

Introduction: Localisation and the theoretical impasse?

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MSH Dijon, 23/11/18



- Definitions
- Localisation and culture:
translation agency perspectives
- Academic approaches to the cultural dimension of
web localisation
- Culture and localisation in translator training
- Conclusions and perspectives

What is localisation?

“a complex communicative, cognitive, textual and technological process by which interactive digital texts are modified to be used in different linguistic and socio-cultural contexts, guided by the expectations of the target audience and the specifications and degree requested by initiators”
 (Jimenez-Crespo 2013)

“l’ensemble des opérations de traduction et d’adaptation d’un contenu numérique pour un environnement cible. Elle concerne notamment l’adaptation dans une autre langue et dans telle ou telle culture de produits informatiques, de pages internet, de sites web et de guides d’utilisation”
 (Alshtaiwi 2017)



Cycle GILT: G12n = I18n <> L10n

BUT what to do with the specific cultural dimension of a website or other product?

1. Culture > native competence

“Correct understanding of foreign cultures is essential if a business wants its audience to understand its copy to the fullest extent. At Global Voices **we don’t just offer a literal translation service**, because we know that trading internationally is only possible through effective localised communication. **To do this we employ professional, native-tongue linguists, all with specific local knowledge of the market your business is looking to enter.**”

(<https://www.globalvoices.co.uk/localisation.php>)

2. ‘Scientific’ approaches



E.g. RWS
[Go Global Model](#)

Plan

Create

Localize

Engage

Optimise

“We can help you understand your ideal customers, learn about their needs and make sure you are the one they find...”

“You cannot optimize your localisation projects without gathering and acting on the right insights.”

“Culture affects everything we do, say, read, hear and think and even websites cannot escape the influence of culture. The impact of culture on website localization is huge. The above few examples are **literally the tip of the iceberg**. The number of variables that have to be taken into consideration requires the **expertise of both a website designer along with a cross cultural communications consultant**. In tandem they can identify the issues that will impact on the successful localization of a site. **At a time where the internet is entering more and more houses** it is crucial that companies involved in the internationalization of their business consider website localization and take care to use effective cross cultural analysis.”

([Kwintessential](#), s.d.)

Technical versus cultural expertise?



Example from transperfect.fr
(French website of large multinational agency)

Localisation =
translation + SEO + customer service + social networking + multiplatform support

= focus on (mostly) technical aspects
= relegating cultural aspects...

<http://transperfect.fr/services/website-localization.html>

Technical versus cultural expertise?

...to the ambit of multilingual webmarketing.



can often make the difference between success and failure. When international markets are involved, cultural nuances can be too numerous to track, and the full creative process needs to be replicated in each market. TransPerfect's cultural consultants possess or gather current, reliable, and insightful information about your concept(s), your target market, and how to best adapt existing copy or to create original copy/creative that will produce the desired result. With TransPerfect working for you, your executive and

Studying the Cultural Dimension of Localisation

Power Distance

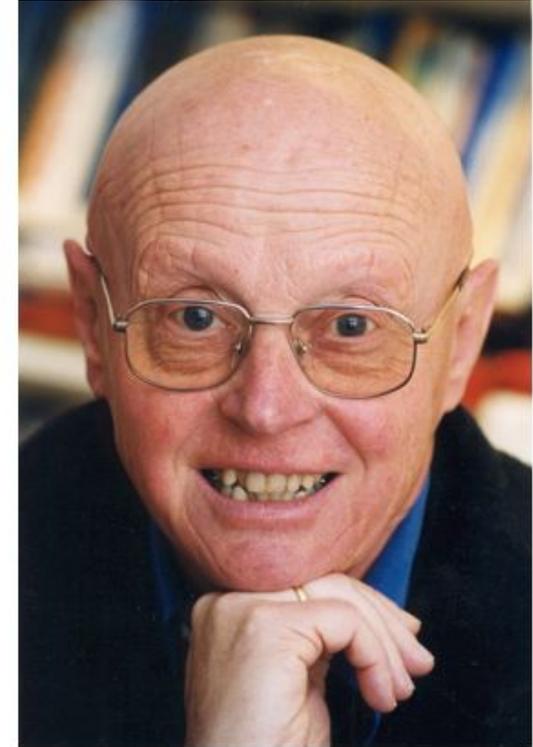
Uncertainty Avoidance

Individualism vs Collectivism

Masculinity vs Femininity

Long-term vs Short-term orientation (1991)

Indulgence vs Restraint (2010)



Hofstede, G. (1991). *Culture and Organisations: Software of the Mind*. London: McGraw Hill.

