

The Web Globalization Report Card



2012

ANALYZING LEADING

GLOBAL WEBSITES

including

MOBILE & SOCIAL

BEST PRACTICES

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Introduction: Mobile Meets Global

Two years ago, we expanded the *Report Card* to focus on social media and to give credit to those companies that supported local-language social networks. Back then, very few companies devoted resources to local-language Twitter or Facebook pages, and those that did were pioneers.

Today, more than half of the companies in this report support at least one local-language social network in addition to English. Supporting local social media has become, for many companies, almost as important as the localized websites themselves.

Now, as we enter the “Post-PC” era, with the 2012 edition of the *Report Card*, we expand our focus to include the globalization of mobile websites and mobile apps.



A global look at mobile websites and apps

This is the first *Report Card* to review websites not only on a PC but on an iPhone and an iPad – all from a uniquely global perspective. Our first aim is to note what companies are doing across these platforms – from languages supported to global navigation.

I must stress that best practices are only just emerging – many of the mobile websites are first generation sites, and some apps still wear the “beta” label. But that’s why it’s important to begin reviewing these mobile elements now – to get a solid understanding of which companies are off to an early start and what they are doing.

One key best practice we look for are mobile sites and apps that maintain language parity with their PC counterparts. It’s important that users be able to enjoy the same linguistic experience as they move from platform to platform. And we also believe that Flash-based elements should be removed from websites so that websites can be viewed in full across all mobile devices.

Nearly 50 website profiles

This is the eighth edition of the *Web Globalization Report Card*. Each year we try to “raise the bar” in how we score websites—not just to keep pace with the evolution of global sites but to push the industry forward. As we raised the bar for 2012, most websites saw their scores go down. That’s because very few companies have created mobile-optimized websites and/or mobile apps with an equal degree of global support.

This year, the report focuses heavily on website profiles – looking at how companies manage a global presence across PCs and mobile devices. To best accomplish this task, we focused on fewer sites overall and spent more time with each them. Nearly half of the websites that received scores also received profiles of one to five pages.

We benchmarked 100 websites across 17 industry verticals. These sites comprise 70% of the companies on the Interbrand Best Global Brands 2011 list and 30% of the Fortune 100, ensuring a broad reach of global brands and businesses. We included five additional websites that support 10 or fewer languages specifically to show that companies don't have to support many languages to be innovative in web globalization.

How to use the *Web Globalization Report Card*

This report serves two purposes. First, it calls attention to those websites that have excelled in the practice of web globalization. The companies that have made the top 10 did not get there by accident. These are companies with employees dedicated to web and mobile globalization, people who must not only educate their colleagues on the value of web globalization but ensure that their colleagues develop content and software with global best practices in mind. Those who manage these sites deserve credit for helping their companies communicate effectively with the world, regardless of language, culture, or geography.

Second, this report identifies emerging trends (both positive and negative) to help you avoid the painful missteps that others have already taken. This report is designed to help you guide your web, marketing, and mobile teams to positive, efficient action.

Never before have companies been expected to support so much content across so many languages and across so many devices. And while this is a very exciting time to be involved in web globalization, it's also quite challenging. I hope you find this report valuable and I hope you contact me with any comments or questions along the way.

John Yunker
Byte Level Research
jyunker@bytelevel.com

Executive Summary

For the *2012 Web Globalization Report Card*, we analyzed 105 global websites across 17 industries.

To the right are the top 25 sites overall.

Last year, Facebook emerged (barely) as number one. This year, Google reclaims the top spot.

Although Google has struggled to harmonize its global navigation across its many applications, the company continues to invest in globalization. It now supports more than 140 languages on its search engine, it continues to add languages to its machine translation engine, and its mobile app for search supports an impressive 42 languages.

Facebook's mobile app, by comparison, supports just 13 languages. And though Facebook continues to improve its global navigation, its language growth stalled in 2011.

Over the past year, Cisco made nice strides in aggregating and promoting its local social networks around the world – 32 markets in all.

Best Global Websites 2012

1. Google
2. Facebook
3. Cisco Systems
4. Samsung
5. Hotels.com
6. 3M
7. NIVEA
8. Booking.com
9. Philips
10. Symantec
11. Autodesk
12. TripAdvisor
13. Nikon
14. Wikipedia
15. HP
16. American Express
17. LG
18. Avon
19. Microsoft
20. Coca-Cola
21. Panasonic
22. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu
23. Caterpillar
24. Yahoo!
25. SAP

2012 Web Globalization Report Card
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As a group, the top 25 websites support an average of more than 50 languages. They also demonstrate a high degree of global design consistency across most, if not all, localized websites. This degree of consistency allows them to focus their energies on content localization, which these companies also do well.

