

SEO for multicountry multilanguage projects

Target Europe & Latin America

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1. International, some facts
2. Cultural aspects
3. Technical SEO
4. Content optimization
5. Link building
6. Web analytics

1 INTERNATIONAL, SOME FACTS language

Queries on Google submitted in languages **other than English** went from:

- less than 30% in 2002
- to more than 50% now

More than 1/3 of such queries are submitted in a **non-English European language**

1 INTERNATIONAL, SOME FACTS

e-commerce

Online retail sales in Europe:

Likely to grow 19.6% to 172€ billion in 2010 following 22% growth last year

Visitors to a site with **content in their language**:

- more than 4 times as likely to buy
- spend twice as long on the page

2 CULTURAL ASPECTS

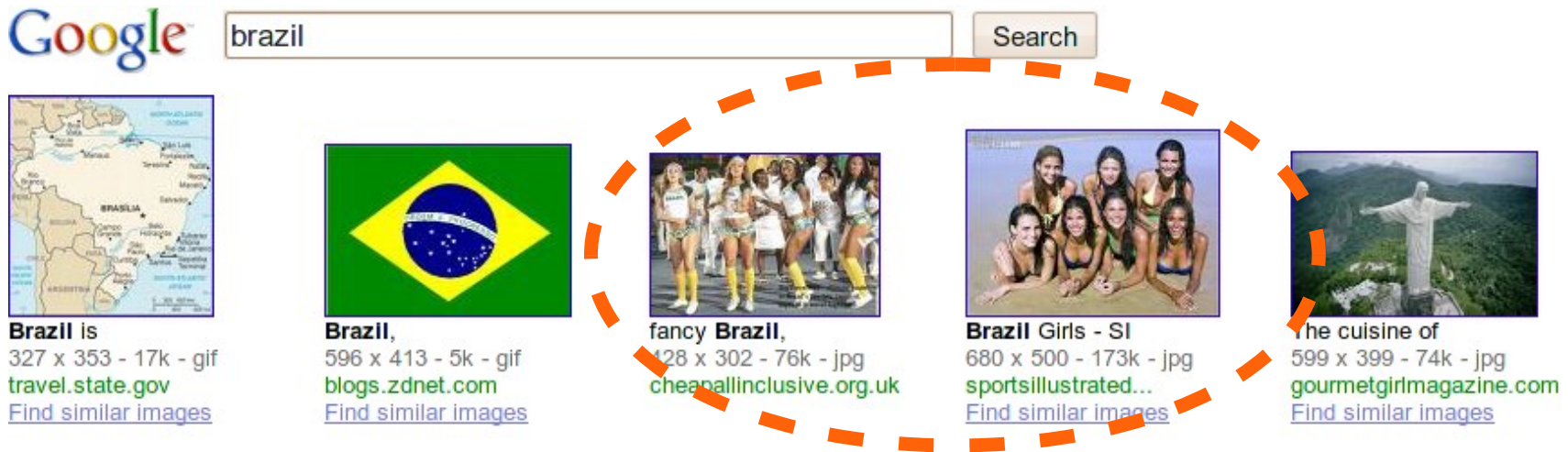
Targeting countries abroad?

It is quite a lot of time, effort and money to invest.
No company decides to target a market by random reasons or no reasons at all

To avoid shooting yourself in the foot right from the start, **get to know the cultural aspects of the markets** to target

2 CULTURAL ASPECTS avoid clichés

Brazil = happy girls?



Google

Brazil is
327 x 353 - 17k - gif
travel.state.gov
[Find similar images](#)

Brazil,
596 x 413 - 5k - gif
blogs.zdnet.com
[Find similar images](#)

fancy Brazil,
428 x 302 - 76k - jpg
cheapandinclusive.org.uk

Brazil Girls - SI
680 x 500 - 173k - jpg
[sportsillustrated...](http://sportsillustrated.com)
[Find similar images](#)

The cuisine of
599 x 399 - 74k - jpg
gourmetgirlmagazine.com
[Find similar images](#)

2 CULTURAL ASPECTS avoid clichés

Argentina = happy girl(s) + football?