Individualism and Collectivism in Localization

by Amandine Greuez | Feb 27, 2017 | Technical Communication | 0 comments



Individualism and collectivism are cultural dimensions introduced by Geert Hofstede, that have an impact on intercultural communication and the way websites are designed.

Individualism and collectivism

The concepts of individualism and collectivism are cultural dimensions introduced by Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede in the 1980s. He differentiated cultures that are individualistic from those that are more collectivistic and studied the consequences of these aspects on communication.

According to him, Northern European countries and the United States tend towards individualism. On the contrary, Asian and Arabic countries tend to be more collectivistic.

Why is this notion interesting for website localization?

This differentiation between individualism and collectivism has an impact on communication, and also affects the way websites are designed.

Search

Search

Categories

- Big Data
- Cape Town
- Globalization
- Internationalization
- Learning
- Legislation
- Localization
- Machine Learning
- Machine Translation
- Marketing
- Natural Language
- Natural Language Processing
- On-campus meetings
- Our News
- SEO
- Simplified English
- Technical Communication
- Translation

Recent Posts

- Translating GDPR
- How to use a metered paywall to grow Facebook-size customer engagement
- Gamification Marketing and Technical Writing : Take the Plunge !
- Brexit and the Return of Imperial Units
- From Free Online Courses to Online Master's Programs: Studying Localization in the Digital

Individualism versus collectivism in web design

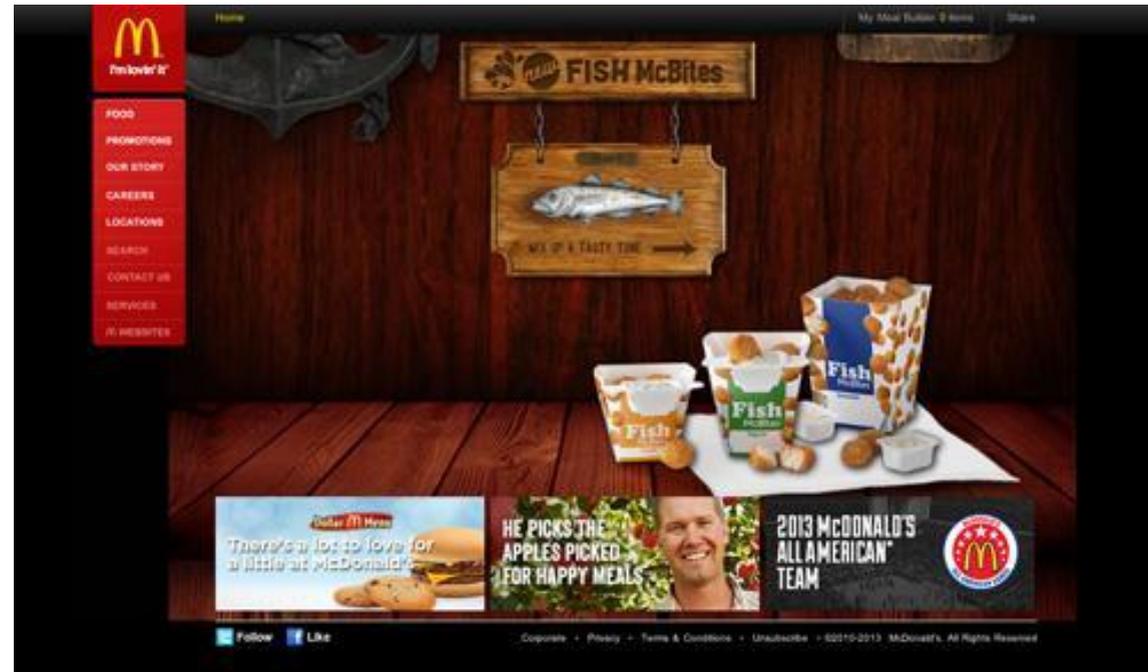
People from societies with a **high score on individualism** take initiative, act upon their own needs and desires, and make their own decisions. They are concerned with their own well-being and take responsibility for themselves and their decisions. On your website, this is an important aspect to consider.

People from this group **visit your site in their own interest, with their own goal, making their own decisions**. You need to focus on these very individual requirements in order to convert them into loyal customers.

On the other hand, visitors from a **collectivist culture** act in the interest of the group, rather than their own interest. They make decisions based on the opinion of others and on what's common or popular, not so much on their individual desire. Consider this on your website and **offer enough reference points, such as “most popular” categories**, testimonials, or social media sharing options to gather instant and personal feedback from friends.

