



[Client] Audit of International Partner Sites

Summary of Findings:

1. **Partner web sites do not consistently use one visual system.**

Most of the partner web sites use the visual system devised for version 4.0, which consists of a blue swoosh across the top of secondary pages and a prominent yellow circle on the home page.

The remaining partner web sites suffer from visual chaos.

- The Nordic sites (Norway, Finland, and Denmark) and the Benelux sites (Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg) adhere to the visual system or a variation of version 3.0.
- Italy, Spain, and Russia share a visual system that is unique from that used in version 3.0 and 4.0.
- The web sites for the Caribe, Columbia /Ecuador, Peru / Bolivia, and Venezuela share a visual system unique from all the previous ones listed.
- Some web sites switch visual systems within their site. For instance, Finland uses version 3.0 on its home page and then switches to version 4.0 for its Partner Access page. Other sites exhibiting this tendency include the Nordic sites, the Benelux sites, Italy and Spain.

2. **Partner sites do not consistently adhere to navigation system standards.**

Sites using the version 4.0 visual system have an associated standard navigation system. At least most of the sites use the top navigation bar to send users to Products, Service & Support, Contact Us, Site Map, and Countries. But other than that, the navigation system becomes as chaotic as the visual systems.

- There is almost always a navigation bar in the left column, but this has not been standardized. The left navigation bar has a variable hierarchy. On some sites, the hierarchy consists of: Focus Overview, [Client] University, e-Tools, e-Marketing, Focal Point, Sales Promotions. Slight variations on this hierarchy exist. A second hierarchy is Communications, Marketing Tools, Sales Support, Training, and Service. A third hierarchy is Focus Overview, eBusiness Tools, Marketing Tools, Training, and Service & Support. And some sites, just list links rather than display a hierarchy.
- Some sites include links in the left column marked as News Stand and Site Tools that are visually differentiated from the hierarchy above.
- Some sites place objects in non-standard locations. For instance, the Iberia and Russia sites place the log in button in the right hand column rather than the traditional left one.



- Some standard objects are incorrectly labeled. For instance, in the lower left-hand column on the Partner Access page, a link should be visible to send users back to the country sites supported by that partner page. On Austria's partner page the link is incorrectly labeled Zurich instead of Osterreich, the title of the country's home page. On the partner pages for France, Ireland, Germany, and many others the link is called [Client] Home instead of appropriate country's name. On the Spain page, it is labeled Spain when it actually goes to Iberia.
- Some partner sites are missing the standard links back to their related country sites. The Americas International partner page is the biggest offender. There is no link to this partner page from any of the Latin American country sites and there is no link to any of the country sites from the partner page.

3. No single point of access to Partner web sites.

Many partner sites include "Countries" as a category in their top navigation bar. A reasonable user would expect to find a page with a list to Partner web sites for other countries. Instead, the user is sent to a page on the United States Country site with links to other country web sites; thereby, disorienting the user when he/she ends up in the wrong location.

4. Some links don't really exist.

Africa and the Middle East have their own links in the drop down menus on Partner sites and Country sites, but they don't really exist as their own unique web sites. They just bring users to the Europe, Middle East, and Africa web site. This might not be disorienting in the majority of cases, but it is when the user is already on the Europe, Middle East, and Africa web site. The user travels nowhere.

5. Bulgaria has disappeared. Or has it?

The Bulgaria site is available on the United States site, which provides a list of country sites. It's located on a drop down menu for countries in Europe, Middle East, and Africa. Yet, it doesn't exist on the drop down menu on the Europe, Middle East, and Africa web site. Such inconsistencies can be tremendously frustrating to users trying to navigate to a site which is only available on one site rather than universally available.

6. Page content and label names arbitrarily switch between the native language and English on Partner sites.

Users cannot necessarily assume what the language of page content or label names will be. In some cases, all content and navigation labels are in the country's native language. In other cases, it's all in English. And in some, it's a mixture. The rhyme and reason for doing this is unknown and unpredictable. The result is a jarring experience. [Client] also runs the risk of alienating the user



if he/she is unable to comprehend English.

7. Users may appear to log into the wrong site.

The title at the top of the page lists the targeted country's name. This should effectively remind the user of the country he/she is in. It doesn't work though when the title switches to that of another country or region. For instance, when a user logs in to the Partner site for Iberia he/she finds herself in Spain. Spain may be part of Iberia, but the user is left questioning whether a mistake was made. The same holds true when the user goes from a Country site to a regional Partner site. On the Poland site, for instance, the user logs into the Europe, Middle East, and Africa Partner page. The user is not made aware of this in advance and becomes temporarily disoriented.

8. Comment tags are in English rather than in a user's native language.

Upon mouse over, many links display comment tags. These tags are supposed to provide the user with context so the user can decide whether to click the link. They are useful if the user can comprehend what they mean. They aren't when the content written on the page is the user's native language and the comment tags are in English. This is disrespectful and shows no attention to detail. Most sites written in a country's native language are respectful but a handful of sites aren't.