Two new companies on this list – Hotels.com and Booking.com – exhibit an impressive commitment to mobile devices. Any company that is developing a mobile strategy should study these two companies.

To make it into the top 25, a website must excel across these four key criteria:

- **Global Reach** (the more languages supported, the greater the global reach)
- **Global Navigation** (ensuring users can easily find local content)
- **Global/Mobile Architecture** (global consistency – across different locales as well as browsers and mobile devices)
- **Localization & Social** (depth and breadth of localization and support for local-language social networks)

On the following pages are key findings from each of these four criteria.

Top Findings, Trends, and Recommendations

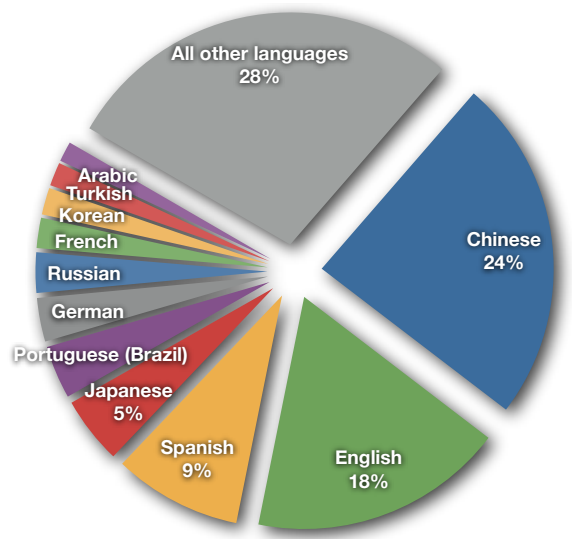
This section includes the most important findings from the report, organized according to the four scoring categories.

Global Reach (languages)

A 10-language website isn't global enough

While language alone does not make a website successful globally, it's a prerequisite to going global.

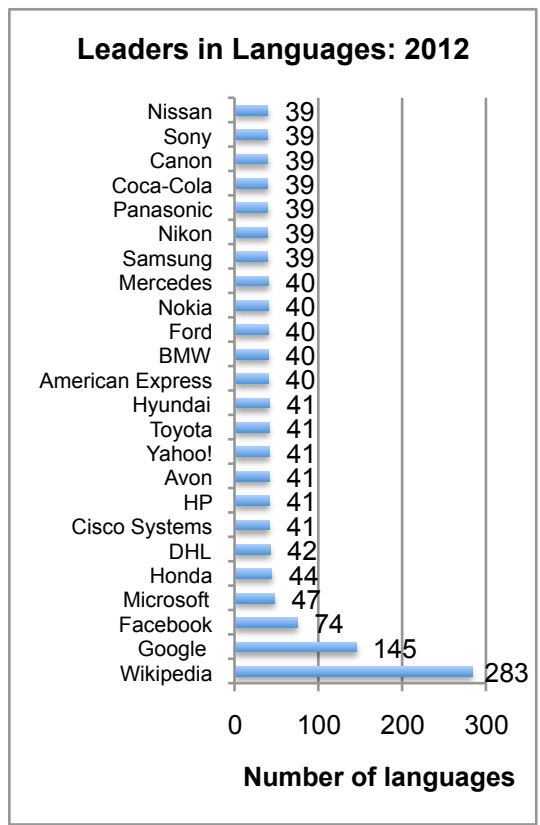
Shown on the right is a chart of the major languages spoken by the world's 2.2 billion Internet users. Currently, fewer than 20% of all Internet users are native English speakers.