<http://blog.usabilla.com/designing-for-a-cross-cultural-user-experience-part1/>

The [US site](#) of McDonald's is very focussed on the benefits of the individual visitor. The design is clear and the site offers a lot of information on all different kind of topics. The site offers a lot of personal calls to action, such as “Meet McDonald’s fish supplier Kenny Logan”, “Find your favorite deal”, or “Try our newest catch”, which require the visitors to interact with the site. Also, on one of the pages it says “exactly what you want”, which appeals to the individual visitor and the idea of self-fulfillment.



<http://blog.usabilla.com/designing-for-a-cross-cultural-user-experience-part1/>

On the [Turkish](#) website of McDonald's, the social aspect is very important. For example, social media buttons can be found on three different spots on the homepage, highlighting the McDonald's "community" and its popularity. The visual of the cook, who presents different menus, demonstrates expertise and works as a reference point for customers. Also, visitors can download a mobile app with different features, such as customer reviews and restaurant ratings.



<http://blog.usabilla.com/designing-for-a-cross-cultural-user-experience-part1/>

Source: Daniel, A. O., Yinka, A., Frank, I., & Adesina, S. (2013). Culture-Based Adaptive Web Design. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 4(2), pp3-5.

The Dutch cultural anthropologist Geert Hofstede (1991) introduced a framework for the cultural values (dimensions) that addresses the behavioural component of culture. Here we present the five cultural values and describe how to emphasized them in the design.

1- Individualism/Collectivism

This is the extent to which members of a culture pursue ends for other members of the culture or primarily for themselves. To customize websites on this value, the following can be incorporated:

Individualism

images with a single person
navigation would provide individual paths
independence theme

Collectivism

group images
navigation would be group oriented
community relationships

Source: Daniel, A. O., Yinka, A., Frank, I., & Adesina, S. (2013). Culture-Based Adaptive Web Design. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 4(2), pp3-5.

4- Masculinity/Femininity

The extent to which a culture exhibits traditionally masculine or feminine value.

To customize websites on this value, the following can be incorporated:

Masculinity

Use of “Masculine” colors such as black, grey, brown, blue, green red

Depiction of men as macho, in positions of power

Sport-oriented images

Limited choices for information

Femininity

Use of “Feminine” colors i.e soft colors : shades of pink, peach or rich shades of

Depiction of women in traditional roles (wives and mothers)

Family-oriented images

Multiple choices for information

Countries	Languages	Genres
Australia	English	Government
Andorra	Catalan	News & Media
Austria	German	Business
Italy	Italian	Education
France	French	Travel
China	Chinese	Society &
Japan	Japanese	Culture
Iran	Afrikaans	Health
Israel	Persian	Science
Lebanon	Arabic	Art &
Saudi Arabia	Hebrew	Humanities
South Africa	Spanish	
Canada	Portuguese	
United States		
Mexico		
Brazil		
Colombia		
Venezuela		
Total: 18	Total: 13	Total: 9

Table 1:
Classification of
sites studied

*Culturability: The Merging of
Culture and Usability* Barber, W
& Badre, A, 1998

HTML Specific	Icons/Metaphors	Colors	Specific Colors	Grouping	
# of lines # of centers # of images # of links # of internal links # of external links link color visited link color horizontal bars tables bold italics underlines frames audio video background image background color text color	international local clocks newspapers books pages homes stamps envelopes musical notes paperclips thumbtacks other	red blue green purple pink black yellow gold teal white multiple	flag graphics pictures borders background	symmetrical asymmetrical proximity alignment boundary enclosure connection	
			Orientation		centered left-right right-left
			Flag		Language
	native foreign multiple	native foreign multiple	maps outline Globe	music voice	
Font	Links	Regional	Shapes	Architecture	
cursive italics bold size shading	color embedded stand alone internal external	foliage animals landscape water desert	squares circles triangles rectangles lines arrows	state building house church office cityscape	

Table 2:
Cultural
Markers

Culturability: The Merging of Culture and Usability Barber, W & Badre, A, 1998

Country	Flags	Genre	URL
Andorra	Andorra, Spain, France, Germany, United Kingdom	Government	http://www.andorra.ad/consell/index.html
Lebanon	Lebanon	Government	http://www.lp.gov.lb/index.html
Brazil	Brazil	Government	http://www.mare.gov.br
Mexico	Mexico, Trinidad, Canada Nicaragua,	Government	http://www.presidencia.gob.mx

