

7.2 Website Analysis : Usage of Indian Languages on the WWW vis-à-vis Other Global Languages

Introduction

The presence of Indian languages on the Web is very limited and still in its nascent stages. Uses of Indian languages have to overcome the technological barriers, since technology is primarily available in English and focussed on the use of English. The challenges of building websites in Indian scripts and languages are enormous. Displaying Indian scripts on available browsers and management of multilingual content is a difficult task. Moreover, browsing a new Indian Language site requires downloading of fonts and configuration of the browser.

To study the usage of Indian Languages on the Web vis-à-vis other global languages, a broad browsing technique was employed to search for Government, Public and Private sites of three countries, namely, India, China (from the Asian continent) and Germany (from the European continent) to check the usage of their native languages. Out of these, the study on China bears more significance in light of the fact that both India and China are considered rising giants in the Asian region. Not only this, both the countries have assumed great economic and political significance in the current world order because of the large markets they offer and because of their rising military might. In this context it would be interesting to compare these two countries on the basis of how much importance these countries have given to their native languages and what steps they have taken to make the presence of their language(s) felt on the Web.

Contents

For the purpose of obtaining the desired data, four case studies were carried out; three comprising of individual data on Indian Languages, Chinese

and German while the fourth case study presents comparative data for the use of these languages by third parties such as multinationals, portals etc.

This report consists of the following four case studies:

- **Case Study 1:** Use of Indian Languages on the Web
- **Case Study 2:** Use of Chinese on the Web
- **Case Study 3:** Use of German on the Web
- **Case Study 4:** A comparative study on the use of Indian Languages, Chinese and German by Portals, Multinationals etc. offering regional sites.

Case Study I:

Use of Indian Languages on the Web

Govt. Websites

The websites of various ministries (a good number are available at *www.nic.in*), government departments etc. are still in English. Information on Indian embassies, consulates etc. in other countries are either in English or bilingual (English and the respective country's language) however, **none of the embassies has information available in Hindi** or any other Indian language. Table CS1-I contains data on a few embassy sites.

Table CS1-I

URL of the Embassy/ Consulate's Site	Country where the Embassy is located	Default Language Options	Other Language
(English Only)			
www.indiacgny.org	New York, USA	English	-
www.hcilondon.net	London, UK	English	-
(Bilingual – English and Local Language)			
www.Indianembassybeijing.org.cn	China	English	Chinese
www.amb-inde.fr	France	French/English (Home page seeks language option)	
www.indianembassy.org.br	Brazil	English/Portuguese (Home page seeks language option)	
www.indianembassy.de	Germany	English	German
www.indianembassy.ru/ru	Russia	Russian	English
www.embassy-avenue.jp/india	Japan	English	Japanese

Table CS1-II

Name of Organisation/ Bank	URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available	Remarks
(PSUs/ Govt. Organisations etc.)				
SEBI	www.sebi.com	English	Hindi	Only limited information is available in Hindi
ISRO	www.isro.com	English	Hindi	Partial information related to a few main links is available in Hindi
(Banks)				
Reserve Bank of India	www.rbi.com	English	Hindi	-
State Bank of India	www.sbi.co.in	English	Hindi	-
Indian Overseas Bank	www.iob.com	English	Hindi	Not all links are available in Hindi but main information is.
Bank of India	www.bankofindia.com	English	Hindi	Partial information available in Hindi, main information related to accounts, schemes, bonds etc. is available in English only
Small Industries Development Bank of India	www.sidbi.com	English	Hindi	-
Union Bank of India	www.unionbankofindia.com	English	Hindi	-
United Bank of India	unitedbankofindia.com	English	Hindi	-
Central Bank of India	centralbankofindia.co.in	English	Hindi	-

While the languages of countries where Indian embassies are located have found place on the Indian embassy sites, Indian Languages have not. English has been accepted as the official Indian language even on the official government and embassy sites and Indian Languages have been totally ignored.

At *www.nic.in*, the URL for the Indian Prime Minister, President and Parliament have been quoted as the most sought after sites. However, the information on these URLs is available in English and not in any other Indian Language. At some URLs such as the one for Rajya Sabha, a token Hindi page has been provided but all other information is in English.

Govt. Organisations/ Banks/ PSUs

Most of these sites are in English. Very few provide a Hindi version while no site was found offering a version in any other Indian Language. A few of the

browsed sites contain partial information in Hindi while some have given limited information in Hindi. Details of few sites that provide partial or total information in Hindi are given in Table CS1-II.

