Ekke Guembel, Bitmotion

STOP HURTING ME!

15 Bad Digital Experiences for an International Audience

Hello!

Ekke Guembel
(with a lot of help from the great team at Bitmotion)

Get ready...

International audience

Digital experience -> **Website** at the core

„Customers, corporate, ... " vs. other senders / recipients

Lots of different aspects, not trivial, lots of work involved

Top-15 list of pitfalls - and how to avoid them

In 30 minutes?
Let's go!

HQ's Challenges

Between „One site fits all" and „isolated sites"

Language / Country variants (and minor variations)

Content, structure, translation & change, local needs & blaim

Sustainable base concept for *variants*
Technology and organization for maintaining

Identify (design) players and roles
Sync, but embrace player's differences (more or less active countries, partners, …)
Invest in processes

Keep it simple, go one step after the other. Resist the pressure.
Automate or delegate where you can, but ensure the quality.
Use the most powerful tech (TYPO3 :)

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Contact Data

Users expect to find the website's relevant contact data easily
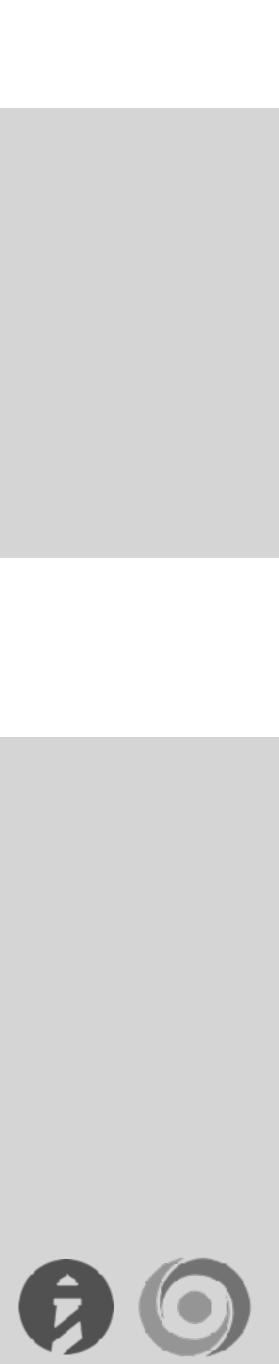
Channels can vary

No address is bad; non-local address *may* be harmful
Imprint is *not* a good place

Don't hide contact, but tune channels as fit for you
Include Country Code to phone number (except US-local)

