



Website Globalization and E-Business Japan

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- China
- Japan
- Germany
- US Hispanic Market
- Brazil
- India
- Russia
- Argentina
- France
- United Kingdom
- United Arab Emirates

This series of reports is meant to be a primer on e-Business as well as a collection of language, culture and website globalization facts by country. These reports are by no means a complete coverage of these topics. For more comprehensive or customized reports on country-specific Website Globalization and E-Business topics, please email mspethman@globalizationpartners.com.

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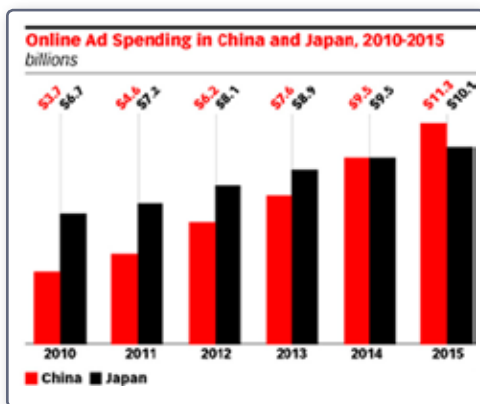
- [Translation](#)
- [Multilingual Desktop Publishing](#)
- [Software Internationalization & Localization](#)
- [Website Internationalization & Localization](#)
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山田太郎

	Fast Facts	Numbers
General Stats	GDP	\$4.31 trillion in 2010 (CIA World Factbook, 2011)
	Growth rate	3.9% in 2010 est. (CIA World Factbook, 2011)
	Population	126,475,664 (CIA World Factbook, July 2011 est.)
Internet	Internet population	99.18 million users as of March 2011, 78.4% penetration (Internet World Stats, 2011)
	Online spending	According to a 2010 survey by MasterCard, Japan ties with Korea as the world's most active online shoppers at 83% each.
	Future trends	Japan's online shopping activity rebounded very quickly and continued to grow a few weeks after the devastating 2010 Tsunami. (Bloomberg Businessweek, April 4, 2011)

- ① In terms of nominal GDP, Japan is the third largest national economy in the world, and is the fourth largest national economy in terms of PPP (Purchasing Power Parity). Wikipedia, 2011
- ① With almost 100 million Internet users in 2011, Japan has almost 80% penetration.
- ① 95% of Japan's population subscribe to mobile phones, and 81% of mobile users are mobile Internet subscribers. (TCA, Japan Statistics Bureau, June 2011)
- ① 77% of the population in Japan has access to mobile Internet via their phones. According to a Forrester Report in June 2011, 47% of Japanese access the Web at least monthly via phone, v.s. 22% of the USA population.
- ① Retail eCommerce in Japan is expected to grow from \$36 billion in 2006 to \$58.3 billion by 2010. In addition, online advertising spending is expected to double from \$3.2 billion in 2006 to \$6.7 billion in 2010. (emarketer.com)
- ① A massive two thirds of Japanese eCommerce takes place through Rakuten, a Japanese digital storefront service. (THE ECONOMIST, June 2010)



Note: includes banner ads, classifieds, email (embedded ads only), lead generation, rich media, search, sponsorships and video; includes mobile ads with existing formats Source: eMarketer, Aug 2011 (http://www.iab.net/insights_research/industry_data_and_landscape/1675/1846707)

Cultural Values

Collectivism: This value indicates how closely a society is knit. In collectivist cultures like Japan, the needs, values and goals of the family and societal unit take precedence over individual goals. Group consciousness and family are the major values that guide people's behavior.

Power Distance: A belief in authority and hierarchy (high power distance). Cultures that are high on power distance accept power and hierarchy in society and are low on egalitarianism. In such cultures, less powerful citizens are accepting of unequal power distribution in society. Japan is high on power distance.

Uncertainty Avoidance: The importance of predictability, structure and order (high uncertainty avoidance) versus a willingness for risk-taking and an acceptance of ambiguity and limited structure (low uncertainty avoidance). People from cultures high on uncertainty avoidance like Japan tend to have low tolerance for uncertainty. They avoid ambiguous situations, view both conflict and competition as threatening, and value security over adventure and risk.

Masculinity-Femininity: A belief in achievement and ambition (masculine) versus a belief in nurturing and caring for others (feminine). Japan is an extremely masculine culture.