Table 3: Occurrences of flags by type of site

Inductive Approaches

Israel	Lebanon	Japan	Brazil	France
grouping - alignment	national flag	architecture: cityscapes	national flag	orientation: centered
orientation: right-to-left	icon: cedar tree; found in flag	grouping: enclosure	geographical references	colors: red, blue, white
borders	light graphics; more text	frames	heavy graphics	motion
color: green	color: green			

Table 4: Cultural Markers by Country

Inductive Approaches

Government	News & Media	Business	Travel
national flag	Bold font for headlines	orientation: center	heavy graphics
colors of national flag throughout site	English words: news, email, web, info	bullet points	geography: maps, out-line of region
human picture; head of state	icons: sun/clouds for weather	logos	icons: skis; mountains; hiking gear; water

Table 5: Cultural Markers by Type of Site

Why so little progress ?



Moura, F. T., Singh, N., & Chun, W. (2016). The Influence of Culture in Website Design and Users' Perceptions: Three Systematic Reviews. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 17(4), 312–339.

- The manifestation of cultural values in websites [33 studies]
- The investigation of cultural markers in websites [27 studies]
- Influence of culture on users' perceptions of online stimuli [30 studies]

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Focus on the macrosocial (national) level which is severely limited.

Factors explaining the success of Hofstede-style approaches:

- Legitimation through “scientific” discourse.
- Sales arguments.

Is the question outdated or simply inappropriate?

Professional practice using “natives”.

Too general: the national level (macro) covers much variety in practices (micro).

Many important strategic factors which go beyond the role of the translator/localiser:

- image of the company / product / service,
- communicational / commercial positioning on the market.

1. Native competence

A localiser localises into their native locale in the same way as translators translate into their native language.

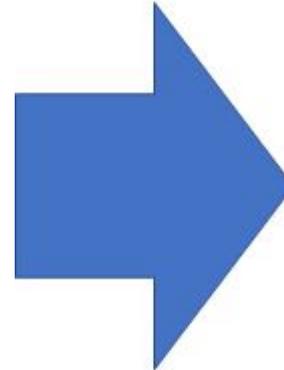
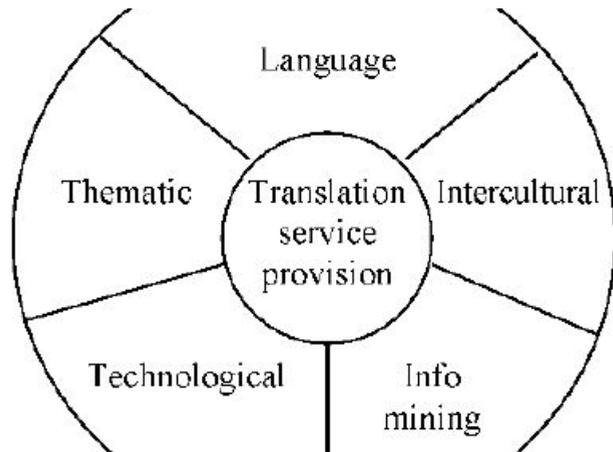
(cf. Samuelsson-Brown 2005, Gouadec 2009, McKay 2011)

If we accept this argument, do we really need a theoretical or methodological account of 'culture'?

2. 'Scientific' models

- Jimenez-Crespo, *Translation and Web Localization* (2013): defines levels of cultural adaptation, drawing *inter alia* on Hofstede.
- Singh et Pereira, *The Culturally Customized Web Site* (2005): applying Hofstede's model... to a selection of well-chosen examples?

Intercultural competence in translator training (EMT framework)



EMT2009: Intercultural competence

sociolinguistic dimension: “identify the rules for interaction relating to a specific community, including non-verbal elements”

textual dimension: “understand and analyse the macrostructure of a document and its overall coherence (including where it consists of visual and sound elements)”

EMT2017: Language and culture

“This competence encompasses all the **general or language-specific linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural and transcultural knowledge and skills that constitute the basis for advanced translation competence**. It is the driving force behind all the other competences described in this reference framework.”

PICT (Promoting Intercultural Competence for Translators)

(cf. PICT 2012;
Tomozeiu et al. 2017)

- Teaching intercultural competence to future professional translators..
- 3 dimensions (theoretical, textual, interpersonal)
- 3 competence levels
- *But does this model apply easily to website localisation?*

“**transcreational turn**”

(cf. Katan 2018, 2016, 2013)

Translator=**intercultural mediator**?