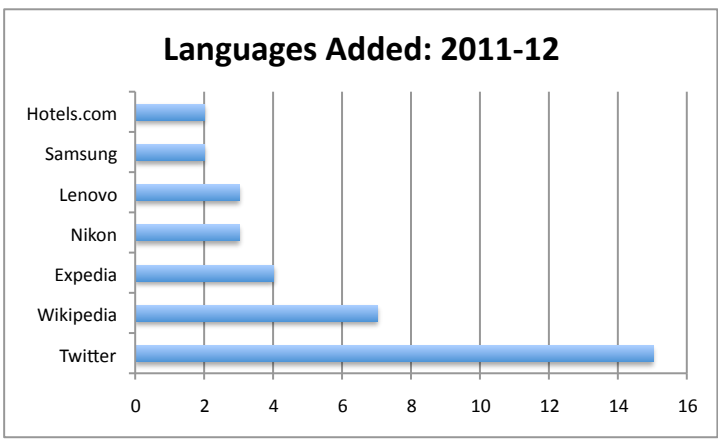
Even if you support the 10 named languages in this chart, you still only reach 72% of all Internet users – a percentage that is decreasing each year. **The average number of languages supported by the companies in this report is 32.**

The average number of languages has increased, but growth is slowing among the leaders

Over the past decade, companies have increased the average number of languages on their websites by roughly two languages per year. This year, the growth in languages fell to between one and two languages, in large part because we've narrowed our focus to companies that already support 30 or more languages. The language leaders are shown on the right.



While companies with 30 or more languages have slowed their pace of language growth, most other companies are still growing at a more rapid pace. Below are the websites that demonstrated the greatest increases in languages over the past year:



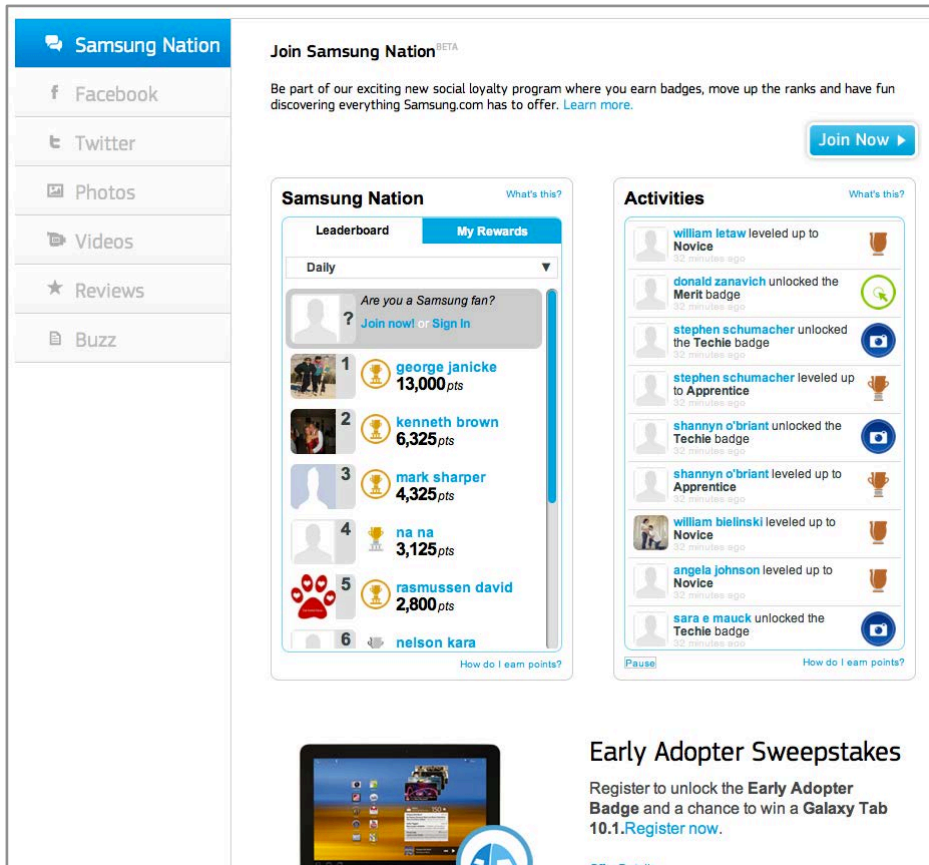
Samsung

Ranking: 4 (2011: 7)
Score: 86 (2011: 84)
Languages: 39 (2011: 37)

The globalization of “Samsung Nation”

First, it’s important to note that Samsung continues to expand its linguistic reach; it added Serbian Latin and Croatian over the past year.

Few multinationals have so fully embraced social platforms as Samsung. While Cisco relegates its social feeds to a separate page, with Samsung, social feeds make up as much as half of its home page real estate. Shown below are the “Samsung Nation” social elements on the home page.