High-Low Context: High context cultures like Japan have close connections among group members. Everyone has a similar, intrinsic knowledge base. In addition, they use more symbols and nonverbal cues to communicate, with meanings embedded in the situational context.

(Hofstede, Geert, "Culture's Consequences, Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across the Nations", Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications)



Japanese Culture and Values

Japan is a traditional society with many symbols, rituals, values and an intricate contextual elements. At a macro-level, Japanese culture can be described using five cultural values based on the work of Hofstede (1980). Professor Geert Hofstede conducted possibly the most comprehensive study of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture and is the author of several books including *Culture's Consequences*, and *Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind*.

Hofstede demonstrated that there are national and regional cultural groupings that affect the behavior of societies and organizations that are very persistent across time. Hofstede's research showed that cultural values like **Individualism-Collectivism, Power Distance, Masculinity-Femininity, High-Low Context** and **Uncertainty Avoidance** can be used to categorize various national cultures (see sidebar for definitions of these terms).

A country's culture is made unique based on which of these five values are incorporated into daily life and the emphasis it puts on each. For example, Japan rates significantly on all five values.

Insights into Japanese Consumer Values:

- ① **Respect:** Japanese consumers demand respect and in return are very loyal to the company or brand. Therefore, Internet retailers not only need to translate the websites for the Japanese audience but also show respect and provide exceptional customer service.
- ① **Culture:** While Japanese consumers are very appreciative of western products, western lifestyle and western celebrities they are also very sensitive to their own culture (Shih) and want western brands, ideas, and products but on a Japanese platter.
- ① **Shibui and Kawaii:** The Japanese love for beauty and aesthetics is captured in two words, shibui, which refers to the quality of the beauty. Kawaii is a Japanese term which means "cute". Cuteness is a highly valued aesthetic quality in Japanese society. Make sure the website content is harmonious and aesthetically pleasing.
- ① **100-Yen Shops:** The Japanese consumer generally buys products for either status or functionality. They normally buy merchandise at the highest or lowest end, not usually the intermediate price range (intelbridges.com). Therefore, Japanese malls and cities are lined with brand name designer products. There are also a plethora of 100-Yen Shops, which are analogous to the dollar store in the US, which sell items at the lowest price range. Daiso is one of the largest 100-Yen Shop chains with more than 1,300 stores across Japan.
- ① **Celebrities:** Japanese Advertisements use western celebrities like Leonardo DiCaprio, Harrison Ford, David Beckham and others to promote their products and stores. However, this phenomenon, which was at its peak in the 1990s is now slowing down in favor of Japanese talent. However, Japanese still love the Celebrity power of endorsement. For example, David Beckham endorses Meiji Seka Confectionary, TB (a salon chain in Tokyo), Castrol and Vodafones' the J-Phone.
- ① **Amine:** According to McKay "Japanese people have a tendency to build an emotional connection with an animated figure". Animated figures like "Hello Kitty" are an integral part of Japanese popular culture.

Japanese Consumer Decision Making:

Demographics Definitions

- ★ **Socio-demographics:** The analysis of different social groups. The criteria used to segment consumers based on age, economics, etc.
- ★ **Geographics:** The geographical distribution of the market being analyzed. The criteria used to segment these consumers can be country, region, town, etc. For example, consumers can be segmented by residence or work. (about.com)
- ★ **Psychographics:** The criteria used to segment consumers based on lifestyle, attitudes, personality, buying motives, and/or extent of product usage. (about.com)

Based on theoretical and applied research in academia (Singh, et al. 2004, 2005, “de” Mooij) here are some unique insights into the Japanese consumer’s mind:

- ⊙ “Japanese advertising is based on building trust, a relationship between the company and the consumer. The purpose of Japanese advertising is to please the consumer and to build indulgent dependency (amae), and this is done indirectly” according to Marieke K. “de” Mooij author of *Global Marketing and Advertising: Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*.
- ⊙ Japanese consumers often buy in a “feel-to-learn” fashion. They will go to a store if they feel good about it or feel they have a relationship with them, buy the product and then learn whether or not the product is good.
- ⊙ The logic of advertising in Japan is:
 - Make friends with the target audience
 - Prove that you understand their feelings
 - Show that you are nice
 - Consumers will then want to buy, because they trust you and feel familiar with you (i.e., the brand and the company)
 - After the purchase, consumers find out if the product is good or what the benefits are.