Google

argentina

Search



Map of Argentina
466 x 350 - 57k - jpg
lonelyplanet.com
[Find similar images](#)



Argentina's
512 x 384 - 137k - gif
bigtravelweb.com
[Find similar images](#)



Argentina Map –
700 x 1007 - 110k - jpg
visitingargentina.com
[Find similar images](#)



Argentina
1068 x 1302 - 299k - jpg
lib.utexas.edu
[Find similar images](#)



Maps Of
650 x 487 - 91k - jpg
embassyworld.com
[Find similar images](#)



Argentina
370 x 370 - 31k - gif
sergiopessolano.it
[Find similar images](#)



Volunteer in
324 x 610 - 24k - gif
transitionsabroad.com
[Find similar images](#)



Argentina Flag
784 x 504 - 31k - png
nesdisia.noaa.gov



Argentina
760 x 618 - 101k - jpg
buenosairesstay.com
[Find similar images](#)



ARGENTINA
514 x 330 - 9k - jpg
myoptionsabroad.com
[Find similar images](#)

2 CULTURAL ASPECTS avoid clichés



destination guides had pics of bullfights to represent Spain



Spain is located
400 x 322 - 42k - jpg
maps.unomaha.edu
[Find similar images](#)



Spain
415 x 332 - 56k - jpg
destination360.com
[Find similar images](#)



The Flag of Spain
738 x 484 - 17k - gif
spain-flag.eu
[Find similar images](#)



Spain and
350 x 321 - 17k - jpg
studentsoftheworld.info
[Find similar images](#)



From the earliest
1092 x 988 - 326k - jpg
blog.willamette.edu
[Find similar images](#)



Spain
1181 x 788 - 35k - gif
missiledefenseadvoca...
[Find similar images](#)



Related maps in
466 x 350 - 53k - jpg
lonelyplanet.com
[Find similar images](#)



Spain country
329 x 352 - 26k - gif
eubusiness.com
[Find similar images](#)




Language Camp -
599 x 402 - 75k - jpg
mssu.edu
[Find similar images](#)













Spain Map,
475 x 507 - 51k - jpg
wordtravels.com
[Find similar images](#)

2 CULTURAL ASPECTS avoid clichés

Dear  : Is 'red light district' representing Amsterdam? (They got the irony)

Google

 <p>Amsterdam-Brid 454 x 300 - 91k - gif blogs.atlassian.com Find similar images</p>	 <p>Amsterdam 168 x 315 - 44k - jpg dailymail.co.uk Find similar images</p>	 <p>amsterdam 1600 x 1200 - 428k - jpg thetravelpeach.com Find similar images</p>	 <p>AMSTERDAM 700 x 465 - 131k - jpg csupomona.edu Find similar images</p>	 <p>(Amsterdam 1280 x 960 - 599k - jpg raunvis.hi.is Find similar images</p>
 <p>amsterdam 540 x 450 - 142k - jpg repairstemcell...</p>	 <p>Map of 656 x 551 - 62k - gif bedandbreakfast.bbnl.nl</p>	 <p>amsterdam-cana 1123 x 842 - 264k - jpg onetravel.wordpress.com</p>	 <p>Hookers Union Sues 690 x 426 - 26k - jpg michaelscomments...</p>	 <p>Amsterdam 322 x 302 - 98k - jpg southafrica.to</p>

2 CULTURAL ASPECTS differences for fun

Canada / Hockey



Spain / Football



What situations would result in **riots** after a game?

2 CULTURAL ASPECTS differences for fun

Canada
when your team loses



Spain
when your team wins



* thanks Brian Katz & Neal McGann, my hockey advisors

2 CULTURAL ASPECTS

flags of Spain  Canadian epic fails!

Capers store Vancouver during Olympic games



Republicofbacon.com Campaign



2 CULTURAL ASPECTS

different habits in Europe

How **regional context** may influence your strategy

In **Mediterranean** countries Internet use is driven more by **social factors** than anything else, where **Nordic** countries rely on the internet for more pragmatic, **functional purposes**.

2 CULTURAL ASPECTS

different habits in Europe

How **local habits** may influence your strategy.