As is evident from Table CS1-II, certain nationalised banks have implemented their sites in Hindi; however, the use of Hindi on the sites of Public Sector, Private and Multinational banks is practically nil.

Some organisations like SEBI have a single page in Hindi, however, the links on this page connect to pages providing information in English. Moreover, the use of other Indian Languages is all together missing from the sites of PSUs, Banks etc.

Newspapers/Dailies/ Sites offering News in Indian Languages

Not many newspapers/ local dailies could be located online that provide news or information on cur-

Table CS1-III

Name of the Newspaper	Site URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available
(Hindi)			
Navbharat (Bhopal)	www.navbharat.net	Hindi	-
Jagran (UP)	www.jagran.com	Hindi	-
Nai Duniya (Indore)	www.naidunia.com	Hindi	-
Rajasthan Patrika	www.rajasthanpatrika.com	Hindi	-
Amar Ujala	www.amarujala.com	Hindi	-
India Today	www.aajtak.com	Hindi	-
India Daily	www.indiadaily.com (site under construction)	Hindi	
(Regional Languages)			
Sandesh	www.sandesh.com	Gujrati	-
Gujarat Samachar	www.gujarat-samachar.com (site under construction)	Gujrati	-
Prajavani	www.prajavani.net	Kannada	-
Thesamaja	www.thesamaja.com (site under construction)	Oriya	-
(Multilingual)			
-	www.satyamonline.com	English	Hindi, Malayalam
(International News Channel)			
BBC	www.bbchindi.com	Hindi	-

rent affairs in Hindi or other Indian Languages. A few newspapers/ local dailies that have provided information on the Web in one or more Indian Language is given in Table CS1-III.

The use of Hindi or regional languages is confined to regional dailies and very few of these are available on the net. The news channels of majority of the portals offer news in English alone. On the few portals that offer their news or information channel in regional Indian Languages, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Gujrati remain the most used languages.

Regionally, Hindi is the language that has found maximum usage on the Websites of North Indian dailies. A few South Indian dailies offer Tamil, Telugu and/or Malayalam versions. On the West Indian side, only Gujrati dailies are available while the use of East Indian and North Eastern languages like Bengali, Manipuri etc. on the Web is negligible.

Portals/ E-Commerce Sites

Indian Portals and E-commerce sites of Indian origin are mostly in English alone. Very few are multilingual/ bilingual or in a certain regional language. Some of the Portals and the respective Indian language(s) used by them are listed in Table CS1-IV.

In case of portals too, Hindi, Gujrati, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam remain the languages most widely used whereas other Indian languages like Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Manipuri etc. are not available. As is the case with other government and private sites, portals too use primarily English.

www.webdunia.com is an exceptional portal that can be called as a truly Hindi portal with complete information available in Hindi only.

Table CS1-IV

URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available	Remarks (if any)
www.webdunia.com	Hindi		
www.indiainfo.com	English	Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada	
www.tamizha-tamizha.com	Tamil	-	
www.satyamonline.com	English	Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam	Only the News and Info channel is available in Hindi/regional languages
www.netjaal.com		Hindi, Gujrati, Marathi, Punjabi, Kannada, Malayalam	-
www.kemchoo.com	Gujrati	-	-

E-mail in Hindi/ Regional languages

Very few sites are offering e-mail in Hindi or local languages. Some of these are listed in Table CS1-V.

Table CS1-V

URL	Languages in which E-Mail is Available
(Hindi Only)	
www.mailjol.com	Hindi
www.tdil.mit.gov.in	Hindi
www.ebharati.biz	Hindi
www.langoo.com	Hindi
www.inoman.net	Hindi
(Multilingual)	
www.e-patra.com	Hindi, Gujrati, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam
www.rediff.com	Hindi, Gujrati

Search Engines for Searching through keywords in Hindi

- google.com
- altavista.com (in process)

Miscellaneous Sites

There are a few sites like *www.manaskriti.com* for poetry in Hindi, *www.bharatdarshan.co.nz* for a Hindi magazine etc.

Summary

It wake of the information provided above, it can be safely concluded that neither the Indian Government, nor the Public or Private Indian sectors

have found it worthwhile to use Indian languages for providing information or services over the Web. Even Portals and E-commerce sites have not targeted the majority of Indian masses who speak and understand Hindi and/or regional Indian languages. Thus the Web remains out of bounds for Indian masses who do not possess the requisite knowledge of English.