Japanese Consumer Segments:

Market segmentation identifies profitable consumer segments based on themes such as socio-demographics, geographics and psychographics. Japan’s demographic make up can be generalized into the following categories:



- ◆ **Shopping Enjoyment:** This segment has a higher percentage of males, ages 30 to 39, household incomes of \$30,000 to \$60,000 and has high frequency catalog and Internet shopping patrons compared to the other three segments. The Shopping Enjoyment consumers are not price sensitive and are more likely to shop for recreation, quality, and do make impulse purchases.
- ◆ **Brand Browser:** The consumers in this segment are looking for both brand and convenience. This group is usually composed of older consumers, college graduates and high-income households. Brand Browsers do some comparison shopping but price is not as important as quality.



- ◆ **Price Browser:** This segment is driven by price, convenience, and recreation. The Price Browser segment consists of a higher percentage of women, younger consumers, lower educational levels, lower income, and is less experienced on the Internet. Price Browsers will choose price over brand.
- ◆ **Dislikes Shopping:** Consumers in this segment only shop when necessary. When they do shop they look for recreation, convenience, and brand. The member profile is older, educated, professional males with higher than average income.

(The Emergence of Internet Shopping in Japan: Identification of Shopping Orientation-Defined Segments)

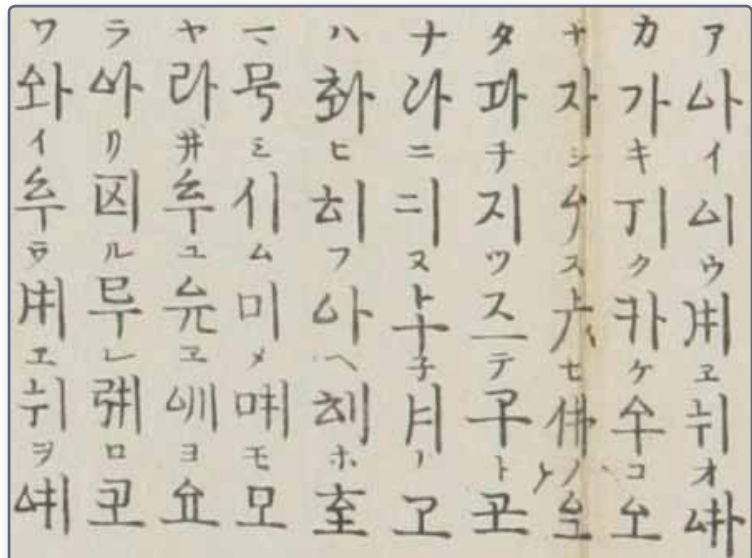
Language Facts/Tips

- ★ Japanese is considered a double-byte language as it is a symbolic language that takes 2 bytes of computer memory to store. (<http://www.fornink.com/DoubleByte.html>, 2008)
- ★ The Japanese writing system uses four different character sets: Kanji which is made of almost 2,000 Chinese characters, Latin which is used sometimes to represent brand or personal names, and Hiragana and Katakana which are two syllabaries of 46 characters each and together are called Kana.
- ★ Kanji represents a meaning rather than a specific sound and poses difficulty sorting as it has multiple pronunciations.
- ★ Japanese can be written both horizontally called yokogaki or vertically called tategaki. (Japan-guide.com, Yunker, 2003, Wikipedia.com)
- ★ Japanese does not have spaces between the words. Therefore, for formatting avoid line breaks and let the end user's browser manage the line breaking. (Yunker, 2003).
- ★ Japanese names should be written surname followed by the first name. Middle names are generally not used.