Online shoppers prefer to fill their online carts:

- **Spanish** between 12 and 1pm
- **Germans** and Italians between 2 and 4pm
- **Danish** shop from 5 to 6pm
- **French** shopping activities from 6 to 10pm
- **British** shopping hours around 8pm
- **Swedes** follow around 9pm

2 TECHNICAL SEO

domains, directories and subdomains

Continental / regional Top Level Domains
like **.eu .asia**

- Not related to specific countries
- Europa is not a uniform cultural entity

Useless from **SEO** perspective

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multilingual, directories and subdomains

Common situations:

- one country, several languages
- one language, several countries

How can we do it?

- main domain and subdirectories per language?
- main domain and directories per language?
- domains by country?

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multilingual, directories and subdomains

Best option domains by country

- mycompany.com US
- mycompany.fr France
- mycompany.de Germany

but it is the most expensive:

- technical resources required
- complicated to manage and coordinate
- one CMS for all or one per domain?

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multilingual, directories and subdomains

Second option directories by country/language

- mycompany.com US
- mycompany.com/**fr/** France
- mycompany.com/**de/** Germany

One language, several countries

- mycompany.com/**es/** Spain
- mycompany.com/**es-ar/** Argentina
- mycompany.com/**es-mx/** Mexico

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multilingual, directories and subdomains

Directories by country/language

One country, several languages

- [mycompany.com/es/](#) Spain generic
- [mycompany.com/es-eu/](#) Spain / Basc
- [mycompany.com/es-gl/](#) Spain / Galician
- [mycompany.com/es-ca/](#) Spain / Catalan

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multilingual, directories and subdomains

Directories by country/language

- cheaper: less technical resources required
- simple to manage and coordinate
- directories contribute to increase the general relevancy of domain and inherit its relevancy

Follow ISO 639-1 two letter codes

- **OK** /es/
- **KO** /spa/ /spain/

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multilingual, directories and subdomains