Early Adopter Sweepstakes

Register to unlock the Early Adopter Badge and a chance to win a Galaxy Tab 10.1. [Register now.](#)

Unfortunately, Samsung has not yet followed in Cisco's footsteps in taking this social template global, though this delay could also be due to a slow rollout of a new web design (which began with the .com site).

The country sites do embrace social, but to a lesser extent. Here is an excerpt from the Samsung Korea home page:

삼성 SNS

twitter

samsungin samsung

[水准높은퀴즈] 장안의 화제! 오늘의 수준 높은 퀴즈 나갑니다^^ "1부터 9의 숫자를 한 번씩만 사용해서 OOO OOOOOO()=7777"이 성립되게 해주세요~! (쉽지 않으실걸요~?)

7분 전

SDIn sdiin

기름이 한 병용도 안 먹는 비행기가 있을까요? 태양전지 2만2000개로 하늘을 나는 비행기~ 소식입니다. ^^ <http://t.co/LtWlXgAz>

11분 전

seri.org 삼성경제연구소(SERI)

[SERI DBR 인포] 좋은 친구를 만나면 전 산술도 맞았다'는 속담이 있다. 나를 알아주는 지기와 함께 하는 술자리는 기분 좋게 취할 수 있다는 의미인데..."남이 우워줘야 소나무의 진가를 안다" <http://t.co/5mghJ18H>

13분 전

cheilstory 제일모직

[CHEIL 모닝] 하루의 시작, 커피와 함께 하는 분들 많으시죠? 여러분들이 즐겨마시는 카페라떼, 카페모카 등을 직접 만들려면 어떻게 하면 될까요? 이러한 궁금증은 이 사진 한 장으로 해결 가능합니다^^

facebook

cheilstory 제일모직 CHEILstory

[CHEIL 모닝] 하루의 시작, 커피와 함께 하는 분들 많으시죠? 여러분들이 즐겨마시는 카페라떼, 카페모카 등을 직접 만들려면 어떻게 하면 될까요? 우유와 에스프레소로 이루어진 카페라떼와 카푸치노의 우유 비율의 차이는? 커피와 관련한 이러한 궁금증은 이 사진 한 장으로 해결 가능합니다^^



좋아요

8명이 좋아합니다.

samsungcard 삼성카드 (Samsungcard)

