LanguageExclusion

Exclusion of languages

This page is sharing some thoughts on the dilemmas of multilingual sites

i18n Team

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Even if it sounds surprising, one of the main features of a higher end multilingual website is to avoid multilingualism.

What I mean by that is that, if you as a user are browsing a site, you should never arrive on a page the language of which you don't understand.

Many programmers start from the principle that available languages should be actively offered in the interface, but it is also sound to hide systematically what is not readable. In that sense a page in a language you cannot read relates to the old html websites principle that you should not disappoint the reader by offering in your menu links to pages that are "under construction".

It also relates to the communication theory principle, according to which information that is not wanted is noise, a nuisance.

A basic application of this would be that the menus in language X offer only links to pages in language X. A more sophisticated version would be that Registered user would specify in My tiki pref pane what languages he/she accepts to read.

This would also apply to the classic series of flags visible when translations are available: If i specified that I don't read volapük, I don't see the little volapük flag. This is one of the many details that make browsing a more fluent experience.

Still this attitude is not often assumed, because people start from the moral/political principle of enhancing the value of multilingualism, international democracy, respect of other cultures, etc. But in fact, as far as reading is concerned it is all right to "exclude" languages. You are innocent if you don't speak all the languages of the Earth.