Strategy for local contact data (Channels? Countries? How?)
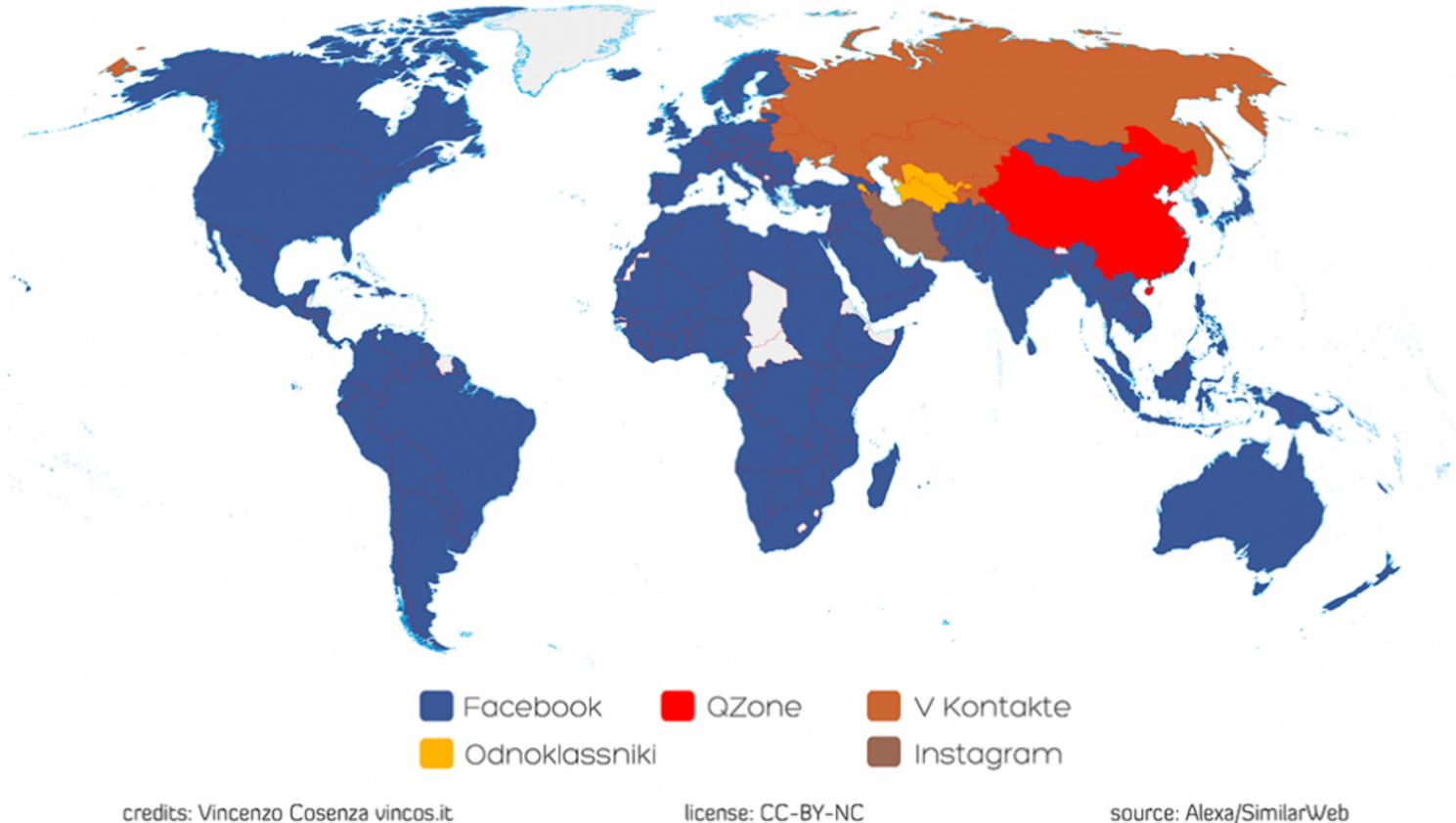(Not only website, also Facebook / Google Places etc.)

Social Media and Ads

Social Media is different per region (+ demographics etc., too)

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Potentially much more important than a website (depending on industry & country)

Paid Traffic (SMM/SEA) = own topic but similar (thus not specifically covered here)

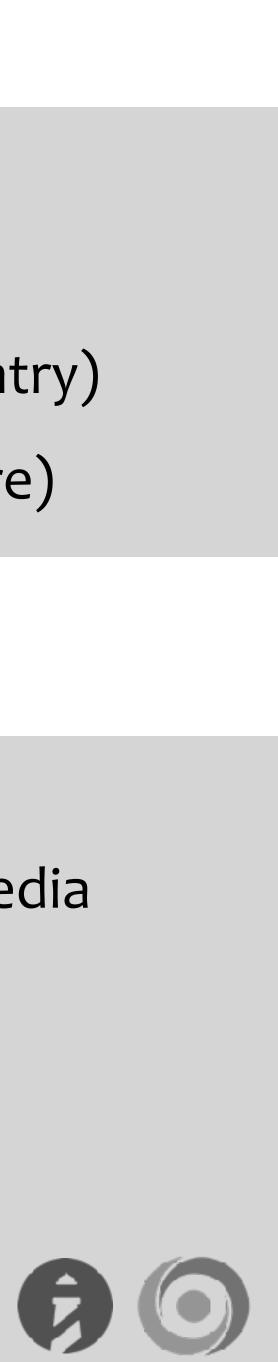*Channels* and *content*
Think future, too!

