and marketing. If the target market is more internet savvy users, then the need and expectation for localization is significantly decreased.

Draw from pre-existing universal schemas for elements such as page layout and navigation. Evaluate commonly used sites in the market when designing, and draw from their

organization of page elements and functionality behavior. This will allow the user to quickly and easily adapt to site.

Language still has a major impact on comprehensibility and usability of the site. Displaying the site in the user's native language is most effective, but applying official national languages for a country is sufficient. For low-cost maintenance, the site should be architected upfront so that the content is separate from the site functionality to allow easy customization by language. The visual design must allow for a 30% text expansion rate once the copy is translated, which is the statistical average across all languages (Hoft 1995). In addition, a translation expert should be engaged rather than a computer-generated translation to ensure the concept is being effectively communicated. Computer translators only translate word-for-word, and do not understand intent.

Consider how users will find the site. Every country has a suffix at the end of their URLs, and typing in the company name with their country's suffix is often the first thing users do when searching online. Consider obtaining the country-specific URL for each targeted country. This assists in not only helping the user quickly and easily finding the site, but also allows the site to automatically appear in the user's native language. However, because purchasing multiple URLs isn't always cost-effective, maintaining a ".com" with translation functionality on the site is acceptable. Automatically displaying the site in the user's native language based on their IP address is preferred.

Not all graphical elements need to be culturally customized. Branding elements can and should remain the same across all sites to reinforce the global brand. Generic and universally understood graphics can be used whenever possible as well. Common icons are emerging for functions such as "search" and "shopping cart." If graphics on the site display people, however, the graphic should be cognizant of the people appearing in the image. Unless a diverse group of people are depicted, localization should be used for these elements. To increase trust and acceptance, make sure the people reflect the targeted country and its cultural standards.

Data like currency, time zone, units of measurements, telephone numbers, addresses, should be formatted by country. This helps for easy comprehensibility and greatly reduces frustration. In addition, a user needs an easy way to contact the company with a toll-free number provided for each targeted country. If this isn't feasible, an online way to contact the company via a chat application, online form or email address is another option.

Even though full localization no longer appears to be implemented by top retailers, these principles should be considered to design a successful multicultural user experience.

4.2   Limitations and Further Research

The number of companies in the *Internet Retailer* list that had sites for multiple countries was extremely low, thereby limiting this study. With time, however, this will change as more companies focus on globalization, allowing for further studies and trend analysis. In addition, evaluating this topic on top-earning companies across the globe could give a more diverse perspective as well as evaluating countries whose native language is written right-to-left. Research should also be performed across industries to discern any trends and patterns.

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6 APPENDIX

Table 1: **URLs Examined**

	Amazon	**Staples**	**Apple**	**Dell**
Full Site				
US	Amazon.com	Staples.com	Store.Apple.com/us	Dell.com
UK	Aamazon.co.uk	Staples.co.uk	Store.Apple.com/uk	Dell.co.uk
Germany	Amazon.de	Staples.de	Store.Apple.com/de	Dell.de
Italy	Amazon.it	Staples.it	Store.apple.com/it	Dell.it
China	Amazon.cn	Staples.cn	Store.Apple.com/cn	Dell.com.cn
Mobile Site				
US	Amazon.com/gp/aw	m.Staples.com	*	m.Dell.com
UK	Amazon.co.uk/gp/aw	m.Staples.co.uk	*	m.Dell.com/mt/www.dell.com/uk
Germany	Amazon.de/gp/aw	*	*	*
Italy	Amazon.it/gp/aw	*	*	*
China	Amazon.cn/gp/aw	*	*	*

Sites visited on April 2nd, 2012
*Mobile optimized website not available

Table 2: **Site Comparison**

	Translated for each country[1]	Page Layout	Navigation Elements	Symbol Usage	Logo Placement	Branding Colors	Products Featured	Promotion of Company Services
Full Site								
Amazon	Yes	Same	Slight differences	Same	Same	Same except US	Different	Wishlist, Return Policy Information, Getting Started Help
Staples	Yes	Same	Slight differences	Same except China	Same	Same	Different	Help Number, Account Register
Apple	Yes	Same	Same	Same except China	Same	Same	Same except China	Recycling, Tech Support, Education Benefit, Gift Help, Protection Plan, Photo Gifts, Apple Store,
Dell	Yes	Same	Same	Same	Same	Same	Different	PC Help not displayed at all for Italy and China, Deals not displayed for Italy
Mobile Site								
Amazon	Yes	Same	Same	Same except China	Same	Same	Different	Same
Staples[2]	Yes	Different	Different	Different	Same	Same	Different	Store finder, In Store Offers, Account functions, Help
Apple[3]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dell[2]	Yes	Same	Same	N/A	Same	Same	Same	Order Support, Deals

[1] Babelfish.yahoo.com used for translation. Includes vernacular and spelling changes between American English and British English.
[2] Mobile optimized website only available for US and UK
[3] No mobile optimized sites available