

Website globalization for Argentina and Brazil

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Brazil and Argentina represent two of the strongest economies in South America and also encompass the two main languages of the continent. Due to the fact that it has both abundant natural resources and a well-educated workforce, Argentina is one of South America's largest economies. The retail sector of Brazil is considered the largest in Latin America and has continued to expand rapidly since 2004. From 2000 to 2005, credit card use has doubled as the result of partnerships with big retailers.

Argentina is divided into 23 provinces and one autonomous city, Buenos Aires, which is the capital. Brazil, the fifth largest country in the world and seventh largest in terms of internet usage, is a federative republic consisting of 26 states and a capital federal district called Brasilia. While the culture of Argentina has been principally influenced and formed by its European roots, Brazilian society has evolved from succeeding waves of migration both from Europe and from the African slave trade.

Brazilian Portuguese is the official language of Brazil and is spoken by 154 million people. Portuguese is a Romance language

like French or Italian, though unlike other Romance languages, it has maintained the stressed vowels of Vulgar Latin. Brazilian Portuguese has been influenced both by native languages that it displaced and African languages that traders forced into Brazil. This is primarily in terms of vocabulary, but also in phonology and grammar. Current examples of words that originate from the Tupi-Guarani and African languages include *tucano* and *samba*, respectively.

The Portuguese language is undergoing a change in spelling rules to be implemented in the next several years. More than 230 million Portuguese speakers are affected by these changes, which has led to some controversy. Some Portuguese-speaking people claim that these rules are "Brazilianizing" the language or that the unification will remove the cultural particularities existent today. Other members of the Portuguese-speaking community believe that the new rules will actually bring cultures together by allowing an exchange of school textbooks among the different countries. Brazil will be the least affected country, with a modification in only 0.5% of the words, while in Portugal 1.6% of the words will change.

Currently, Spanish is the primary language of 21 countries, including Argentina, and one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Spanish is spoken by over 322 million people worldwide. Throughout the 21 countries in which Spanish is the primary language, there can be a difference in the

dialect, vocabulary, accents and even grammar rules that need to be considered when translating materials into Spanish. The main dialect of Spanish spoken in Argentina is Rioplatense Spanish, also known as Silver River Spanish. The vocabulary that is used in the Rioplatense dialect of Spanish has been minimally influenced by the native populations of the area, such as Guarani



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and Quechua. Where Peninsular Spanish borrows words from UK English and French, Rioplatense Spanish borrows words from US English. This leads to a great difference in the vocabulary of the various Spanish dialects.

Insights into consumer values

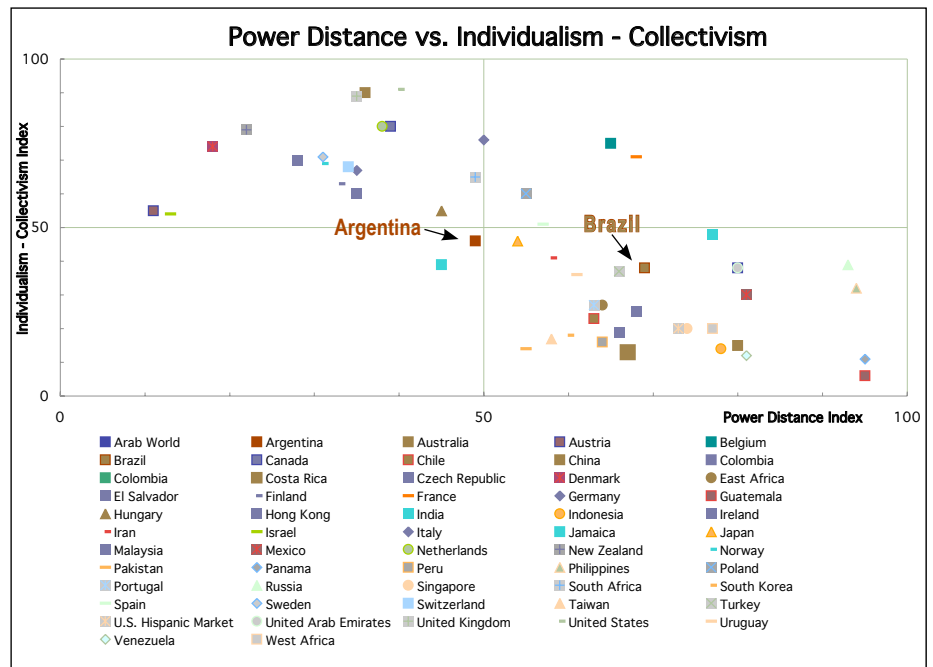
Both Brazilians and Argentines put a high value on appearance. Looking good is an integral and important aspect of their cultures. Whenever possible, Brazilians prefer to purchase products made within their own country. Brazilians enjoy saving money for larger purchases, such as a house; therefore, they often look for a deal when purchasing other items. The decision-making power of women in Brazil has increased, which has resulted in many companies tailoring products and services to the interests and needs of this new group.

Argentine people value relationships and build networks of friends and contacts, both for professional and personal use. Family ties, both nuclear and extended, are extremely important to the consumers of Argentina. It is expected that people will share resources with their family.