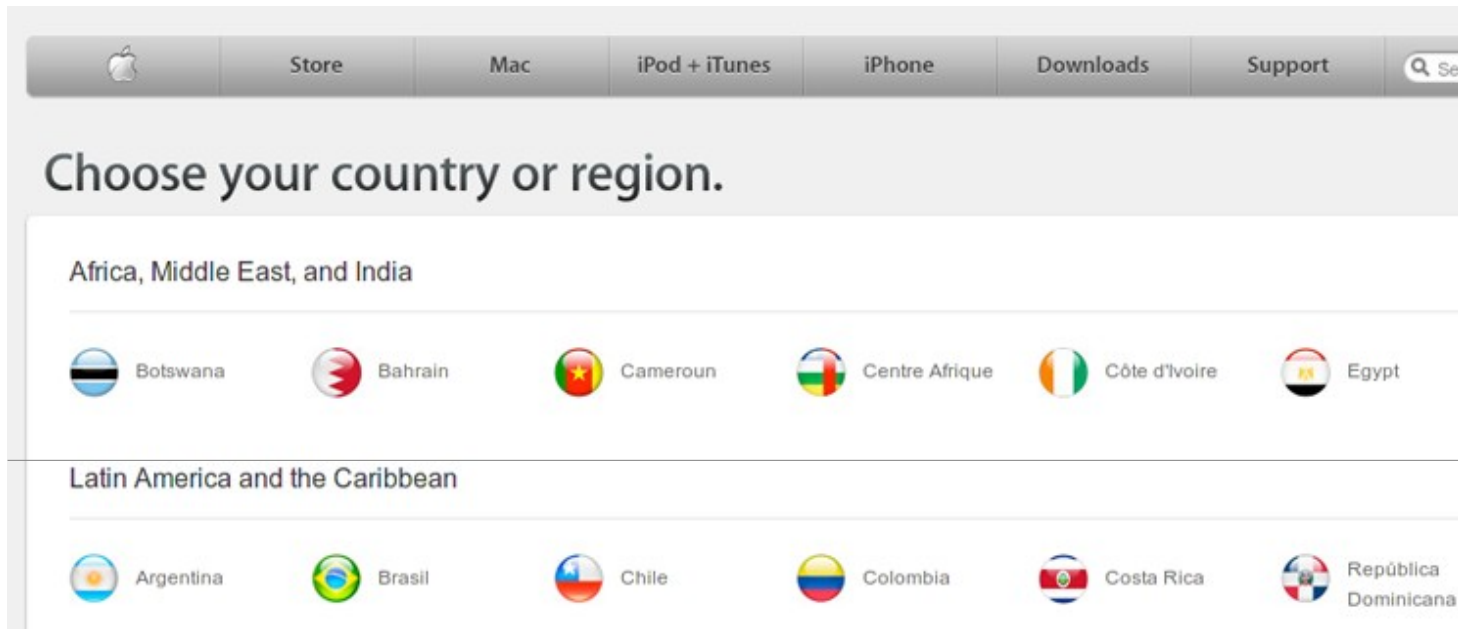
Worst option subdomains by country

- Search Engines consider subdomains almost a completely different entity than their domain
- they don't inherit most of the domain's relevancy
- contribute poorly to increase the domain's relevancy

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multilingual, directories and subdomains

Example: Apple directories by country



* example courtesy of Aaron Bradley @aaranged

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multicountry multilingual handling

Are **IPs by country** important?

Not actually (and expensive)

Country TLD's automatically associated to country

Webmastertools help directories-by-country sites to be associate with countries

3 TECHNICAL SEO







multicountry multilingual handling


Google webmaster tools

Home

+ Add a site...

Sites

-  transfer-lbc.com
-  transfer-lbc.com/en
-  transfer-lbc.com/es
-  transfer-lbc.com/fr
-  transfer-lbc.com/nl
-  transfer-lbc.com/pt

 transfer-lbc.com/es ▼

[Dashboard](#)

[Site configuration](#)

[Sitemaps](#)

[Crawler access](#)

[Sitelinks](#)

[Change of address](#)

Settings

Settings

Geographic target

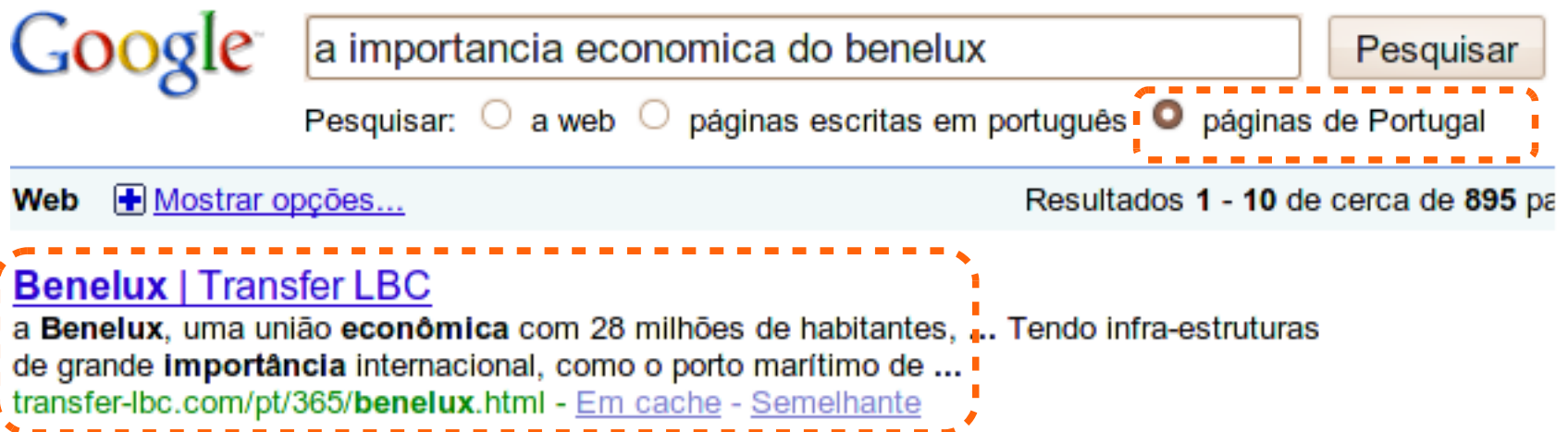
Target users in: Spain ▼

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multicountry multilingual handling