Other than the portal *www.webduniya.com*, the infrastructure construction company IRCON International Ltd., *www.irconinternational.com* provides a complete Hindi version for its website. These are the Indian websites that keep the hope of Indian Languages finding their due place on the Web still alive.

Case Study II:

Use of Chinese on the Web

The use of Chinese on the Web is substantial, as far as the Chinese sites are concerned. Chinese emerges as the primary language, or at times, the ONLY language in which information is available on Chinese sites. Not only this, Portals and organizations with commercial or other interests in China can usually be found offering a Chinese version of their Websites. A broad categorization and the pattern of usage of Chinese on the Web is presented in this case study.

Information on Chinese Government

Information on various Chinese Ministries, State Bureaus, Commissions, Local Governments etc. is available at *www1.cei.gov.in/govinfo* that is a bilingual site. The **default language** (the language in which the website opens when no language option is speci-

Table CS2-I

Ministry/ Commission	URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available
(Chinese Only)			
National Development and Reforms Commission	www.ndrc.gov.cn	Chinese	-
Ministry of Culture	www.ccnt.gov.cn	Chinese	-
(Bilingual – English and Chinese)			
Ministry of Education	www.moe.edu.cn	Chinese	English
Chinese Academy of Sciences	www.cashq.ac.in	Chinese	English
China Meteorological Administration	www.cma.gov.cn	Chinese	English
China Securities Regulatory Commission	www.csrc.gov.cn	Chinese	English
(Multilingual)			
Ministry of Foreign Russian, Affairs	www.fmprc.gov.cn	Chinese	English, French, Spanish, Arabic

fied) is **Chinese**, the English version being the second option available.

The sites for various ministries, commissions etc. are either in Chinese or bilingual (Chinese and English) with **Chinese being the default language**. The site for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China is a notable exception that is multilingual. A few Chi-

nese government sites and the language versions available at these sites are given in Table CS2-I.

As can be seen from Table CS2-I above, the Chinese government has given priority to its own language over English or the native languages of other countries. Chinese has been used as the primary language for dissemination of information with options

Table CS2-II

URL of the Site	Country where the Embassy is located	Default Language	Other Language Options
(English Only)			
www.China-embassy.org	USA	English	
(Bilingual – English and Chinese)			
www.Chinese-embassy.org.uk	UK	English	Chinese
www.Chinaembassy.org.au	Australia	English	Chinese
www.Chinaembassy.org.nz	New Zealand	English	Chinese
www.chinaembassy.dk	Denmark	Chinese	English
www.chinaembassy.org.tr	Turkey	English	Chinese
www.chinaembassy.org.sa	Saudi Arabia	English	Chinese
(Bilingual – Local Language and Chinese)			
www.embchina.org.br	Brazil	Chinese	Portuguese
www.chinaembassy.ru	Russia	Russian	Chinese
www.china-embassy.or.jp	Japan	Chinese	Japanese
www.amb-chine.fr	France	French	Chinese
www.china-botschaft.de	Germany	German	Chinese
(Multilingual)			
www.China-embassy.ch	Switzerland	English	Chinese, French, -German

Table CS2-III

Name of Organisation/Bank	URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available
(Chinese Only)			
China Economic Information Network	www.cei.com.cn	Chinese	-
Bank of Communications	www.bankcomm.com	Chinese	-
-	www.spacectin.net.cn	Chinese	-
-	www.citicib.com.cn	Chinese	-
-	www.autoinfo.gov.cn	Chinese	-
(Bilingual – English and Chinese)			
China Construction	www.ccb.com.cn	Chinese	English Bank
Industrial and Bank of China	www.icbc.com.cn	Chinese	English Commercial
(Multilingual)			
China Internet Information Center	www.china.org.cn	English	Chinese, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese

for other languages being provided wherever deemed appropriate.

Chinese Embassies

Most of the information sites on the Chinese embassies in various parts of the world are multilingual or at least bilingual (Chinese and English) except for the site of the Chinese embassy at USA that is only in English. However, on rest of the sites, English remains the default language with Chinese version as an available option. A detailed pattern for some of these sites is given in Table CS2-II.