Start strategically! Important markets? Relevance of SM? Channels?
Basic corporate standards („polished look" vs. „DIY look", ….), good default media

Local responsibilities, local agencies (successful SM from HQ wont't work)
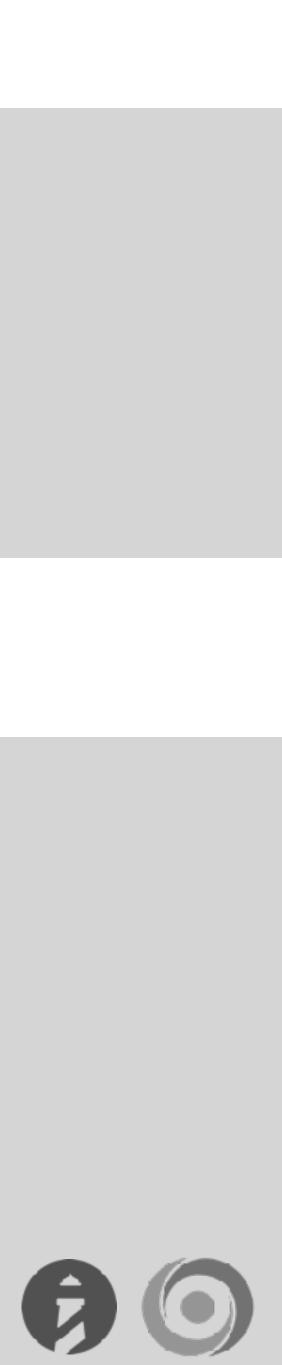Help countries to mesh up: Experiences, wishes, joint initiatives, re-cycling

E-Commerce

Invoicing, VAT, currency, shipping costs, payment methods etc.

Bad integration w/ Amazon, Ebay, Alibaba, …

Sales inhibitor, directly!
Also: Post-sales inquiries, bad cust sat / retention / recommendation

Technical topic
Choose a capable, flexible e-commerce platform from the beginning
One shop for all, or not? Separate sometimes better…

Data Protection & Law

GDPR, Cookie and tracking rules etc. (also Imprint requirements etc.)

Lots of different legislation, plus immature case law

Two distinct issues here: (a) user being annoyed, (b) actual legal trouble or fines

Do not underestimate (a) - especially during conversion

EU law is mostly a good starting point, but there's more (China, E-Commerce, …)
Maximum is not always optimum - it takes conscious choices.
Adjusting website behavior to local laws? More work, but better use of potentials

I am not a lawyer. The above are observations, not advice. Proper legal consulting is a must.

"THIS REQUIRES A ZIP CODE BUT I DON'T HAVE ONE!"

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Local Standards

Postal address (State, ZIP before/after/none, Multi-line street address, …)

Date & Time (mm/dd? 24h or am/pm?)

and even different **calendars**, e.g. Hijri

Prohibitive in some cases
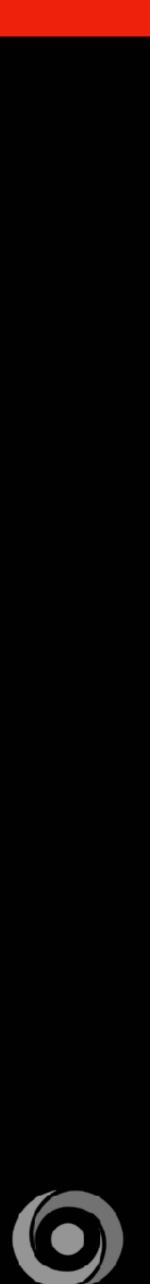Not being ignorant will be appreciated

Content: Not a problem (if aware)

Tech:
   Most accurate form data => different forms
   Event calendar etc. => Some conversion needed (maybe tricky)

"OUCH - THIS LOOKS UGLY TO ME!"

Design

Design **taste** and fashion / **trends** (style, elements, colors, content density, …)

Symbols - positive/negative/no-go (colors, animals, numbers, uncovered body parts, …)

Avoiding the pitfalls is a must, fine-tuning to a market is a bonus
Mostly one-time effort

Have a *local person (or agency)* to eliminate the bad things
On top, add the good things (w/o being clumsy!)
Persist the learnings

Usability

Different environments (right-to-left languages, long words, …)