IPs are not so important if options at Webmastertools are properly set

Example: Site ranks **#1** in Google.pt although hosted (IP) in Canada
Option 'Pages from Portugal' checked



Google

Pesquisar: a web páginas escritas em português páginas de Portugal

Web Resultados 1 - 10 de cerca de 895 pa

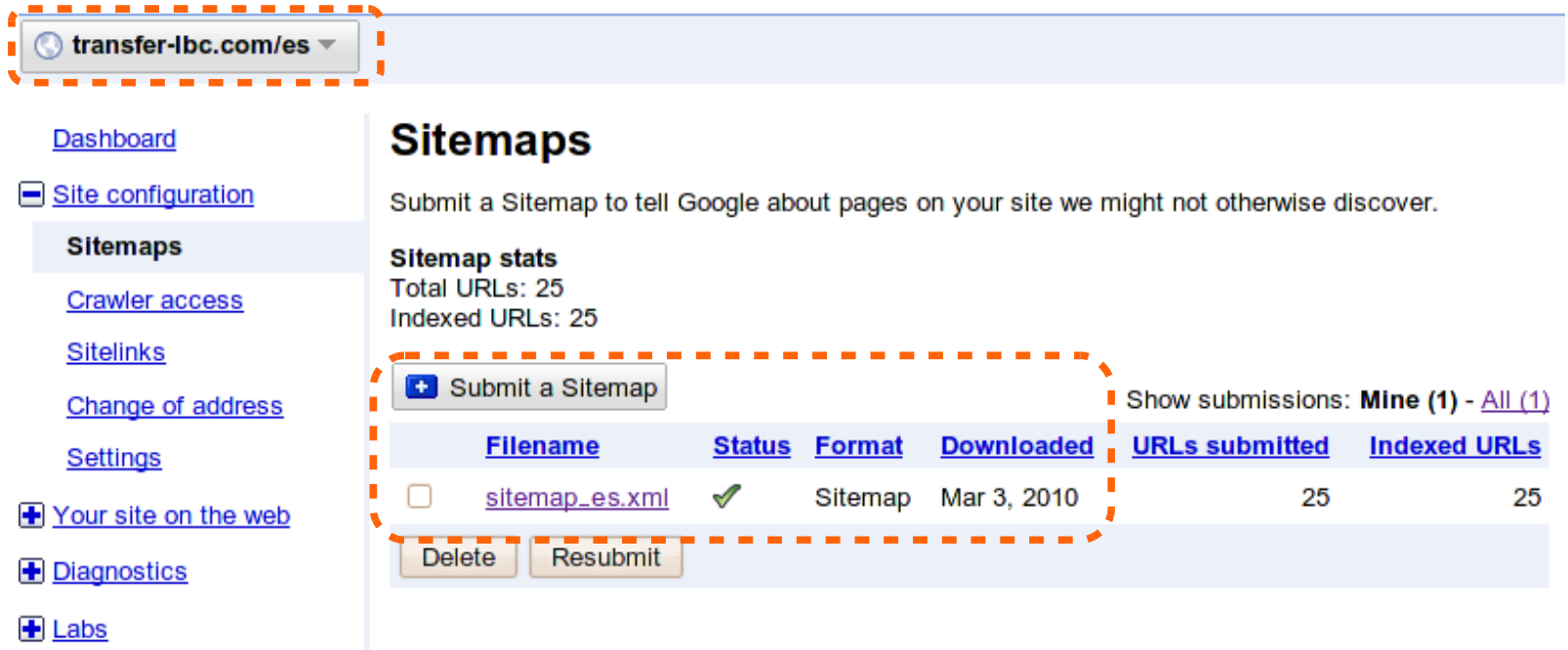
[Benelux | Transfer LBC](#)
a **Benelux**, uma união **econômica** com 28 milhões de habitantes, .. Tendo infra-estruturas de grande **importância** internacional, como o porto marítimo de ...
transfer-lbc.com/pt/365/benelux.html - [Em cache](#) - [Semelhante](#)

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multicountry multilingual handling