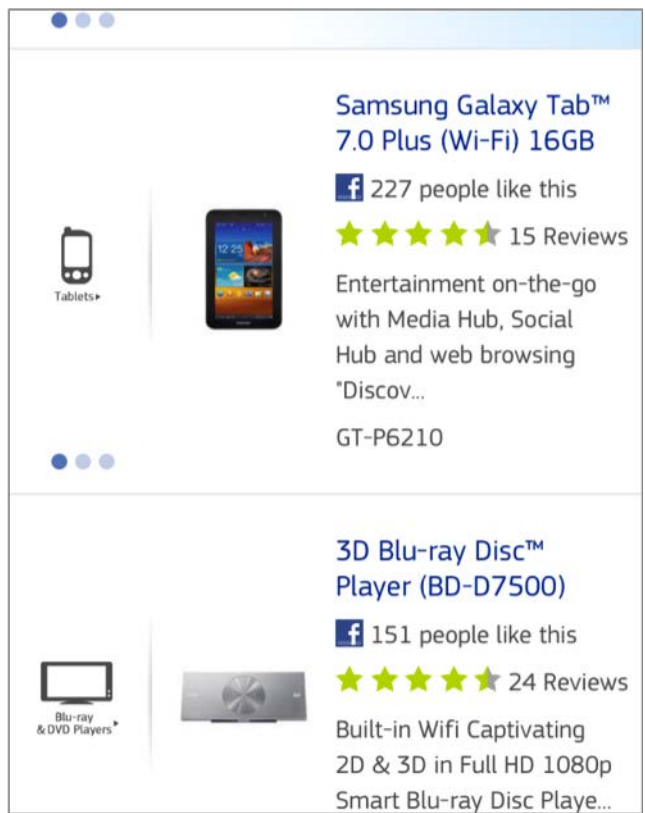
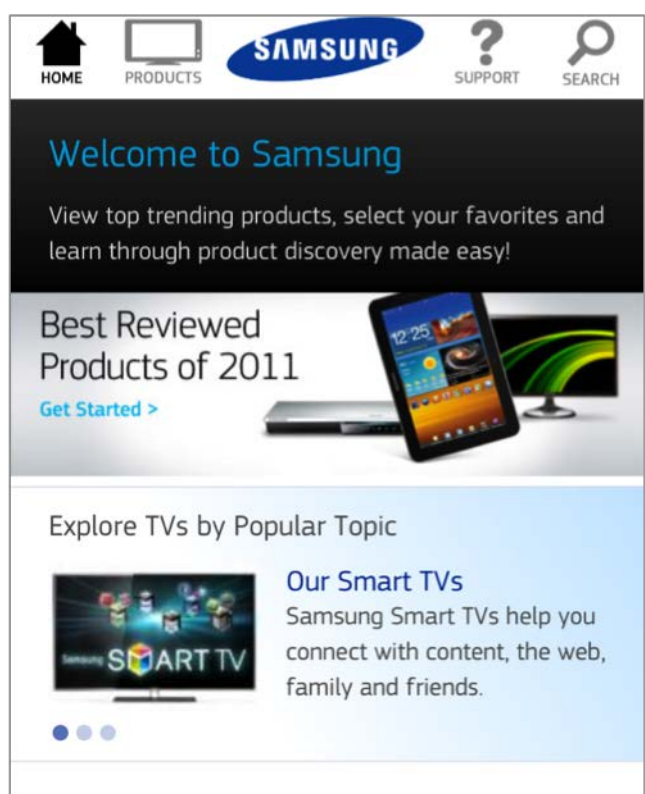
[어제 못 보신분 도전해 보세요. 도전!!! 2012년 삼성카드가 드리는 '용한' 이벤트] 저희 페이지 상단에 '용' 그림이 보이시나요? 아래 그림과 같이 용 머리와 꼬리가 끝에 오도록 그림을 맞추어 저희 담벼락에 사진과 함께 올려주세요! 추첨을 통해 3분께 '용한' 삼성카드가 뽕뽕 터지는 상품을 드립니다!! (키보드 F5키를 누르시면 용 그림의 배열이 랜덤으로 바뀌어요!) 이벤트 일시: 1

Mobile

Samsung offers a smartphone website. It appears to be in English only. Compared