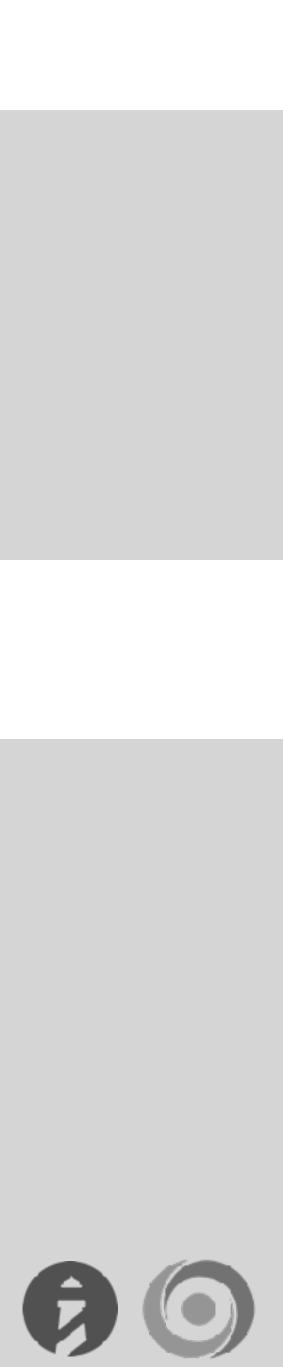Different user skills, experiences, habits

Related to Design

Test and adjust templates early
Have a *local person (maybe agency)* for first verification

If needed: Partial or full UX/UI process, personas, tests, …
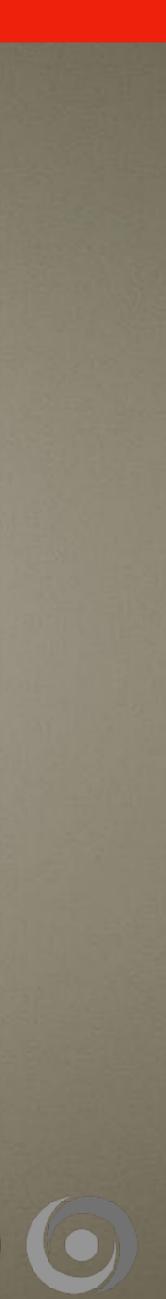Monitor live system for issues

"THIS AGGRESSIVE SELLING MAKES ME RUN!"

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Style of Selling

Selling? Other goals = Contact data (*lead*), free sign-up with *later upsell*, donation, …

Means? Content, sticky items, banners / overlays / slide-ins, browser notifications, chat, …