Add xml sitemaps by subdirectory/country

Google webmaster tools



The screenshot shows the Google Webmaster Tools interface for the domain `transfer-lbc.com/es`. The left sidebar contains navigation links: Dashboard, Site configuration, Sitemaps, Crawler access, Sitelinks, Change of address, Settings, Your site on the web, Diagnostics, and Labs. The main content area is titled "Sitemaps" and includes a description: "Submit a Sitemap to tell Google about pages on your site we might not otherwise discover." Below this, "Sitemap stats" are shown: Total URLs: 25, Indexed URLs: 25. A "Submit a Sitemap" button is highlighted with a dashed orange box. Below it, a table lists the submitted sitemaps. The table has columns for Filename, Status, Format, Downloaded, URLs submitted, and Indexed URLs. One entry is shown: `sitemap_es.xml` with a status of "checked" (green checkmark), Format of "Sitemap", Downloaded on "Mar 3, 2010", 25 URLs submitted, and 25 Indexed URLs. Below the table are "Delete" and "Resubmit" buttons.

`transfer-lbc.com/es`

[Dashboard](#)

[Site configuration](#)

Sitemaps

[Crawler access](#)

[Sitelinks](#)

[Change of address](#)

[Settings](#)

[Your site on the web](#)

[Diagnostics](#)

[Labs](#)

Sitemaps

Submit a Sitemap to tell Google about pages on your site we might not otherwise discover.

Sitemap stats
Total URLs: 25
Indexed URLs: 25

[+ Submit a Sitemap](#)

Show submissions: **Mine (1)** - [All \(1\)](#)

Filename	Status	Format	Downloaded	URLs submitted	Indexed URLs
<input type="checkbox"/> sitemap_es.xml	✓	Sitemap	Mar 3, 2010	25	25

[Delete](#) [Resubmit](#)

3 TECHNICAL SEO multilingual handling

Do not mix languages in same page / directory

» About Me

[Download a Full Biography](#)

[下载关于焦守昕的完整中文简介](#)

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT:

1. Tri-lingual: English, Mandarin and Cantonese (speaking and writing).
2. An entrepreneur at heart.
3. Experience in residential marketing and client services: ***Carina, Callisto, and Cielo in Coal Harbour; Coco on Spruce in South Granville.***
4. Commercial real estate experience.
5. Extensive training from some of the industry's top performing commercial brokers.

焦守昕来自中国南京。她于2001年搬至加拿大。在西蒙菲沙大学取得工商管理学士学位之后，焦守昕开始开创她的房地产事业。她投身于温哥华的地产开发及商业地产界，在著名的德大地产发展有限公司与高力国际工作了三年。

焦守昕说流利的英语及普通话，并可用广东话沟通。她的中文书写亦流利。焦守昕一向具有企业家的创业精神与毅力，这是她决定成为一名地产经纪的重要原因之一。

通过在过去的工作中，焦守昕积累了不少为高档公寓楼盘销售策划与售后服务的经验。她参与过的项目包括：在Coal Harbour的 Carina, Callisto, 与 Cielo，以及在South Granville 的Coco on Spruce。

Ancient Olympics

古代奥林匹克运动会

Contact

English

中文

Nederlands

Links



This website introduces you to the wonderful world of the ancient Greek games. More than a thousand years, from 776 BC until AD 393, the Greeks held competitions in running, fighting and horse driving in Olympia in honour of Zeus. These games were the model for the modern Olympics. Side by side with the Olympic games, hundreds of similar competitions were held in the Greek and Roman cities. Alongside sports they also made room for musical competition. There were even games for girls. Have a look at the precursors of the great games in Beijing in 2008.

[ENTER SITE](#) - [FAQ](#)

Deze website leidt u binnen in de wonderbare wereld van de Griekse spelen. Meer dan duizend jaar lang, van 776 v.Chr. tot 393 n.Chr., hielden de Grieken wedstrijden in lopen, vechten en paardrijden in Olympia ter ere van Zeus. Deze spelen stonden model voor de moderne Olympische spelen. Naast de Olympische spelen waren er nog honderden andere wedstrijden, in de Griekse en Romeinse steden. Naast sport was er ook plaats voor muziekwedstrijden en er kwamen zelfs spelen voor vrouwen. Maak hier kennis met de antieke voorlopers van de grote spelen van 2008 in Peking.

