Chinese language on the internet

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Should you or should you not publish your website In Chinese is often seen as complex. It is not. This papers goal is to help you understand the facts and processes so you can make an informed business plan if the Chinese internet market is appropriate for your business.

If you need any further help on the points raised, found an error, or points not covered, please contact: support@accesstochina.com.

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Summary of Options

Chinese language is the one of the most confusing subjects to resolve in publishing / selling on the Chinese market.

Option	Performance Improvement	Resources
Do Nothing	No change	None
Add / update Chinese search engines webmasters	Start your ranking in the Chinese search engines	A few days' work and on-going maintenance
Create Chinese additional information page	Gives the Chinese an insight to business	A few days' work
SEO data transaction	Increase your Chinese search engine ranking	A few days' work and on-going maintenance
Add Search engines results page (SERP) to webmasters in Chinese	Increase your Chinese search engine ranking	A few days' work and on-going maintenance
Multi-media transaction e.g. Sub titles etc.	Allows overseas people to review your media content	A few days' work
Key products and services transaction	Increase your Chinese search engine ranking	A few days' work and on-going maintenance
Create marketing website and point it back to your local internet content	Good feed for the Chinese search	One weeks work and on-going maintenance
Fully translate your website	Greatly increases your Chinese search engine ranking	One month's work and high on-going maintenance

Chinese language Background

Chinese different language types

For the basis of trading in China, there are three groups of languages:

- Local language - most cities / regions have their own language. In most cases this is not a local dialect. They are languages in their own right. Whilst the characters are common between the languages in most cases, simplified Chinese, in the same way we share the Latin characters between most of European language.

  People between cities / regions will not understand each other's languages.

- Mandarin is the main language of China. This was started by the emperors of China and fully implemented by Chairman Mao. "One country needs one common language".

Mandarin was used as it was already the language of government.

- Hong Kong, Taiwan and many areas of southern Asia use the traditional Chinese for their local language; e.g. Cantonese and Taiwanese. These two languages share a common written language but is spoken differently in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

  This also includes areas of the world where Chinese people emigrated to prior to 1950's e.g. California, USA.

Most people in China speak Mandarin, often their local language and increasing numbers speak English as part of their international language education at school and college. It is estimated that there are more than 100 million people learning English in any given year.

There are three forms of written Chinese language, partly covered in the above:

- Traditional Chinese – The original written language of China. The traditional writing of this language is an art and takes many years to prefect. It is still used in Cantonese and Taiwanese languages.

- Simplified Chinese – is the written language of China.

- Romanisation systems – There have been many ways developed for writing Chinese in Latin (European) characters. It is not practical to have a key board for Chinese characters, there are too many of them.

  Pingyin is the standard which has been adopted by the internet. Most Chinese people under the age of 40 years use Pingyin. If you were schooled over 25 years ago you would have been taught one of the other systems (like Pingyin).

  Pinyin enables you to type in Latin characters and then select on your PCs, mobiles, etc, the appropriate Chinese character from a drop-down list. While this may sound like a slow why of typing, it is very fast, possible faster than typing English. To learn more about Pingyin, there is a very good summary on the BCC website

Automatic translation to Chinese

Translation technology is getting better. Translation from English to Chinese at this time, is not reliable to communicate directly to your customers.

We recommendation, whatever languages is on your website, do not use automatic translation. Your Chinese reader will see at best as a poorly translated contents which will reflect badly on your company.

This does not mean that automatic translation will not be used. The end user can always turn on translation in their browser. In doing so, they still have a translation but user know that it is not your internet contents making translation the mistakes.

While automatic translation gives a service to the end user, it will not help your racking in the Chinese search engines.

Who do use to translate?

Chinese translation can be very technical. A word for word translation can leave you with a translation which is technically correct and a meaningless description of your business, products and services.

Many Chinese people will not necessary understand your business. When translating will do a word for word description and guest what your business is about.

We recommend using a translator from your own country. Many colleges and universities are producing good Chinese translators who will have a far better understanding of your business.

Once you have a translation, ask a few Chinese people what they understand about your business, products, etc. Do not ask if it is correct as it will not be a word for word translation.

Chinese language translation options

Do nothing – No Chinese transaction

Leave your internet content in your local language. The two internet languages of the Chinese internet are Chinese and English. It your internet content is not in English or Chinese except very little internet traffic from China.

If your internet content is in English then except, provided your Chinese search SEO is setup, to receive internet traffic from China.

For more information, please see Chinese SEO.

Chinese search engines webmaster

This is good please to good place to start. The Chinese webmaster, whilst these systems are only in Chinese, the content parameters are the same as in Google or Bing.

For more information, please see Chinese SEO.

Create Chinese page – An additional page of Chinese data

An additional page to your internet content, a "Welcome Page" in Chinese with the key elements of your business explained.

Provided the Chinese SEO data has been created, this will help your website be indexed in Chinese search engines.

Translate your SEO data into Chinese

Create a copy of your website and translate the SEO data.

Combine with a Chinese domain and your internet contents hosted in China / Asia this should increase your Chinese internet traffic speed in China.

Chinese search engine SERP

Baidu Search Engine Result Page (SERP), like Google Rich text, greatly supports your search engine ranking.

Multi-media translation

If your business has multi-media, add Chinese subtext etc.

Whilst automatic Chinese translation will work on your internet content text, it does work on spoken words and in the main not on multi-media content.

Key product and service translation

The translation of your key internet products and services.

Very useful approach when promoting a key business activity. This is also required if you are using Chinese Tmalls.

 For more information, please see Chinese SEO.

Chinese marketing website

Creating an internet marketing / brochure in Chinese and point the key products and services in the Chinese contents back to your overseas pricing / on-line cart.

This approach is far better than creating full translation of internet content provided you keep the descriptions to the minimum so not creating a large overhead in translation maintenance.

Full translation of your internet content

This option is not recommended unless you have an existing customer base in China who demand a site in Chinese.

Remember, that the Chinese have the automatic translation option in their browse.