Japanese is an agglutinative language and is spoken by over 130 million people. This language uses a complex system of honorifics which reflect the hierarchal nature of Japanese society by verb forms and particular vocabulary to indicate the relative status of the members of the conversation or communication. Japanese is written with blend of four different types of scripts: Kanji which are modified Chinese characters, two syllabic scripts, Hiragana and Katakana, together called Kana, and Romanji which is the Latin alphabet. (Wikipedia.org)

pa	ba	da	za	ga	n	wa	ra	ya	ma	ha	na	ta	sa	ka	a
パ	バ	ダ	ザ	ガ	ン	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア
pa	ba	da	za	ga	n	wa	ra	ya	ma	ha ^{hi}	na	ta	sa	ka	a
ピ	ビ	チ	ジ	ギ			リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ
pi	bi	ji	ji	gi			ri		mi	hi	ni	chi	shi	ki	i
プ	ブ	ツ	ズ	グ			ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ
pu	bu	zu	zu	gu			ru	yu	mu	fu	nu	tsu	su	ku	u
ペ	ベ	デ	ゼ	ゲ			レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ
pe	be	de	ze	ge			re		me	he ^{hi}	ne	te	se	ke	e
ポ	ボ	ド	ゾ	ゴ			ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ
po	bo	do	zo	go			o ^{hi}	ro	yo	mo	ho	no	to	so	ko

Japanese text can be written in two different directions. The traditional way to write Japanese is in vertical rows from the right to the left side of the page called tategaki. The western style of writing Japanese is based on horizontal rows called yokogaki. Yokogaki may be written and read from left to right, but the right to left direction is still preferred. (Wikipedia.org)



Whether you are trying to launch a multilingual website in order to expand the markets for your products and services, or you are trying to increase your company's global operational efficiencies by developing multilingual extranets and intranets, Website Globalization is a requirement to make either a reality. In order to enable your web presence to communicate, conduct and complete international e-Business, you need to translate (globalize) your website.

Website translation is also known as "Website Globalization". In order to truly "translate" a website into other languages you may need both Internationalization (I18n) and Localization (L10n) services.














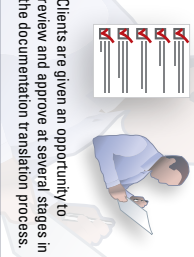
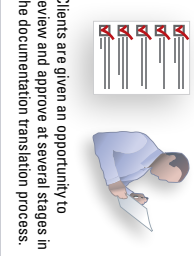
















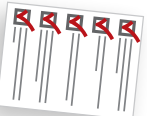
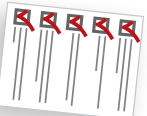
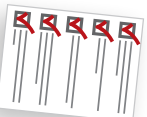
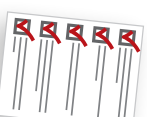
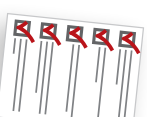
Internationalization (I18n) involves enabling the backend of a website to handle different languages, character sets, currencies, submit form data, site search capabilities, etc... and involves understanding what database and content management systems you are using to author, store and publish your site's content.

Localization (L10n) involves translating and localizing the front end of your website into different languages ensuring all content (text and graphics) is translated in an accurate and culturally correct manner.



The next two pages detail the steps that may be performed in a typical website globalization project. The tables list the team members, tasks and standard quality assurance steps utilized in translating a website.

<p>Source File Review</p> 		<p>Project Kick-Off</p> 		<p>Subject Matter Training and Research</p> 		<p>Glossary Development</p> 		<p>Cultural Correctness Assessment</p> 		<p>Translation, Editing and Proofreading</p> 		<p>Localization of all Graphics</p> 	
<p>Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies wanting to translate their website put together all of the source files from their site (called a "Localization Kit") for a globalization services provider to analyze. The files are prepared in order to utilize a translation memory tool workflow and preserve any mark-up/formatting code in order to save time and costs with desktop publishing the language versions. A proposal is generated based on an array of factors including word counts, localizable graphics, target languages and any content management systems and workflows to be used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Project "Kick-Off" includes and confirms the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The project team ✓ Project schedules ✓ Project specifications ✓ Workflow requirements ✓ Communication channels ✓ Review & approval opportunities ✓ Review current web authoring and publishing workflow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Globalization Services Team (GST) will review/study any reference materials provided, including source files, demos and general client information. In addition, there may be client-specific training for translation teams related to the subject matter of the website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation teams develop and maintains client specific glossaries leveraging any existing client glossaries and the latest industry-specific dictionaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before the actual translation begins, the source web content and overall site design and feature set is reviewed for basic cultural correctness and customizations that may be required. An array of issues are reviewed ranging from the need to culturally customize graphics and adding local phone numbers to comprehensive customization of website features based on locale specific cultural values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All translations are completed by human translators, utilizing translation memory technologies that ensure an efficient and consistent translation. The translated text is then incorporated into the original graphic, adjusting as required, to create a language or "localized" version of the graphic. 							
<p>Quality Assurance</p>			 <p>Clients are given an opportunity to review and approve at several stages in the documentation translation process.</p>		 <p>Clients are given an opportunity to review and approve at several stages in the documentation translation process.</p>								
<p>Quality Assurance</p>	<p>GPI follows a comprehensive, customizable and fully documented Quality Control Process. Each step in our translation workflow includes a series of checklist-based quality audits to ensure the accuracy of the translation and desktop publishing. Our client's QA and workflow processes can also be easily incorporated into our workflow.</p>												

