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The Polyglottal Internet

By Sam Vaknin, Ph.D.

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<http://www.everymail.com/>

The Internet started off as a purely American phenomenon and seemed to perpetuate the fast-emerging dominance of the English language. A negligible minority of web sites were in other languages. Software applications were chauvinistically ill-prepared (and still are) to deal with anything but English. And the vast majority of net users were residents of the two North-American colossi, chiefly the USA.

All this started to change rapidly about two years ago. Early this year, the number of American users of the Net was surpassed by the swelling tide of European and Japanese ones. Non-English web sites are proliferating as well. The advent of the wireless Internet - more widespread outside the USA - is likely to strengthen this unmistakable trend. By 2005, certain analysts expect non-English speakers to make up to 70% of all netizens. This fragmentation of an hitherto unprecedentedly homogeneous market - presents both opportunities and costs. It is much more expensive to market in ten languages than it is in one. Everything - from e-mail to supply chains has to be re-tooled or customized.

It is easy to translate text in cyberspace. Various automated, web-based, and free applications (such as Babylon or Travlang) cater to the needs of the casual user who doesn't mind the quality of the end-result. Virtually every search engine, portal and directory offers access to these or similar services.

But straightforward translation is only one kind of solution to the tower of Babel that the Internet is bound to become.

Enter WorldWalla. A while back I used their multi-lingual e-mail application. It converted text I typed on a virtual keyboard to images (of characters). My addressees received the message in any language I selected. It was more than cool. It was liberating. Along the same vein, WorldWalla's software allows application and content developers to work in 66 languages. In their own words:

"WordWalla allows device manufacturers and application developers to meet this challenge by developing products that support any language. This simplifies testing and configuration management, accelerates time to market, lowers unit costs and allows companies to quickly and easily enter new markets and offer greater levels of

personalization and customer satisfaction."

GlobalVu converts text to device-independent images. GlobalEase Web is a "Java-based multilingual text input and display engine". It includes virtual keyboards, front-end processors, and a contextual processor and text layout engine for left to right and right to left language formatting. They have versions tailored to the specifications of mobile devices.

The secret is in generating and processing images (bitmaps), compressing them and transmitting them. In a way, WordWalla generates a FACSIMILE message (the kind we receive on our fax machines) every time text is exchanged. It is transparent to both sender and receiver - and it makes a user-driven polyglottal Internet a reality.

Sam Vaknin is the author of "Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited" and "After the Rain - How the West Lost the East". He is a columnist in "Central Europe Review", United Press International (UPI) and ebookweb.org and the editor of mental health and Central East Europe categories in The Open Directory, Suite101 and searcheurope.com. Until recently, he served as the Economic Advisor to the Government of Macedonia.

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How to Choose an Internet Marketing Company

By Lester Boey

How to Choose an Internet Marketing Company by Lester Boey

-- Internet Marketing Determines Web Success --

Internet marketing is essential to the success of e-commerce sites. You can have a professional looking website but what good can it do if internet users are not able to find it when they need your products and services? That is where an internet marketing campaign comes into play.

Internet marketing is similar to designing websites- it does not require much experience to do a good job, just good knowledge and a keen eye for details. It is fundamentally important for a good internet marketer to constantly update himself weekly, if not monthly, of online markets.

--What an Internet Marketer can offer--

In short, an Internet Marketer oversees that your website is built properly for visibility and promoted with the best dollar spent on your internet marketing campaign. It is no good having a website and not appearing in internet searches. Your website has to magically appear before buyers when they need products and services. Internet Marketers deploy search engine optimisation techniques to make your website visible and targetted to internet users.

Internet marketing requires research and analysis effort for individual website, followed by optimisation of website. Hundreds of hours may be spent on each website, depending on the size of your targetted market. You are essentially paying for the amount of effort involved, effectiveness of your internet marketer and daily sales tracking of your website.

-- How to choose an Internet Marketer -

Internet marketing requires constant updating of skills and knowledge. One crude way to test if your internet marketer is a genuine or fake- Ask your internet marketer about recent events that happened in his field. If he cannot answer that, he must have a genuinely good reason to back himself as a good internet marketer! At times, it is easy to fall prey into the hands of bad internet marketing companies as happened in US and other parts of the world.

Lester Boey works in an Australian search engine marketing and design company (<http://www.definiteweb.com/>)

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