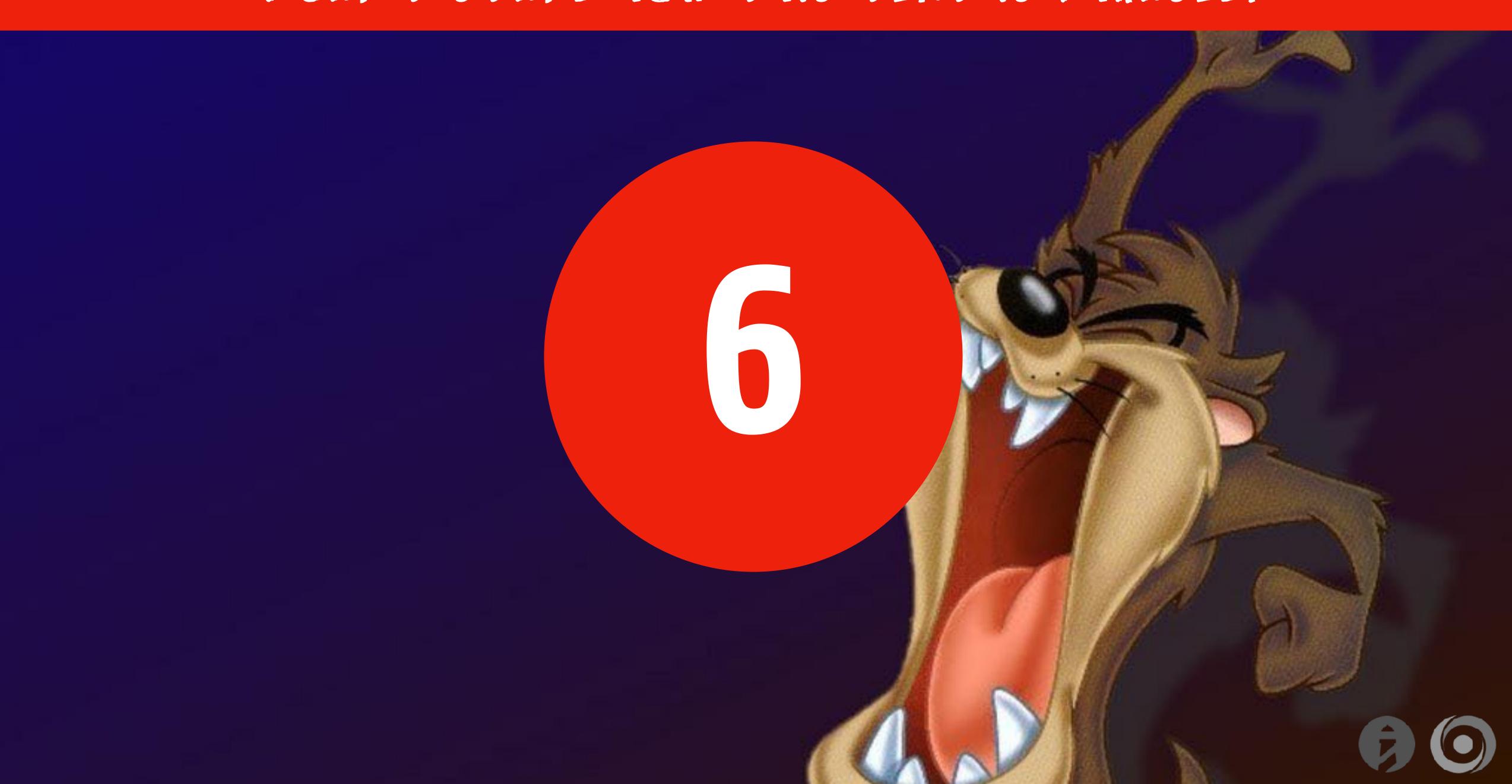*Style?* Explicit vs. indirect; in-your-face banner vs.shy slide-in; smart vs. clumsy; user-friendly

Basis = other criteria! (industry, good, demography, …)
„What are people used to *in this market*" is on top of that

Local adjustments can go *both directions*
Test (A/B)!

Copywriting

Style - conversational vs. factual/educational, conservative vs. personal, …

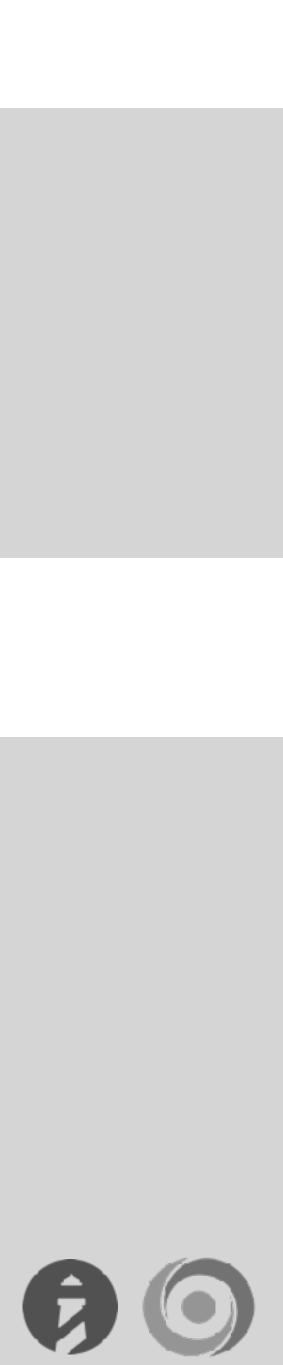*Wording* - per-country industry terms, spelling, length, …

Appropriate and consistent copy can make a big difference
Mostly a matter of guidance

Per-language version of corporate standards for consistent copywriting
Have that available to (and honoured by) all translators

"FOR MY LANGUAGE, THIS WEBSITE IS A PAIN."

