

# Going global: unlocking the secrets of app localization

Localizing your app can unlock lucrative opportunities to reach more users: here we explain why you should do it and how. Insights from AdMob's survey of app consumers in major markets help you make informed decisions about building, monetizing and promoting your app.

## Why localize?

The global opportunity created by the app economy is amazing. As a developer you create your app, make it available in an app store, and within one day it's possible to have customers from every corner of the world.

With smartphone penetration growing globally, it's no longer sufficient to provide your app in only one language if you hope to retain users.[32]



Don't underestimate the importance of localization. You can lose over a third of users in all markets if you neglect cultural and language differences.

**MICHAEL SCHIPPER**

*Product Marketing Manager, AdMob*

Localizing your app means more than adapting the user-interface language, it's about being culturally sensitive too. App developer, RV App Studios, created the popular Zombie Ragdoll game in twenty languages. They immediately began seeing significant usage in countries where they hadn't seen much traction before. Part of their success comes not only from localizing text within a game, but also localizing game features to specific countries and cultures. Vivek Dave, founder of RV App Studios emphasizes this point, "Users want a personalized experience, and by offering a localized game with translation of text and graphic assets, we believe users will connect at a much deeper level with the game." [33]

In an effort to better understand consumer app behavior, perceptions, and preferences, AdMob conducted a new survey across five major markets: China; South Korea; Japan; the United States, and the United Kingdom. The study provides you with data and analysis to help you optimize your design, marketing, and monetization of your app. Key insights from cross-country comparisons can help you understand adjustments you could make for consumers in different markets.

Though users in all surveyed markets have experienced poor localization, app users in Asian markets are much more likely to feel the pain. A staggering 53% of Chinese respondents and over a third of Japanese and South Korean users have felt the app they were using was poorly adapted to their needs. Approximately 25-30% of users discontinued app usage as a result. Even for an app that was good quality, over 10% of users in China and Japan responded that they would stop using the app due to poor localization. If your goal is to distribute to a worldwide audience, we strongly encourage you to localize.



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## Tools Help localizing

**Google Translate.** For simple words or phrases, Google Translate is a quick and free option. It's ideal for apps that contain a small amount of text and covers many languages.

**Google App Translation Service.** Purchase professional translations through Google Play's Developer Console.

This new service has a list of pre-selected vendors who've been vetted by Google to provide high-quality translation services at competitive prices.

Founder Pieter Olivier of G4A Indian Rummy says, "When we heard that the App Translation Service was available in the Developer Console, we jumped at the opportunity. We've now been using the App Translation Service for several months and found that the cost per translation is much lower than with local companies and the process is much easier." G4A Indian Rummy saw a 300% increase in user engagement after localizing apps in specific countries where the game was popular, but not in the country's native language.

Find the App Translation Service in the Google Play Developer Console. You can start a new translation or manage an existing translation [here](#).

**ICanLocalize.** Toni Fingerroos, founder and CEO of Fingersoft, uses this paid service when translating his games. "Most of our game interface is simple enough that you can understand the controls and gameplay without needing instructions. For things that we do need translations for, we use a service called ICanLocalize."

**CrowdIn.** One low-cost option is CrowdIn, which uses crowdsourcing to translate app files. When you create a project you can either make it public so anyone can contribute, or it can be private and you invite selected translators. There are more than over 100 languages to choose from, and thanks to CrowdIn, Minecraft is almost fully translated into Klingon.