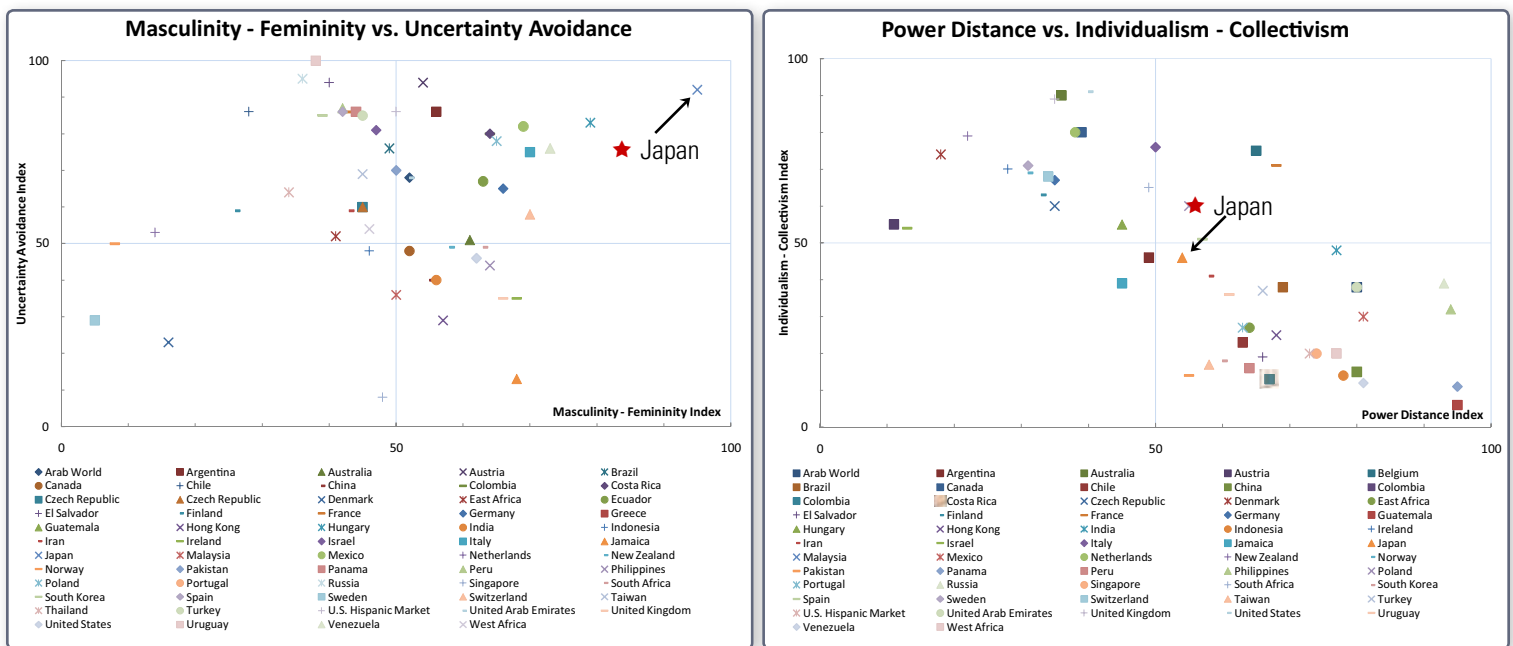
<p>Formatting of Language Documents</p> 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager • Lead Translators • Editors & Copy Writers • Desktop Publishers • Localization Engineers • Web Designers 	<p>Localization of Multimedia</p> 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager • Lead Translators • Editors & Copy Writers • Desktop Publishers • Localization Engineers • Web Designers • Web Developers 	<p>QA / Testing</p> 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager • Lead Translators • Editors & Copy Writers • Localization Engineers • Internationalization Engineers • QA -Testers • Web CMS Specialists • Web Designers • Web Developers 	<p>Delivery to Client</p> 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager 	<p>Final Edits and Archiving of Files</p> 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager • Desktop Publishers • Localization Engineers 	<p>SEO and Internet Marketing</p> 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager • Lead Translators • Global SEM Specialists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many websites have an array of linked documents which may require localization. • Formatting or desktop publishing (DTP) of these documents includes formatting the target language documentation to match the original source documents in terms of layout, fonts, graphics, and overall design. • Adobe PDF's can be created and optimized for screen or print and linked off of the new website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many websites incorporate various multimedia components which may require localization. • Multimedia must be analyzed individually for numerous items. These items range from determining word counts in screen text, audio scripts and graphics, to the analysis of the types of assets and how they were digitized and included in your multimedia. • All multimedia can be localized and tested to play in any target languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPI provides basic Online Localization Quality Assurance (QA) as a standard line item for all website projects. • This QA checks the language versions of your site under selected browser-OS combination for any cosmetic or linguistic issues, and will help identify basic functionality issues as well. • Typically all testing is client-driven and GPI's professionals can work side by side with your expert users to perform Internationalization (I18N), Localization (L10N) and/or Functionality Testing, onsite or offsite. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the website and all components have been localized, final draft sets of the source files in all target language versions are provided to the client. • Client may review and approve all web content for both translation accuracy and design correctness. • Another round of QA is performed once language versions of a website are in their final hosting environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client provides any final comments for the translation and formatting. • Comments are incorporated and final websites and documents are produced. • GPI ensures the client's Translation Memories and Glossaries are updated with any final linguistic changes and the final project folder, including all source files are securely stored for future revisions if required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPI recommends the client plan on and conduct some form of global internet marketing (IM) and/or search engine marketing (SEM) in order to drive traffic to your new language sites. • This may include global search engine optimization of the localized web content, submission of pages to key country (local) search engines and pay-per-click marketing campaigns through services like Google AdWords or Overture. 						
 <p>Clients are given an opportunity to review and approve at several stages in the documentation translation process.</p>			 <p>Clients are given an opportunity to review and approve at several stages in the documentation translation process.</p>								

