

Guidelines for Creating and Maintaining an Efficient Bi lingual Web Site

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Introduction

This document concerns Maori and English languages, but can be modified to adapt to any languages. The Maori language along side English, are both official languages of New Zealand.

Intended audience is any company, organisation, government, iwi, individual or web developer that is currently or will create a bi lingual web site.

This document does not discuss macron issues. For information of macrons visit <http://www.taiuru.maori.nz> .

Executive Summary

Each page on your site should consecutively have the option of viewing it in either language at all times. Failure to do so can result in public perception that your organisation values the dominant language on your site as the more valuable and important language.

Both language options should reflect what the other language option is conveying.

Easy navigation between the two language options in a site is imperative.

Objective of a bilingual web site

The primary objective of a bilingual web site should be to consecutively offer all content in both languages and to be easily navigated between languages at any time and place in the web site.

Entrance to web site

A bilingual web site should have an entrance page giving the end user an option to view the web site in either Maori or English. The rest of the web site should be designed as normal with homepages etc.

Not all users are able to view images and other multimedia objects or scripts. Therefore the language option should at least be in plain text in a position that is viewable with little effort. Then if desired also with Multimedia or script generated language options.

Once the user has chosen a language option they should be taken to the homepage of that language option *ie* Maori.

The Title HTML tag for the secondary page after the entrance page should include a general term that you would normally include for the homepage of your site.

File Structure and Naming Conventions

Folders

Two parent directories called “m” and “e” or “maori” and “english” are required for time efficient uploading and simple navigation.

All the Maori content and folders to be placed under the “m” or “Maori” folder and all the English content and folders under the “e” or English” folder.

It is important that both parent directories contain identical folder names and file names.

For example:

http://www.example.govt.nz/m/test/hello.html
and
http://www.example.govt.nz/e/test/hello.html

Following the above recommendation allows for:

Sub domains

Allocating a sub domain for each language option and including all files and folders under the sub domain folder can be achieved by using the method above.

For example:

Entrance page = http://www.example.govt.nz
then
http://english.example.govt.nz
and
http://maori.example.govt.nz

Domain

Have the one domain name that is pointed at the “Entrance page” and is for one language option, then a secondary domain name for the other language option.

For example:

http://www.example.co.nz
and
http://www.example.maori.nz

Images

Often in modern web sites there are images containing text or maybe postal addresses etc.

It is important to ensure that not only the text on the site is completely bi lingual but also any images.



.pdf and other downloads

If a .pdf or other download is an internal document all effort to offer it in both language options should occur.

Often .pdf and other downloads are from a third part and are copyright. In these cases the content can not be translated.

Navigation

Each page, regardless of which language the user is in, should offer the user the option of viewing the current page in the other language.

For example a user should be able to read /hello.html in Maori then click a link and go direct to the English version of /hello.html .

The language option link should be in a clearly visible place on the page, preferably at least in plain text and consistently in the same place through out the site.

Although it is not recommended that only one language option of a page or resource is uploaded, if it is this should be clearly stated.

Internal Search engines

If a search is conducted from an English page then only English pages that should be indexed *i.e.* all files and folders under the “e” directory are to be searched in the English search option and vice versa for when the search engine is accessed from a Maori page.

Specialised and New Terminology

New words are constantly being created for the Maori language to ensure the language is kept alive. More often than not the general public do not immediately know of the new terms or sometimes never hear them or even have their own coined terminology.

All new terminology and specialist words you include on your site should be included in a site glossary.

For a large list of IT terms – <http://www.dictionary.maori.nz>

Maintenance

Before a page is uploaded both language versions should be completed and uploaded at the same time. If it is not possible to have a page in both language options this should be clearly stated on the page before a user proceeds to view a language option that is not available.

Ideally there will be two web authors or editors a Maori language and a English language author/editor working in sync to ensure all pages are offered in both language options.

Another person will be responsible for approving of content, uploading and coordinating of the two language editors/authors.

In a smaller organisation or a Maori Language organisation the one person is likely to fulfill all three of the previously mentioned roles.