It is worth noting that the use of English/ other languages on the websites of Chinese Embassies elsewhere has been quite judicious. While all sites are available in Chinese, English has been used for countries where English is the national or most widely spoken language, whereas in countries like France, Germany, Russia etc. where the national/ local language is preferred, English versions are altogether missing and only the regional language versions have been made available. What needs to be noted again is that Chinese has got its due place on the embassy sites.

Table CS2-IV

Name of the Newspaper	Site URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available
(Chinese Only)			
Beijing Daily	www.bjd.com.cn	Chinese	-
Beijing Evening News	www.ben.com.cn	Chinese	-
Guangming daily	www.gmw.com.cn	Chinese	-
(Multilingual)			
Xinhua	www.xinhua.com	Chinese	English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Japanese
People's Daily	www.peopledaily.com.cn	Chinese	English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic
(English Only)			
Shanghai Daily	www.english.eastday.com	English	-
South China Morning Post	www.scmp.com	English	-
Shanghai Star	www.shanghai-star.com	English	-

Table CS2-V

URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available
(Chinese only)		
www.21cn.com	Chinese	-
www.zhaodaola.com	Chinese	-
www.gznet.com	Chinese	-
www.hongen.com	Chinese	-
www.cseek.com	Chinese	-
(Bilingual – English and Chinese)		
www.e21times.com	Chinese	English
www.chinavista.com	Chinese	English
www.yifan.com	Chinese	English
www.surfchina.com	English	Chinese

Major Economic/ Bank Sites

Major economic websites (whose URLs are available at www1.cei.gov.cn) are in **Chinese only** while a few are bilingual (Chinese and English). Details of some of these sites are provided in Table CS2-III.

Table CS3-I

Ministry/ Commission	URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available
(German Only)			
Federal Ministry of Finance	www.bundesfinanzministerium.de	German	-
Federal Ministry of Education and Research	bmbf.de	German	-
Federal ministry of Transport, Building and Housing	bmwbw.de	German	-
Federal Ministry of Defence	bundeswehr.de	German	-
(Bilingual-English and German)			
Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour	bmwi.de	German	English
(Multilingual)			
Foreign Office	auswaertiges-amt.de	German	English, French

Once again, Chinese is the preferred language for commercial/ economic sites, i.e. they are targeted at the local populace to a large extent. Some sites have used English as the second option while the site of China Internet Information Center that would cater to global population contains other language options as well.

Chinese Newspapers/ Dailies

Chinese dailies offering news in Chinese have a good presence on the Web. Certain Chinese dailies/ newspapers are multilingual while a few are available in English only. Table CS2-IV lists some of the browsed Chinese dailies/ newspapers and the language options available on them.

As can be seen, the use of Chinese in news sites is also substantial. Though a few online newspapers are available only in English, many of them have a Chinese version.

Portals/ E-Com Sites

Most of the Chinese portals are in Chinese with English available as the second option in a few of them. Table CS2-V gives details of a few of these portals.

As is evident from Table CS2-V, Chinese gets priority in portals too with majority of them having a Chinese version only, which goes on to show that they are focused on the local public.

Summary

From the browsed Chinese sites, whether Government or Private, it can be deduced that China has taken adequate steps to popularize its language on the Web. Simultaneously, it can be inferred that Chinese remains the preferred language of the Chinese people and various commercial and public organizations in China recognize and acknowledge this fact and optimize the use of Chinese on their respective sites.

Case Study III:

Use of German on the Web

All sites pertaining to the Government of Germany as well as public and private organizations in Germany, use German on the Web. Not only this, any

Table CS3-II

URL of the Site	Country where the Embassy is located	Default Language	Other Language Options
www.deutschebotschaft-china.org	China	German	Chinese
germanembassy-india.org/en/	India	English	German
germanembassy-japan.org/de/home/	Japan	German	Japanese
www.amb-allemande.fr	France	French	German
deutschebotschaft-rom.it/de/home/	Italy	German	Italian
deutschebotschaft-moskau.ru/de	Russia	German	Russian
gembassy.or.kr/de/home/	Korea	German	Korean, English
germany-info.org	USA	English	-

multinational with business interests in Germany and any portal that offers regional sites has a German version available. Just as in the case of Chinese, German is the primary language for dissemination of any type of information about Germany. The

Policy Documents etc. is available at www.bundesregierung.de. The **default language** (the language in which the website opens when no language option is specified) is **German**, with English and French versions also available.