Cultural Customization: Key Issues

The basis for cultural customization of websites is a theoretically sound, empirically validated framework built on five unique cultural values that account for similarities and differences across global cultures. **Research indicates that attitude towards websites, the sites' interactivity and usability, as well as purchase intentions of users are enhanced when sites are congruent with the target customers' cultural predispositions.** (See "The Culturally Customized Website", Elsevier)

The cultural customization framework is drawn from established research and is based on five unique values: Individualism-Collectivism, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity-Femininity, and Low-High Context. (See page 4 of this report.)

The five predominant cultural values can be represented in a country-to-country comparison using the maps below:



Cultural Maps adapted from: "The Culturally Customized Website: Customizing Websites for the Global Marketplace" by Nitish Singh and Arun Pereira (2005), and Hofstede, Geert. "Culture's Consequences, Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations" Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001)

The Cultural Customization Scorecard

Once we have identified the country's predominant cultural values using the cultural maps the next step in customizing a website is to evaluate it on the relevant cultural values. This can be done in the form of The Cultural Customization Score Card. The score card is produced by analyzing the site on the features that conform to the cultural values of interest.

The cultural values of interest for Japan are Collectivism, Masculinity, High Power Distance, High Context, and High Uncertainty Avoidance. The scores are calculated using the "content analysis" of a given website. (For a detailed cultural analysis of your website please contact mspethman@globalizationpartners.com)

The Cultural Customization Scorecard™ - Japan

Values	Individualism	Collectivism	Uncertainty Avoidance	Power Distance	Masculinity	Low Context	High Context
Cultural Scores							

Grading Scale:

> 90%	Excellent Customization on Cultural Value
70-89%	Good Customization on Cultural Value
< 70%	Poor Customization on Cultural Value

Cultural Customization (Examples)

➤ **Collectivism:** Japan is a collectivist society that places emphasis on group-relations, family and the extended social network. Social network sites and group dating are popular. See the image used at the 7-Eleven website for Japan showing a mother and daughter shopping together.