to the PC site, the smartphone site is welcome on the eyes and thumbs.

Scrolling down the page, you'll see selected products highlighted along with their Facebook "likes."

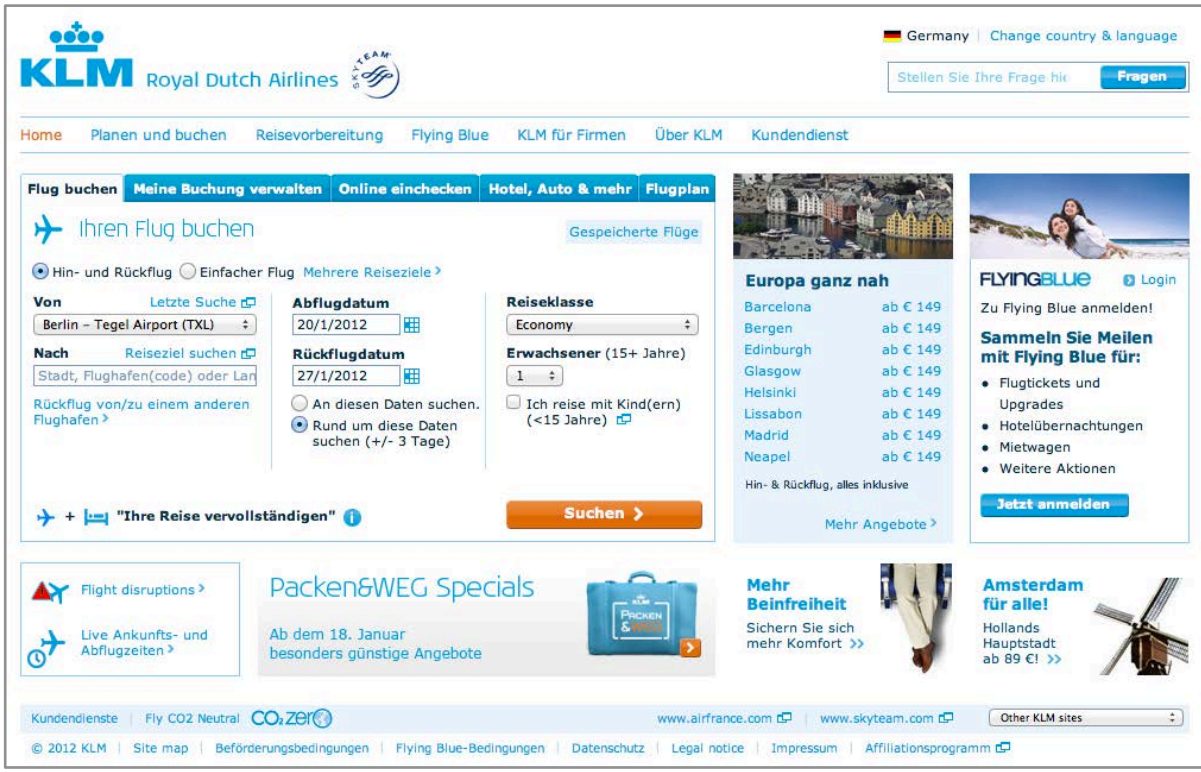
Since social networking is such a core feature of smartphones, it makes great sense to make "like" buttons easy to find and use on mobile devices. Samsung gets it.