Table CS3-III

Name of the Bank	URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available
Deutsch Bank	www.db.com	English	German
Dresdner Bank AG	dresdner-bank.de	German	English
Commerzbank AG	commerzbank.de	German	English
IKB Deutsche Industriebank AG	www.ikb.de	German	English
Anton Hafner oHG	www.hafnerbank.de	German	-

portals, companies, banks etc. of German origin use German as the default language or provide a German version for their sites. A broad categorization along with example URLs that use German language are discussed in this case study.

The sites for various ministries are either in German or bilingual (German and English) with German being the default language. Details of a few government sites are given in Table CS3-I.

Information on German Government

Information on Germany's Federal Government such as various Ministries, Cabinet, the Chancellor,

German Embassies

Most of the information sites on the German embassies in various parts of the world are bilingual (German and the country's regional language). In a

Table CS3-IV

Name of the Newspaper	Site URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available
Berlin Online	www.berlinonline.de	German	-
Express Online	www.express.de	German	-
Berliner Morgenpost	morgenpost.berlin1.de	German	-
bildzeitung	www.bild.t-online.de	German	-
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung	www.faz.net	German	English

Table CS3-V

URL	Default Language	Other Languages Available
www.web.de	German	-
www.allsklar.de	German	-
www.dino-online.de	German	-
www.eule.de	German	-
www.fixx.de	German	-
www.aladin.de	German	-
(Search Engines)		
www.fireball.de	German	-
www.speedfind.de	German	-
www.abacho.com	German	English, French, Italian, Spanish

few cases, English is also available as a third option. Information on some of these sites is given in Table CS3-II.

As can be seen from Table CS3-II, for countries like France, Italy, Russia, China, Japan and Korea the German embassy site has a version in the respective country's native language, however, in the case of India, English has been used instead of an Indian language.

German Banks

Most of the German Banks provide their sites in German alone, while some have English versions also available. A few banks whose sites were browsed at random are listed in Table CS3-III.

German Newspapers/ Dailies

Most of the online newspapers and dailies from Germany are in German. Only one news site from Germany was found offering an English version. Information on a few news sites from Germany that were browsed for the purpose is tabulated in Table CS3-IV.

Portals/ E-Com Sites

Most of the German portals are in German and offer search facilities too in German. During a random search of German portals, only one search engine was found offering multilingual search, rest were in German alone with not even

an English version available. Table CS3-V lists some of the browsed German portals.

Summary

Table CS3-I to Table CS3-V prove that German has got preference over English or other languages on the German sites. This shows that the German-speaking local populace has been kept in mind while making information available on the Web. It also proves that German finds due prominence on the Web and any organization dealing with Germany cannot afford to ignore its language.

Case Study IV:

Brief Report on Multilingual (Global) Portals/ Websites

Certain multinationals companies/ banks and portals such as Yahoo! have created regional sites for various countries. These regional sites are either available in English or in the country's respective language. Table CS4-I shows comparative results for the availability of the regional sites of certain companies/portals in the local language for the three countries chosen in the case studies above.

As can be seen from Table CS4-I above, the regional sites for China and Germany are in their respective language in most of the cases, whereas the regional site for India is in English. No information in any of the Indian languages has been provided. This once again proves that Indian languages remain ignored on the Web by multinational/ global companies. Instead, English has been used and accepted as the default language for India.

Conclusion

The languages of the developed nations such as Germany, France, Italy, Russia etc. find prominence on the Web and wherever an entity such as a Portal, a Bank, a Company etc. provides regional sites, the native language of the developed countries is chosen as the medium of providing information.

Developing Asian nations like China, Japan and Korea too have taken steps to provide their sites