➤ **Uncertainty Avoidance:** As Japan is a very risk-averse society. In general it is important to reduce risk, anxiety and uncertainty that Japanese consumers might have shopping online. For example, using graphics and pictures of support personnel along with some graphic designs for products may help to reduce the anxiety.



➤ **Power Distance:** Japan is a society that is rooted in tradition, hierarchy, and both social customs and role structure. In this society being aware of social hierarchal structures and acknowledging them is important. Example: see how proudly the 7-Eleven Japan website displays the CEO's message and depicts them with high honor and respect.



➡ **Masculinity:** In Japanese culture it is important to succeed, challenge and at the same time conform to the group norms and not “stand out”. Games and quizzes are a way of relaxing, challenging oneself and at the same time not being in direct competition with others. One example is that Toshiba has a section for children on their site with a virtual science museum. Another example is the Olympus site that has “fun section” on their website.



➡ **High Context:** Japanese culture is very high context and very accepting of graphics, colors and images to add depth and context to the communication. At the same time, this reduces uncertainty. Kawaii, as mentioned previously, is the Japanese term for “cute” and it highly valued in Japan.



Website Customization Considerations

Adopting Western foreign language brand names without cultural consideration might lead to marketing blunders. For example, the Japanese translation for “web and sweepstakes” was thought of by some Japanese to mean “buy meat or steak online”. Alternatively, the Japanese travel agency, “Kinki Nippon Travel Agency” appealed to a different crowd than originally intended.

Only about 1 percent of the Japanese population has enough foreign language skills to completely understand the content on foreign websites and they tend to skip content they can’t read (intelbridges).



Symbols and Icons

An ancient culture like Japan has accrued a list of symbols and icons that carry a special cultural meaning. It is important to be aware of them to avoid any cultural blunders and inadvertent use of offensive symbols.

Some example:

The Japanese Zodiac is based on a 12 year rotation with each year being represented by a different animal. The people born under the different animals are said to have inherited certain traits, both positive and negative, from their animal sign.

- ❶ Zen gardens evolved from gravel and rock gardens used in Japan to denote sacred areas. Zen gardens “seek to replicate the deep calm of pristine nature in a highly stylized manner.” (www.japan-zone.com/omnibus/zen_garned.shtml)
- ❶ Origami has been an important part of Japanese Culture since the time of the Samurai. It is believed that if a person folds 1,000 cranes they will be granted one wish.
- ❶ Fish are an integral part of the culture of Japan. Tai (Sea bream) fish are considered lucky as the word rhymes with “medetai”, the Japanese word for auspicious. Koi have been developed for their beauty and because they are a symbol of strength, courage, and patience.
- ❶ A white carnation symbolizes death.
- ❶ The word “four” in Japanese sounds like death and items packaged in fours are unpopular.
- ❶ Black cats are considered unlucky.
- ❶ Chopsticks should not be stuck into rice as that symbolized death.

Some Japanese Superstitions and Beliefs:

- ❶ If you cut your nails at night, you will not be with your parents when they die.
- ❶ If you lie down immediately after eating, you will become a cow.
- ❶ If you whistle in the night, a snake will come to you.
- ❶ The nail that sticks out gets hammered down.



Colors:

In Japan certain colors carry specific meaning and symbolize aspects of Japanese culture. Using these colors and shades of these colors on a website can create a very rich website that develops strong feelings within the end user. Just be careful not to use colors that can have a negative meaning in Japan.

Colors with Positive Meanings:

- **Red:** the color of luck.
- **Yellow:** The Japanese color of courage.
- **Blue:** symbolizes peace, calm, stability and loyalty among other things. Indigo blue is a very common color used in Japan as it is the color of the ocean surrounding the Japanese islands.



Colors with Negative Meanings:

- ⦿ **Black/White:** The mixing of black and white stands for mourning and a cheerless occasion.
- ⦿ **Purple:** the color of danger in Japan.

Spatial Orientation:

Spatial orientation refers to how web content is structured. According to Wendy Barber and Albert Badre, authors of “**Culturability: The Merging of Culture and Usability**”, spatial orientation has a direct effect on website usability, because it affects visual perception. Manipulating the orientation can change the user’s comfort level. What is user-friendly for one country may be vastly different for another. As Japanese writing can be done either vertically or horizontally it is important to remember that the orientation does impact how the Japanese browse the website.

