



Should you translate your website into Chinese?

We recommend against translating your website into Chinese in its entirety.

- Your business website needs to remain foreign-looking, so you must convey confidence that your products and services are genuine.
- The overhead of translating your website into Chinese will be high, and ongoing maintenance will slow down adding and updating information.
- Chinese people reading your website can and will use translation options in their browsers to translate your website as and when required.
- We do recommend translating the SEO data into Chinese.

Summary of options

Options	Performance Improvement	Resources
Do Nothing 	No change	None
Automatic translation More information 	Automatic translation has been inadequate. The Chinese reader will not know it is an automated translation, which will reflect poorly on your business. AI is beginning to improve automatic translation significantly. Still work needed to simplify your text into “International business English”	A few days of work
Add a Chinese-language information page to your existing website. 	It provides Chinese audiences with insight into your business and improves your search engine rankings in China.	A feday work

<p>SEO data translation. For more information on Chinese SEO</p> 	<p>Increase your Chinese search engine ranking.</p>	<p>A few days of work and ongoing maintenance.</p>
<p>Add a Chinese-language search engine results page (SERP) for web admins.</p> 	<p>Increase your Chinese search engine ranking.</p>	<p>A few days of work and ongoing maintenance</p>
<p>Multi-media Subtitles translation</p> 	<p>It allows a better understanding of your media content.</p>	<p>A few days' work</p>
<p>Essential products and services translation</p> 	<p>Increase your Chinese search engine ranking.</p>	<p>A few days' work and ongoing maintenance</p>
<p>Create a marketing website and point it back to your local internet content.</p> 	<p>Active feed for the Chinese search</p>	<p>One week's work and ongoing maintenance</p>
<p>Fully translate your website.</p> 	<p>Increases your Chinese search engine ranking</p>	<p>One month's work and high ongoing maintenance</p>

Chinese Language Background

The Chinese language is among the most challenging aspects of publishing/selling in the Chinese market.

Chinese language types

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

- Local language—Most cities/regions have a local language. In most cases, this is not a regional dialect. It is a language in its own right. People between cities/regions will not understand each other's languages.
- Mandarin is China's primary language. The emperors started using a single Chinese language, which Chairman Mao fully implemented. "One country needs one common language." Mandarin was used as it was already the language of government.
- Hong Kong, Taiwan, and many southern Asian areas use traditional Chinese as their local language, e.g., Cantonese and Taiwanese. These two languages share a common written language but are spoken differently in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Cantonese is spoken in areas where Chinese people emigrated before the 1930s, such as California, USA.

Most people in China speak Mandarin, their local language and in increasing numbers, English as part of their international language education at school and college. An estimated 100 million people learn English each year.

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

- Traditional Chinese: the original written language of China. Traditional Chinese handwriting is an art and takes many years to master.
- Simplified Chinese: the spoken and written language of China.
- Romanisation systems(a,b,c, etc): used by APPs to create Chinese characters on desktops, tablets, mobiles, etc.

The internet has adopted Pinyin, the standard used by most Chinese people under 40. If you were schooled more than 35 years ago, you would have been taught a different system (such as Pinyin).

Pinyin enables you to type in Latin characters and select the appropriate Chinese Character from a drop-down list on your PCs, mobiles, etc. While this may sound slow, it is actually faster than typing in English. To learn more about Pinyin, see the excellent summary on the [BCC website](#).

Automatic translation to Chinese

Most browsers have built-in translation apps.

Chinese people are not deterred by foreign-language online content. The translation software used in China, including browsers and mobile devices, is designed to translate Chinese into and out of most international languages.

Whatever languages are on your website, do not use automatic translation. The Chinese reader will not know that they are reading an automatic translation. Your Chinese reader will see poor translation, which reflects poorly on your company.

The Chinese reader will use an automatic translation tool as needed, such as Baidu Translate. In doing so, the Chinese reader will know that the Chinese-language content has been automatically translated and does not reflect poorly on your company.

If time and resources allow, have a Chinese speaker read your internet content in Chinese using Baidu's automatic translation. Check for any significant issues in the automatic translation of Chinese. When major translation issues are identified, consider revising your local-language content (often, the problem is an error in the source language).

Automatic translation will not improve your ranking on Chinese search engines.

Who do you use to translate?

Word-for-word translation can give you a technically correct but meaningless description of your business, products, and services.

Many Chinese people will not necessarily understand your business. When translating, a word-for-word translation may not accurately reflect your business; it's "Lost in Translation."

We recommend using a translator from your own country. Many colleges and universities produce strong Chinese speakers who will better understand your business and provide more accurate translations.

Chinese language translation options

- **Do nothing** – No Chinese translation

Leave your website in your local language. The two primary languages of the internet in China are Chinese and English. Your website content is not in English or Chinese, and you receive very little internet traffic from China.

If your website content is in English, and your Chinese SEO is set up, you can receive internet traffic from China.

- **Automatic translation** – Automatically translate your website pages using software like Google Translate

Automatic translation can be inadequate. The Chinese reader will not know it is an automated translation, and it will reflect poorly on your business. Let the Chinese read and use their local automatic translation software. Any errors in the translation will be attributed to the translation software and will reflect poorly on your business content.

For more information, please see the [Automated translation into Chinese](#).

- **Create a Chinese page** – An additional description of your business in Chinese

Add a page to your internet content, a “Welcome Page” in Chinese that explains the critical elements of your business.

Once the Chinese SEO data is created, it 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.

Combined with a Chinese domain and your internet content hosted in China / Asia, this should increase your Chinese internet traffic speed.

For more information, please see the [Chinese SEO](#).

- **Chinese search engine SERP**

Like Google's rich text, Baidu's Search Engine Results Page (SERP) significantly supports your search rankings.

- **Multi-media translation**

If your business has multimedia content, add Chinese subtitles.

While automatic Chinese translation works on your written content, it does not work on spoken words and, in most cases, not on multimedia content.

We recommend adding video subtitles to your website to help the Chinese search engines understand your business.

- **Key product and service translation**

The translation of your essential internet products and services.

This is a beneficial approach when promoting an essential business activity. A translation is also required if you are using Chinese e-Malls.

For more information, please see the [Chinese SEO](#).

- **Chinese marketing website**

Create an internet marketing brochure in Chinese, linking the essential products and services in the Chinese content to your overseas pricing / online cart.

This approach is far better than creating a complete translation of internet content, provided you keep the descriptions to a minimum to avoid significant translation maintenance overhead.

- **Full translation of your internet content**

This option is not recommended unless you already have a customer base in China that requires a Chinese-language site.

Remember that Chinese users have an automatic translation option in their browsers.

Chinese Social Media

Chinese social media is the exception to the above options.

Chinese social media content is usually entered in Chinese. You can enter your content in your local language. However, there is no automated method on Chinese social media platforms for Chinese users to translate content from their local language into Chinese. Using your local language on Chinese social media will significantly reduce the likelihood that your content will be followed.