

# What is Internationalization?

Access to the Web for all has been a fundamental concern and goal of the W3C since the beginning. And because it is easy to overlook the needs of people from cultures different to your own, or who use different languages or writing systems, you have to ensure that any content or application that you design or develop use international features.

The [W3C Internationalization Activity](#) works with W3C working groups and liaises with other organizations to make it possible to use Web technologies with different languages, scripts, and cultures.



**Watch out!:** "internationalization" and "localization" are not the same thing!

- Internationalization is the design and development of a product, application or document content that **enables** easy localization for target audiences that vary in culture, region, or language. The word 'Internationalization' is often abbreviated to '*i18n*'. This is a widely used English abbreviation, derived from the fact that there are 18 letters between the 'i' and the 'n'.
- Localization refers to the **adaptation** of a product, application or document content to meet the language, cultural and other requirements of a specific target market (a locale). Localization is sometimes written as *l10n* (using the same abbreviation trick).

For more detailed information, read this [Localization vs. Internationalization](#) article.