[ENTER SITE](#) - [FAQ](#)

来吧，进入我们的网站，进入精彩绝伦的古希腊竞技世界！从公元前776年到公元393年的一千多年中，古希腊人为纪念主神宙斯在奥林匹亚举行赛跑、搏击及赛马等比赛。这些比赛是现代奥林匹克运动会的原型，不过与后者有着迥异的差别。千百年间，在奥林匹克精神的感召下，数以百计的类似竞技比赛，在希腊的各城市、土耳其、埃及和意大利与奥林匹克运动会并肩发展起来，其中既有国际性的也有区域性的。在希腊化和罗马时期，这些比赛更为盛行，也越来越专业。除了体育竞技外，还发展出音乐和诗歌朗诵方面的角逐，甚至有专门的女子比赛。现在，请跟随我们的网站，来结识举世瞩目的2008北京奥运会的古祖先辈吧！

[ENTER SITE](#) - [FAQ](#)

هذا الموقع يقودك إلى العالم المدهش للألعاب اليونانية القديمة. خلال أكثر من ألف سنة، أي من 776 قبل الميلاد حتى 393 بعد الميلاد نظم اليونان مباريات الجري المصارعة والفروسية في مدينة أولمبية لتكريم زيوس. كانت هذه الألعاب نموذجاً للألعاب الأولمبية الحديثة. إلى جانب الألعاب الأولمبية نُظمت أيضاً منات من المباريات الأخرى في المدن اليونانية والرومانية. لم تتركز الألعاب على الرياضة



KO!

3 TECHNICAL SEO multilingual handling

Search Engines are great at detecting languages

Metatags for language definition are useless

```
<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="en">
```

If used, do it right

```
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xml:lang="en" lang="en">
```

Indicate the right charset right after <head>

```
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1" />
```

3 TECHNICAL SEO

multicountry multilingual handling

Entrance page for selecting language or country is a **bad idea**, don't make me click / think.

Country (IP) / language (browser) auto detection + redirect to right content is the **best option** using cookies to store user preferences

Do it serverside with proper redirections

Double check indexability in all web site or sites

4 CONTENT OPTIMIZATION

Google translate is great tool but it is the worst idea to translate content for sites

What if one language is used in several countries?

- Spanish is official in 21 countries
- German spoken in 7 countries including Italy
- Portuguese total native speakers 210 millions
Brazil 192 millions, Portugal 10.7 millions

Localization is the solution

4 CONTENT OPTIMIZATION language localization

Same concept, different words by country
but in the same language

Spanish

· English	wholesale
· Castillian	venta al por mayor
· Argentinian	venta mayorista
· Mexican	mayoreo

4 CONTENT OPTIMIZATION language localization

Google Insights for Search
beta

Compare by

- Search terms
- Locations
- Time Ranges

Search terms

Tip: Use a comma as shorthand to add comparison items. (tennis, squash)


- venta al por mayor
- venta mayorista
- mayoreo

[+ Add search term](#)

Filter

- Web Search
- Worldwide
- 2004 - present
- All Categories

Regional interest

1.	Puerto Rico	
2.	Chile	
3.	Argentina	
4.	Spain	
5.	Ecuador	
6.	Peru	
7.	Colombia	
8.	Venezuela	
9.	Mexico	



4 CONTENT OPTIMIZATION language localization

Portuguese

· English	train
· Brazilian	trem
· Portuguese	comboio

Sometimes it is just a character difference

· Brazilian	correção
· Portuguese	correccção

4 CONTENT OPTIMIZATION language localization

Regional interest



Regional interest



4 CONTENT OPTIMIZATION language localization

Domains

Company about '*sports*' and '*football*'
bought these domains:

- sportsfootball.co.uk
- sportsfootball.de
- sportsfootball.es
- sportsfootball.it

FAIL! Why?

4 CONTENT OPTIMIZATION language localization

- sports**football**.co.uk
- sports**fussball**.de
- sports**futbol**.es
- sports**calcio**.it

OK!