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Translation

HQ content? If yes -> translated to localized versions

Optional HQ content (Pools, Inheriting, …)

Not only regular content, but also marketing overlays, labels, error messages, …

Mixed languages are bad, ugly translations are even worse
Speed, cost&effort, and quality (over time!) are real issues

Either do translation properly, or not at all!
No content fallback to other languages
Good tools (Notfications, Label translation, l10nmgr, Localizer, LangageWire, …)

Non-localized assets may be ok, but do make that *recognizable*!
Have an *independent native speaker* (freelancer?) for routinely review

Outdated Content

Time-related content can easily get out of date

Not only text on websites, but also video tutorials, price lists, …

Looks really bad, even if translation is good and targeting fits

Use content that is less quickly outdated
Create update triggers (version, price, …) and mark content accordingly

Fix bottlenecks (staff, training, tools, budget, …)
Shift roles and processes
Provide all possible support from HQ, let local people focus on content

Language Selection

Language/country detection - and what to do with it (for users in *your* industry)

Manual switch to other variants

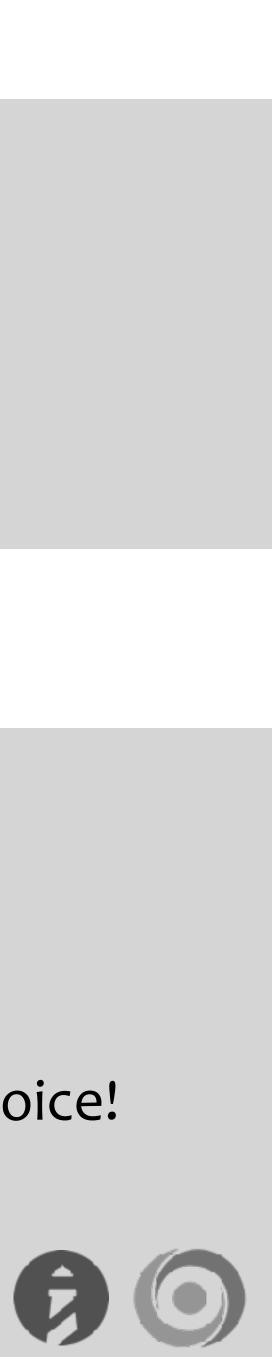Strategies vary; common sense involved, but details can be nasty
Also related to SEO

On „*Home*", decide on best available language for the user
  (Browser language, IP, HTML5 Geolocation, referrer, …)
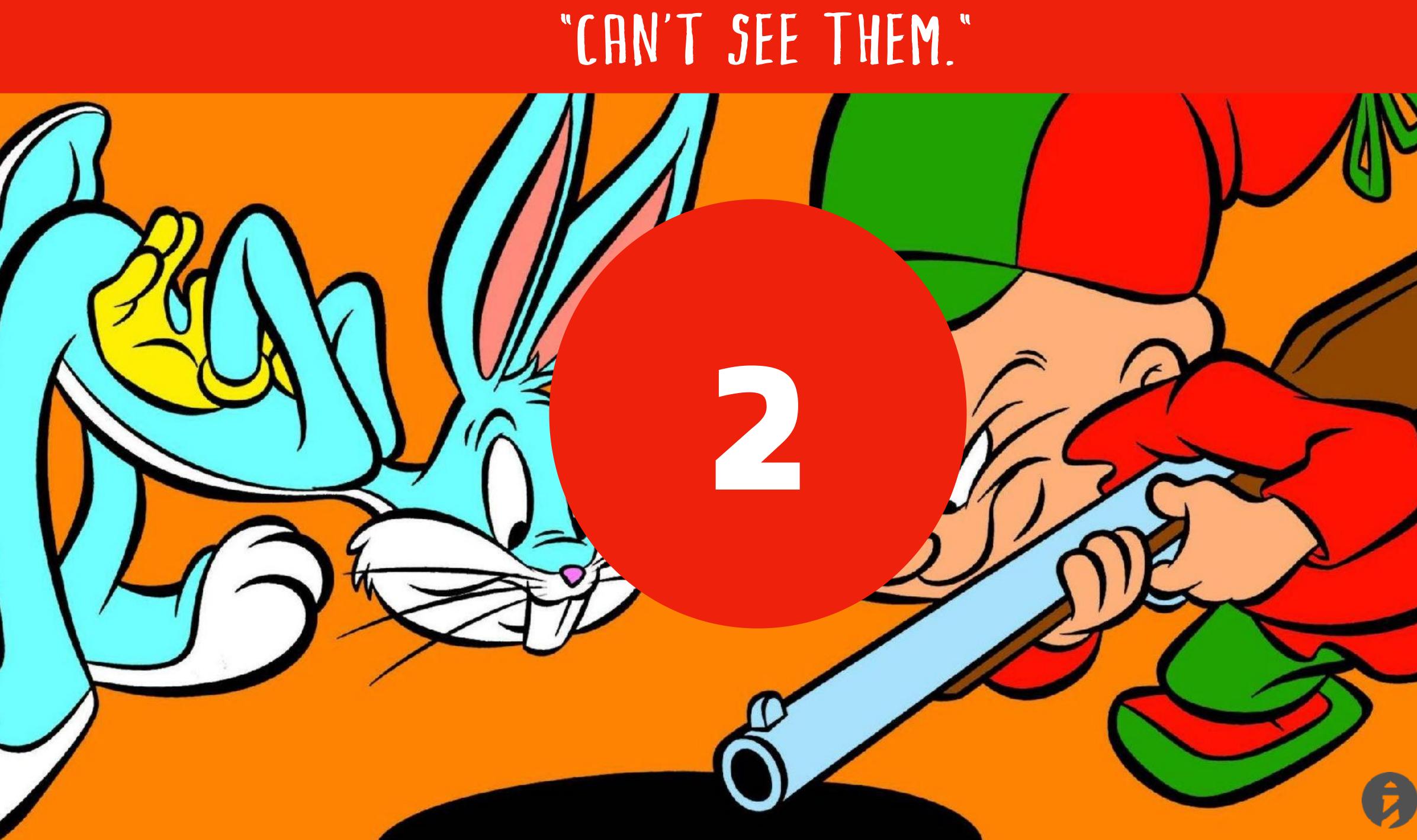On *all other pages*, respect the deep link - do not auto-switch