Table CS4-I

Portal/ Company	Main URL (Default Language)	Regional URL (Language)		
	India	China	Germany	
(Portals)				
Yahoo!	www.yahoo.com (English)	in.yahoo.com (English)	cn.yahoo.com (Chinese)	de.yahoo.com (German)
Netscape Netcenter	www.netscape.com (English)	Not Available	wp.netscape.com/zh- cn/index.html (Chinese)	netscape.de (German)
Asiaco	www.asiaco.com	india.asiaco.com (English)	china.asiaco.com (Chinese)	Not Available
AltaVista	www.altavista.com (English)	www.in.altavista.com (English)	Not Available	www.de.altavista.com (German)
Excite	www.excite.com (English)	Not Available	Not Available	www.excite.de (German)
(Banks)				
Hongkong and Shanghai Bank	www.hsbc.com (English)	hsbc.co.in/in (English)	hsbc.com.cn/cn (English)	www.hsbctrinkaus.de (German)
Deutsch Bank	www.db.com (English)	Not Available	Not Available	www.deutsche-bank.de (German)
(MNCs)				
LG Electronics	www.lge.com (English)	lgindia.com (English)	lge.com.cn (Chinese)	www.lge.de/cgi-bin/lge.cgi (German)
Samsung Electronics	samsungelectronics.com (English)	samsungindia.com (English)	isamsung.com.cn (Chinese)	samsung.de (German)
Siemens	www.siemens.com (English)	www.siemens.co.in (English)	www.siemens.com.cn (Chinese)	www.siemens.de] (German)
Intel	www.intel.com (English)	intel.com/in/eng (English)	www.intel.com/cn/gb (Chinese)	www.intel.com/deutsch (German)
Hewlett Packard	www.hp.com (English)	welcome.hp.com/ country/in/eng/ (English)	www.hp.com/country/cn/ (Chinese)	welcome.hp.com/country/ de/ger/ (German)

in their country's language. As in the case of European nations, the regional sites of various Portals, Multinationals etc. use Chinese, Japanese and Korean for their regional sites for these countries.

What's surprising is that even small and lesser-known countries like Brazil and Korea have made their presence felt with regional sites for Yahoo! (*www.br.yahoo.com* and *www.kr.yahoo.com*, respectively), Netscape (*www.wp.netscape.com/pt/* and *www.wp.netscape.com/ko/*) etc. being available in Portuguese and Korean, respectively while the languages of a country like India that is purportedly

an emerging regional super power, find practically no place in such regional sites. Instead, English is taken as the language for the regional sites meant for India.

Remedies

Till the time we don't wake up to the need of using Indian Languages on the Web, English is likely to remain India's accepted official language for all practical purposes. As the first step towards rectifying this anomaly, the basic information about the country and its government must be in

Hindi and other Indian Languages. State/ Regional departments can focus on regional languages for their websites, for example, northern states/ Union Territories like Delhi, UP, Haryana etc. can adopt Hindi for their Government/ other official sites, southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu etc. can use Malayalam, Tamil, etc. and so on.

Sites of public departments, banks etc. that are common to the entire country such as RBI, SEBI etc. should be multilingual with information available not only in Hindi but in other regional languages also.

Once the major official web sites start adopting Indian Languages on the Web and their results are encouraging, the Public and Private sector will automatically follow suit.

Equally important is to acknowledge the fact that the Indian masses who do not understand English and are versed with one or more Indian languages only, too have the right to avail of the vistas opened up by the information and services available over the Web.

Issues

Lack of standardization of fonts is often quoted as a hindrance in the creation of Web content in Hindi. It would be worth mentioning that the sites that use Chinese or Japanese or Korean scripts require that their respective fonts be downloaded for viewing the content properly. However, this has not proved to be a deterrent in the exemplary use of Chinese, Japanese and Korean in various sites available on the Web. So why can't sites be made in Hindi or other Indian languages with the option of downloading the respective font?

Since there are umpteen number of Hindi and other language fonts available, we may strive towards choosing 3 or 4 widely available fonts as standards, providing free downloads for them and using them on various websites. Once a few fonts are marked as standard, we can work towards inclusion of these fonts in the widely used browsers such as Internet Explorer, Opera, Netscape Navigator etc.

Unicode encoding and Server technologies like Embedded Open Type Fonts (EOT) and Portable Font Resources (PFR) can also be used to overcome the problem of displaying Hindi fonts correctly.

Indian Languages Indic script has already been standardised in Unicode system and developmental work has already started on use of these scripts for multilingual websites.

Various Indian initiatives like TDIL, C-DAC and others contributing towards development of multilingual technologies need to be coordinated together and frame work for multilingual portals be put in place.

Note : This report presents random but comprehensive data from the Web to study the use of Indian Languages on the Web. As most of the net-savvy people would know, Indian Languages are hard to find on the Web. This report brings out the stark contrast between the lack of use of Indian Languages on the Web and the strong presence of the languages of other nations of economic, strategic, geographic and/or political importance.

*Courtesy : Hema Sharma
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