Average web search according to Google Insights

DE	football	8	fussball	27
ES	football	5	futbol	61
IT	football	5	calcio	68

4 CONTENT OPTIMIZATION content strategy

Amount of content in different languages

Question from client: *How **much content** does a user expect in their own language (Spanish), before they'll respond in some way knowing that our primary business is English based?*

Answer: *Add all the possible content in Spanish **till your site ranks great** for this language in Spain and **traffic converts as good as English** (applicable for any other language / country)*

4 CONTENT OPTIMIZATION content strategy

Parallel content structure for all languages?

- Yes, at the beginning
- Then discover (with the knowledge of their culture and habits + web analytics) what content fits best for every country and **adapt it** for better rankings and conversions

5 LINK BUILDING

Coherence in your link building strategy

Links **pointing from each country** to its related directory or domain

- [company.com/es/](#) ← Links from Spain
- [company.com/es-ar/](#) ← Links from Argentina
- [company.com/es-cl/](#) ← Links from Chile

Appropriated **localized anchor texts** in links

5 LINK BUILDING



6 WEB ANALYTICS

Global data is nice but useless

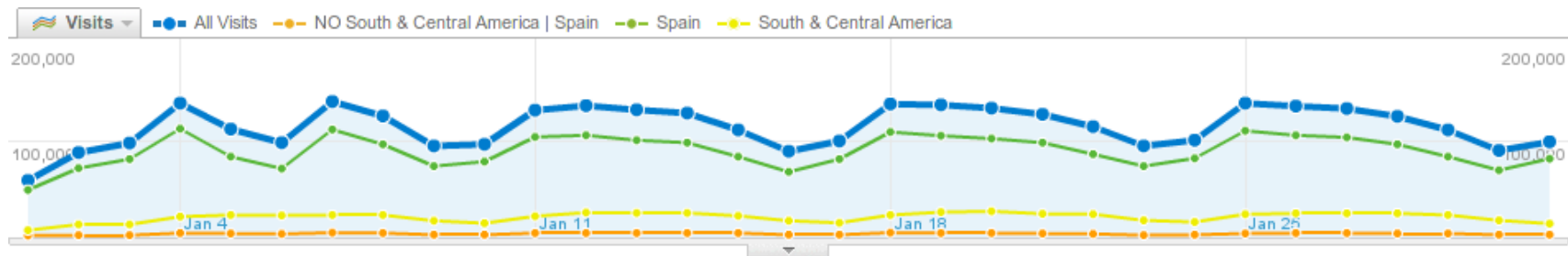
Segmentation is crucial to guess what is happening in every country targeted

Actions taken based on non-segmented data and not taking into consideration local culture or habits have high probabilities to fail

★ transfer-lbc.com	View report	✓	519	00:02:02	69.56%	3	↑ 57.75%
★ transfer-lbc.com/en/	View report	✓	23	00:01:45	65.22%	0	↓ -23.33%
★ transfer-lbc.com/nl/	View report	✓	299	00:02:21	62.54%	0	↑ 2,618.18%

6 WEB ANALYTICS

Advanced Segments combining language and region / country shows how effective your SEO is



Search sent 3,581,634 total visits via 1 mediums in the "All Visits" segment
 Filtered for mediums containing "organic"

	Medium	None	Visits ↓	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1.	organic						
	All Visits		3,581,634	2.87	00:02:06	61.18%	60.41%
	NO South & Central America Spain		121,087	2.79	00:01:55	77.93%	63.76%
	Spain		2,795,616	3.09	00:02:20	57.37%	57.81%
	South & Central America		654,367	1.77	00:01:02	84.74%	71.56%

6 WEB ANALYTICS

Example: Company having sites for Spain and Latin American countries (domain by country).

Spain's site:

How much traffic not coming from Spain?
(Latin America or else where) **21.65%!!!**

All Organic Visits	3,581,634	
Spain	2,795,616	78.05%
South & Central America	654,367	18.27%
NO South & Central America or Spain	121,087	3.38%
		21.65%

Thanks

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Brain Katz for Google Analytics advice

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*a link to <http://dynamical.biz/blog/> would be great



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