Make manual switching easy; open the *corresponding* page. Persist the user's choice!
Double-check that you are not confusing Google

SEO

No ranking in the relevant Search Engines -> no organic traffic!

Google is not everything (and other search engines work slightly different)

Most relevant others: Baidu (but Sogou approaching 20%),
Yandex (overtaken by Google in 08/2019!), also e.g. Yahoo (in Japan still >20%)

SEO is the most sustainable driver for traffic, typically most cost efficient
Good ranking is a per-language (if not per-country) effort

General Google SEO plus lang, hreflang, x-default, canonical, …
Consider country-specific TLDs for your important markets
Local link building, local competitor research, Google My Business, …

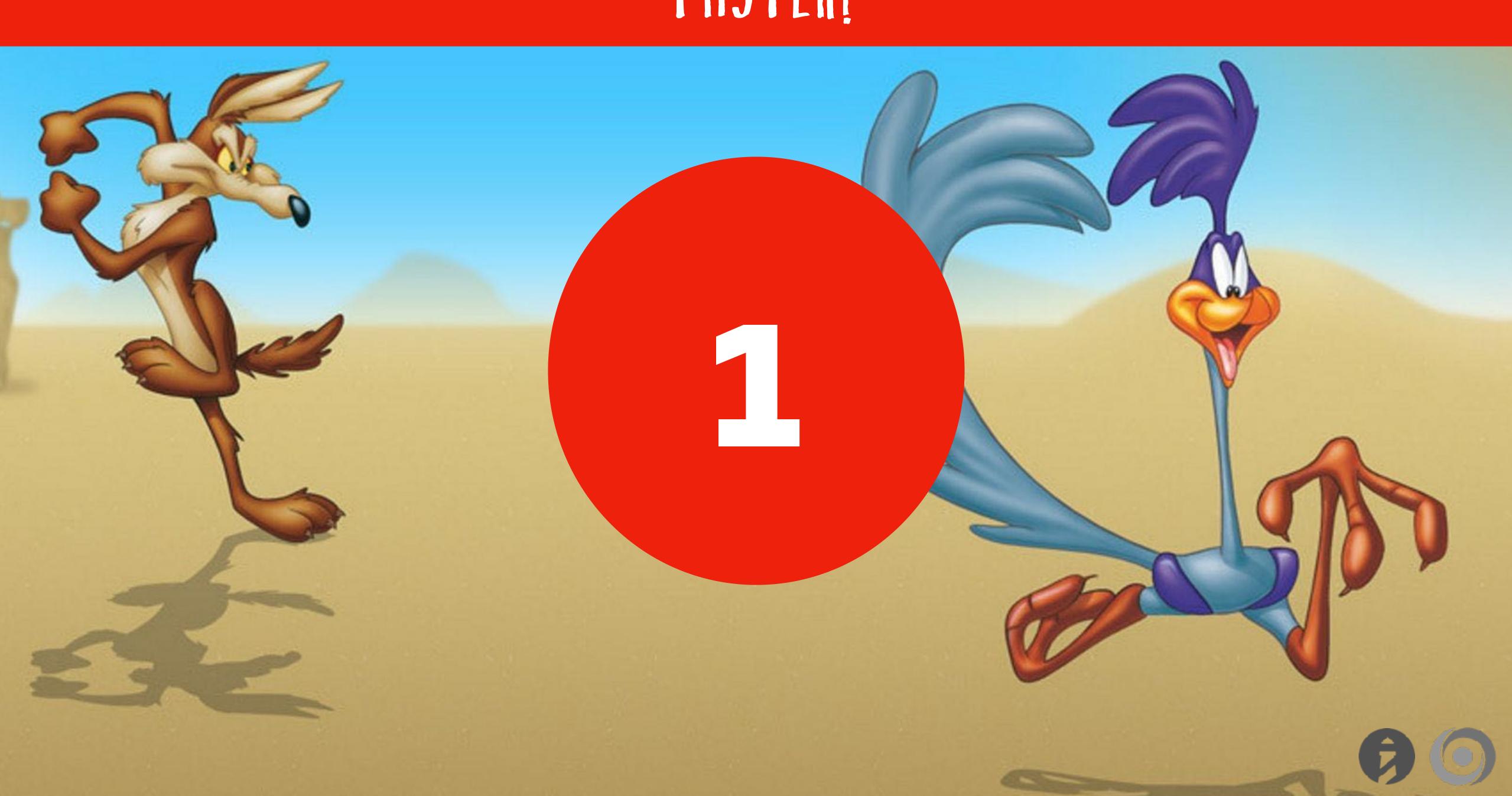Relevant search engines (meta data usage & char limits, JS capabilities, crawling limits, …)
SEO focus in local copywriting
Monitoring of results (incl. Yandex.Webmaster, Baidu Webmaster Tools, …)

Performance

Large regions exist that have…
- General bad (slow or shaky) connectivity - completely, or from other countries
- Thin mobile broadband coverage

At a certain point, every little bit of bad performance hurts - every improvement counts

Network: Central hosting, great connectivity, CDN (China: Local proxy?)