What happens to traditional notions of ‘fidelity’ and ‘integrity’?

A hybrid model of translation?
(translation>[cultural] adaptation)?

Automation in ‘basic’ translation >
transcreation as a human skill

But is this ‘localisation’?

And have we resolved the problem of cultural competence?

So is the question still relevant?

- Globalised and digital cultures imply increased multicultural communication needs:
- *but how to define the ‘cultural’ needs of different target users?*
 - we tend to translate/localise for a specific locale, *but also* for unknown users from unknown locales with unknown (national, regional, professional, subcultural) cultural references
- Is the ‘translation market’ moving towards a ‘localisation (or transcreation) market’?
- Where does the localising translator fit into the product workflow?
 - in a cloned site (MT or TM), or a ‘culturally adapted’ site (cf. localisation levels in Jimenez-Crespo 2013)?
 - does the translator/localiser have a say in the internationalised or localised design phase?
 - how to educate your clients: “*Localisation, getting it right?*”

How might we take culture into account in a more relevant way?

Liquid, plural cultures

Macro vs micro: taking the context into account.

Cultural Framing (Van Gorp, 2007).

Van Gorp, B. (2007). The Constructionist Approach to Framing: Bringing Culture Back In. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 60-78.

Multiple publics – taking identities into account (organisations and their audiences).

- Understanding IC issues (cf. EMT & PICT projects) :
 - understanding the cultural aspects of a site in its SL version
 - *finding practical and usable tools to make and justify cultural choices in TL/target locale*
- Understanding specific brand communication strategies in different countries/locales;
- Negotiating identity issues (e.g. cultural appropriation) in target locale communication.

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Color	China	Japan	Egypt	France	United States
Red	Happiness	Anger Danger	Death	Aristocracy	Danger Stop
Blue	Heavens Clouds	Villainy	Virtue Faith Truth	Freedom Peace	Masculine
Green	Ming Dynasty Heavens	Future Youth Energy	Fertility Strength	Criminality	Safety Go
Yellow	Birth Wealth Power	Grace Nobility	Happiness Prosperity	Temporary	Cowardice Temporary
White	Death Purity	Death	Joy	Neutrality	Purity

Table 6:
Colour
Symbolism
(Boor & Russo,
1993)

“When applied to Web design, color may impact the user’s expectations about navigation, links, and content, for example, as well as overall satisfaction.

For example, an American bank using a web site to promote services for French investors may want to avoid the use of the color green, which some French may associate with criminality.

On the other hand, the American bank may want to use green to attract Egyptian and Middle Eastern investors, as green has a positive connotation for them”.

Culturability: The Merging of Culture and Usability Barber, W & Badre, A, 1998

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Table 6:
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(Boor & Russo,
1993)

Table 1: Color Usage in Background, Foreground, Frame, Images, Hyperlinks and Logos

	Cntry	Wht	Blk	Blu	Red	Grn	Ylw	Org	Ppl	Pnk	Gry	Oth	TOT
Bkgnd	US	37	2	4	0	1	4	0	0	0	2	0	50
	CN	44	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	50
Frgnd	US	10	17	32	5	1	15	11	1	0	8	3	103
	CN	8	24	31	23	7	23	5	0	0	17	3	141
Frame	US	22	6	17	1	2	17	4	0	0	10	5	84
	CN	17	4	27	10	8	25	8	0	1	22	5	127
Image	US	7	19	22	10	14	16	5	1	2	3	0	99
	CN	15	19	43	42	41	38	30	8	17	2	6	261
Hplnk	US	8	15	28	11	6	10	7	1	1	3	2	92
	CN	4	30	31	31	10	17	8	1	0	7	0	138
Logo	US	16	16	17	16	7	9	4	0	1	3	0	89
	CN	5	31	21	28	7	17	6	0	1	5	0	121
TOTAL color	US	100	75	120	43	31	71	31	3	4	29	10	517
	CN	93	108	154	134	74	122	57	9	19	55	17	839