Text Length:

When translating a document or website, it is important to take into account how the length of the text will change after translation. There are a variety of reasons why text expansion occurs. Equivalent phrases in a target language may have more characters or words than in English, and some cultures prefer using a more formal style than other cultures, avoiding abbreviations, for example. Additionally, for both documents and websites both line and page breaks may be different in the localized version than in the English version. Finally, the layout of the document or website itself may change depending on the direction of the text. For example, Arabic is a bi-directional language and is read right-to-left, which will not only switch the layout of the text, but also the graphics, the tool bars, the navigation bars, and the binding of the book, etc... Similarly, some languages like Chinese and Japanese can be displayed either in left-to-right character rows or vertical character columns, and the choice influences how document elements such as graphics, figures, tables, call outs, etc. are arranged in the final document or webpage.

There can either be text expansion or compression when a document or website is translated from English into a target language. For example, Japanese can shrink up to 25% when translated from English. With document localization, there are several steps that can be taken to help preserve the integrity of the look and feel “layout” of the document. These include:

- ① Using a larger font in the original language, if it is expected the language will expand during translation. This will help to develop a better feel for the final size of the document and how the document elements will be laid out relative to the text. If the text is expected to shrink, use a slightly smaller font for the same reasons.
- ① Tables and graphics may need to be resized or changed. Some, like the vertical Chinese or Japanese layout, will require more finessing than others.



The key to promoting the website internationally is to create localized content, localized keywords, register local domains and then promote through local search engines, affiliate marketing, online and offline branding and promotions.

To effectively tap the online market in Japan it is important that the website not only be translated, localized and culturally customized for the Japanese audience but also effectively marketed to them.

In order to effectively market a website in Japan it is important to acquire a Country Code Top Level Domain Name (ccTLD:.jp) which allows a site to have Japanese characters in the domain name label. This is important for several reasons:

- ➡ As most Japanese are not proficient in English, a Japanese character domain label will help to successfully reach this population.
- ➡ Higher search results in local search engines.
- ➡ The domain can be used in online and offline advertising.
- ➡ The Japanese consumer can easily remember the domain in their own language.
- ➡ The Japanese will know that the company has a long term interest in the Japanese market and may stimulate more trust.
- ➡ From a strategic point of view it is better to be proactive and get the ccTLD before it is taken. In addition, early entry and acquisition of ccTLD will give a company first movers advantage.



According to Japan.Internet.com some of the most popular shopping sites in Japan are Rakuten, Amazon, Yahoo! Shopping and Netprice.



The top search engine choices for Japanese users are:

- ① Yahoo!
- ① Google
- ① Goo
- ① MSN
- ① Infoseek



These top search engines listed above are an excellent starting place to promote your site when targeting the Japanese online market. It is crucial for a website to get listed on these search engines and get visibility. Companies should explore key word development, paid submission, manual submission, paid inclusion to top search engines and directories like Rakuten.

It is recommended that firms plan on and conduct some form of global search engine marketing (SEM) in order to drive traffic to their new language sites.

This may include global search engine optimization of your localized Web content, submission of pages to key country (locale) search engines, and a pay-per-click marketing campaigns through services like Google Adwords or Overture.

For more information on Global SEM Services, see www.globalizationpartners.com/SEM

References available upon request.

Search Engines

 www.google.co.jp

 www.biglobe.ne.jp

 www.nikkei.co.jp

 www.yahoo.co.jp

 www.fresheye.com

 dmoz.org/World/Japanese

 www.goo.ne.jp

 www.infoseek.co.jp

Useful Links

 www.nielsen-netratings.com

 www.japan-zone.com

 www.itu.int/net/home/index.aspx

 www.countrywatch.com

 japanese.about.com

 [www.nationmaster.com/country/ja-japan/
int-Internet](http://www.nationmaster.com/country/ja-japan/int-Internet)

 www.export.gov


 [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/
the-world-factbook/geos/ja.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ja.html)

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 globaledge.msu.edu

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 en.wikipedia.org

 [japanese.about.com/library/weekly/aa100498.
htm](http://japanese.about.com/library/weekly/aa100498.htm)

 www.nic.ad.jp

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