Hosting: HTTPD / MySQL, HTTP/2, Redis cache, Brotli compression, … (and HW)

Front-End: WebP, srcset, Lazy Loading, Resource Hints, AJAX, …
TYPO3 Back-End: settings, HTTP/2 push, optimized TS, SQL queries + PHP (profiling!), …
Test and *monitor* performance

Bottom Line Learnings

Embrace diversity. Don't make your own culture and experiences
the standard for your thinking, or you'll waste opportunities.

Again: Identify partners (and roles) early up!
- Who is (or should be) involved at the regional sales office?
- Who at HQ might help?
- What agency or freelancer can we work with?
- Mostly: Have trusted, responsive QA persons for each language version!

Action Plan

1. Market categories (high / mid / don't care / don't want)

2. Potential actions - choose from these 15 areas :)

3. „Must-actions" per category

4. „Synergy clusters" among actions

5. Cost/benefits (high / mid / low), per category or market

6. Feasibility: Availability & quality of subsidiaries, other partners

7. Decide first steps: „Musts" first, high prio / low hanging fruit; one by one

8. Go! (Inspect and Adapt *early*)

T3BOARD19: The Stubai

(c) Riccabona   More Information ...

20 years of T3BOARD ...   ... asking for celebration!

T3BOARD20 Europe   T3BOARD20 Canada

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