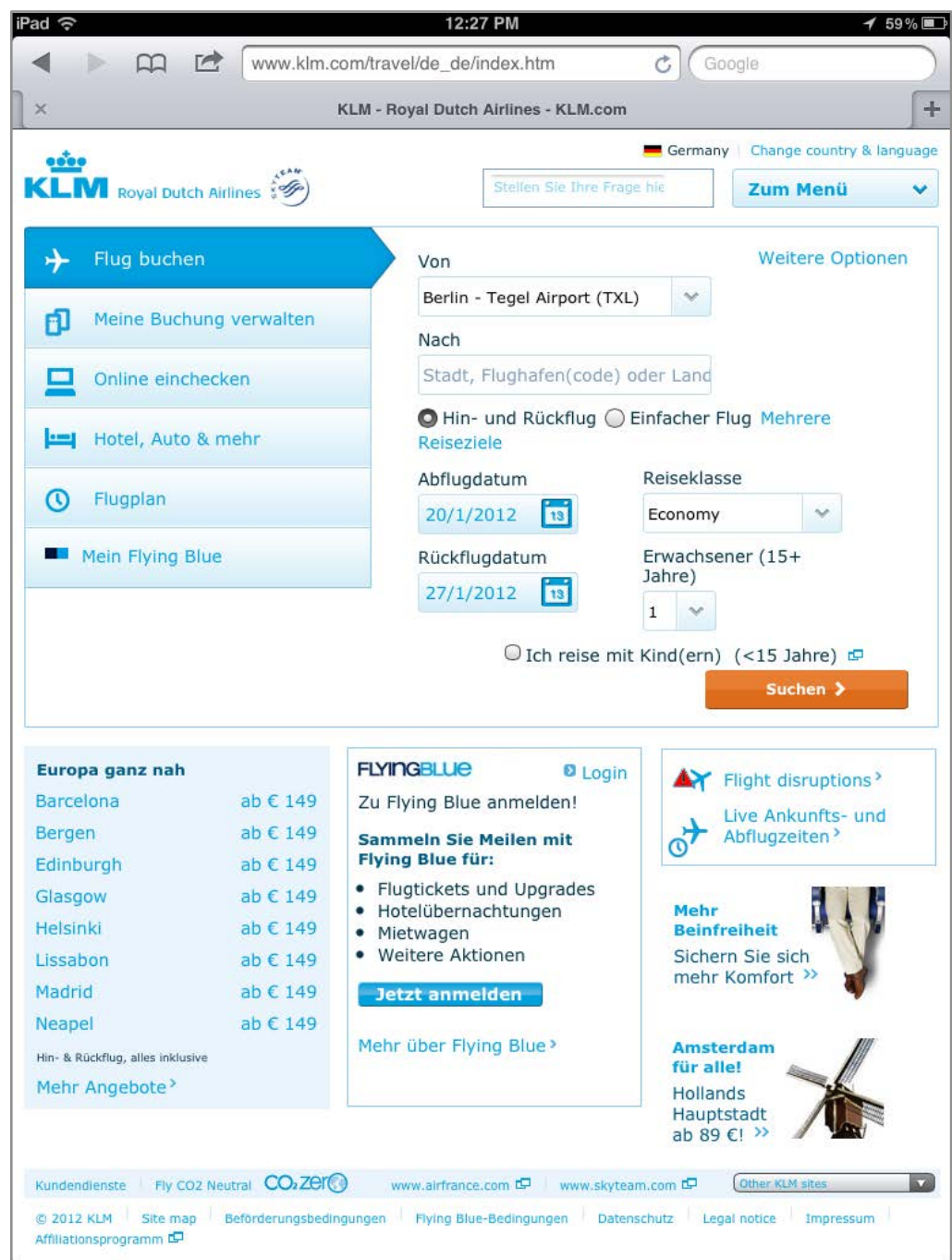
KLM

Best airline website

Although Hotels.com emerged as the best global website in the travel category, KLM emerged as the best airline website. KLM leads the airline sector with support for 26 languages. KLM does a very good job with global consistency. From China to Germany to the US, a consistent template is employed. Shown below is the home page for Germany.



KLM optimizes this website for the iPad as follows:



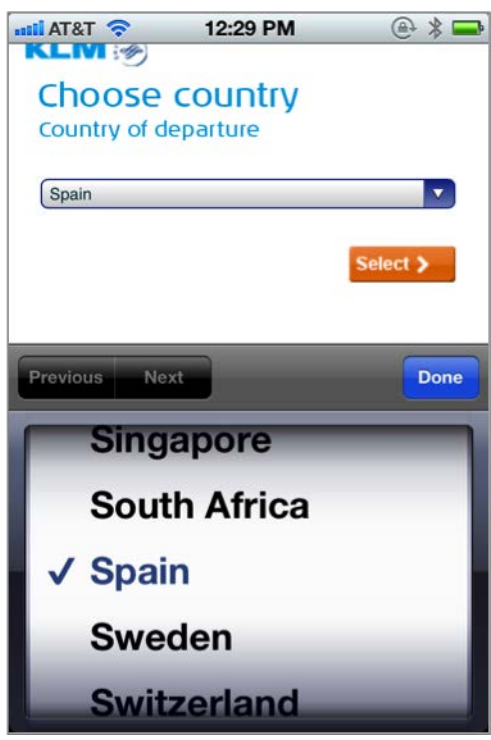
Note how the design goes from three columns to two and, most important, with large, finger-friendly buttons.

Shown on the right is the KLM mobile website, as well as the global gateway page.

From a globalization perspective, such consistency also enables re-use of terminology and reduced testing costs.

Although a number of carriers offer iPhone apps (American, United, Southwest), only Air France and KLM offer localized mobile apps. Both apps support six languages: English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Most iPhone apps automatically align the language of the app with the language of the operating system – which is widely considered a best practice. But there is no reason why a mobile app can't also allow users to override the default language setting, which KLM does. Many users are bilingual and may prefer to have more leeway in how they interact with the apps.



About the Author

John Yunker, co-founder of Byte Level Research and Byte Level Books, consults with many of the world's largest multinational corporations, providing web globalization training and benchmark services. Over the years, he has authored a number of reports on web globalization, including eight annual editions of *The Web Globalization Report Card*.



John is the author of *Beyond Borders: Web Globalization Strategies*, the first book devoted to the emerging field of web globalization. Widely acclaimed, the book is used in a number of university and corporate training programs and by most of the Fortune 500. John also authored *The Art of the Global Gateway*, available in PDF, paperback, and Kindle formats (www.bytelevel.com/books/gateway).

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Byte Level Research Services

Byte Level Research LLC is a research and publishing company devoted to web and content globalization. Founded in 2000 by John Yunker and Midge Raymond, Byte Level provides research, training, and consulting services.

Industry Benchmarks

The Web Globalization Report Card provides a high-level understanding of global websites, but often companies want a more in-depth analysis as well as benchmarking against specific competitors within their industry. We pioneered the practice of web globalization benchmarking, and we have evaluated more than 500 websites across all major industries. We provide valuable, hands-on recommendations that help companies improve traffic to local sites, improve usability, and save money along the way.

Training and Seminars

Let Byte Level train your organization to effectively develop and maintain a multilingual website. We specialize in full-day “global summits,” conducted with web and marketing teams.

For more information, contact John Yunker at jyunker@bytelevel.com or (+1) 760-300-3620.

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