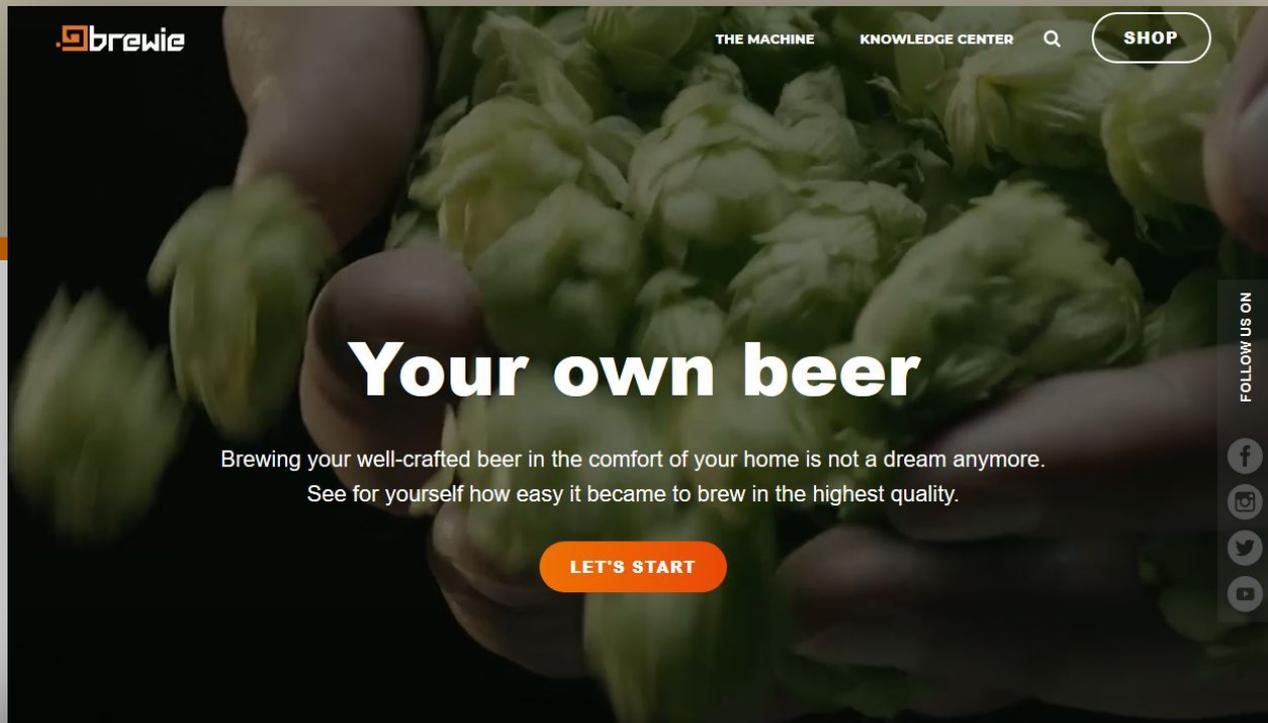
Lo, Bruce WN, and Panqun Gong. 2005. 'Cultural Impact on the Design of E-Commerce Websites: Part I—site Format and Layout'. *Issues in Information Systems* 6 (2): 182–89.

The follow observation may be made:

- The predominant color for background is white for both countries (Figure 2). Background color usage here appears to show some trend for standardization.
- In terms of the foreground color usage (Figure 3), blue, black, and yellow are the three leading colors in both countries. But it would be difficult not to notice the prominence of red as a foreground color in Chinese sites.
- In terms of total color usage, Figure 5 shows that the dominant colors for US are blue (23%), white (19%), Black (15%) and Yellow (14%); and for Chinese are blue (18%), red (16%), yellow (15%), and black (13%). Blue is the most frequently used for both countries. But the prominence of red and the relative de-emphasis of white in Chinese sites are clearly evident. Traditionally Chinese associate red with good luck, wealth, and marriage (e.g. bridal dress), while white has been associated with death and mourning.
- The US sites show a clear trend of using blue color for hyperlinks (Figure 4). But in the Chinese sites, all three colors, black, blue and red hyperlinks are equally likely.
- With respect to logo colors (graph not shown), black and red are the clear favorites for Chinese sites while white, black, blue, and red have equal frequencies on the US sites.

Lo, Bruce WN, and Panqun Gong. 2005. 'Cultural Impact on the Design of E-Commerce Websites: Part I—site Format and Layout'. *Issues in Information Systems* 6 (2): 182–89.

Can we really analyse the (macro)cultural aspects of a (sub)culturally specific product?



SEO Content		
✓	Title	Brewie - World's first fully automated home-brewery Length : 51 Perfect, your title contains between 10 and 70 characters.
✓	Description	Brew. Simple. Clean. Magnificent. World's first fully automated home brewery. Full of features that assist you to make your own high-quality craft beer. Length : 157 Great, your meta description contains between 70 and 160 characters.
✗	Keywords	Very bad. We haven't found meta keywords on your page.