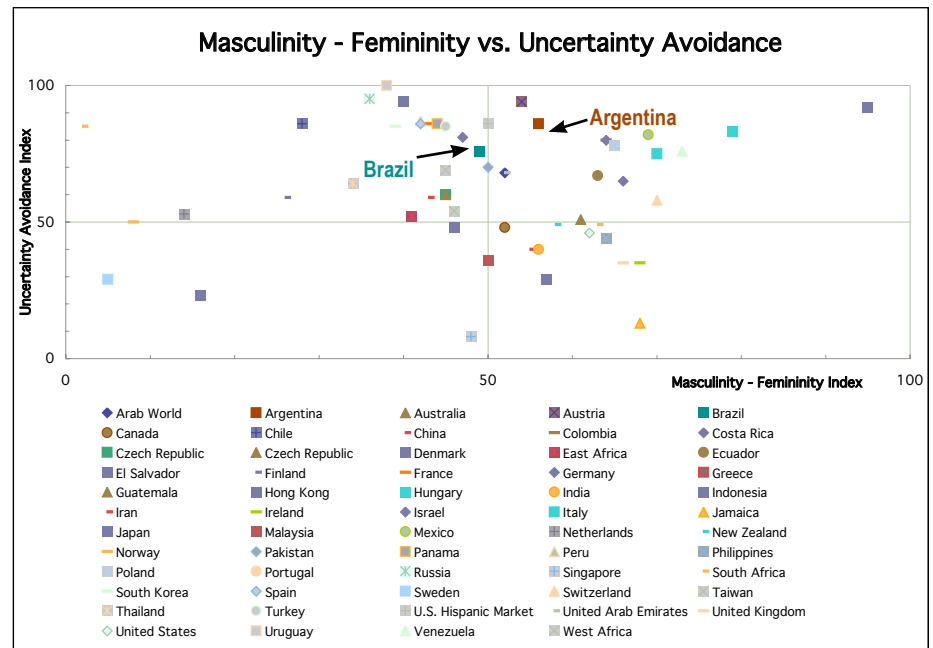
Culture and values

Argentina is fairly traditional when it comes to gender roles and authority figures, while Brazil is a more heterogeneous society due to its diverse population. Both societies are full of symbols, rituals, traditional values and contextual elements. At a macro-level, the culture of Argentina can be described using five cultural values based on the work of Professor Geert Hofstede, who conducted perhaps the most comprehensive study of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture.

Hofstede demonstrated that national and regional cultural groupings affect the behavior of societies and organizations and are persistent across time. Hofstede's research showed that cultural values such as individualism-collectivism, power distance, masculinity-femininity, and uncertainty avoidance can be used to categorize various national cultures. Each of the two Latin American countries shows a different value set. For example, Argentina rates moderately on four of the five values and is a high-context culture. Brazil, on the other hand, rates significantly on four values and shows a preference for masculinity.



Cultural maps adapted from *The Culturally Customized Web Site: Customizing Web Sites for the Global Marketplace* by Nitish Singh and Arun Pereira (2005) and *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations* by Geert Hofstede (2001).



Fast Facts	Brazil	Argentina
Gross domestic product	\$1,067 billion (www.eiu.com, 2007)	\$214.3 billion (www.eiu.com, 2007)
Growth rate	3.7% (www.eiu.com, 2007)	8.5% (www.eiu.com, 2007)
Population	186.8 million	40.3 million
Internet population	45.6 million	16 million
Future internet population	9% growth rate through 2011	35% by 2009

Region Focus

Icons and colors to pay attention to include yellow, which represents either hope, hazards or cowardice to Argentines; green, which represents new beginnings; and blue, which represents depression, conservativeness and sadness. White represents brides, angels, doctors and peace, and black represents funerals, death, rebellion and high fashion. In Brazil likewise it is associated with mourning, as is purple. In the Brazilian culture, handkerchiefs also symbolize grief and mourning, especially when given to a person.

In Brazil, the “fig” is a good luck sign, made by placing the thumb between the index and middle fingers while making a fist. It is also considered a national symbol of Brazil. On the other hand, the O.K. sign made by a circle of the first finger and thumb is considered a vulgar symbol.

The traditional icons of Argentina are fairly well-known. The tango represents the profound transformation of

The Cultural Customization Scorecard for South America							
Values	Individualism	Collectivism	Uncertainty Avoidance	Power Distance	Masculinity	Low Context	High Context
Cultural Scores							
Grading Scale							
>90%	Excellent Customization on Cultural Value						
70-89%	Good Customization on Cultural Value						
<70%	Poor Customization on Cultural Value						

the urban landscape at the beginning of last century with the influx of diverse European immigrants. The tango was also a moral threat for what it symbolized about women and the fact that it romanticized the male behavior that kept them away from home. Eva Perón, also called Evita Perón, was the symbol

of the dreams, hopes and womanhood of Argentina. She completed a significant amount of charity work and spoke on behalf of the unions from when her husband Juan was elected president in 1946 until her death in 1952. There are mixed feelings about her in Argentina due to some of the practices of the Perón government.

The cultural customization scorecard

Once a country’s predominant cultural values have been identified, the next step in customizing a website is to evaluate it on the relevant cultural values. This can be done in the form of the Cultural Customization Scorecard, shown on this page. The scorecard is produced by analyzing the site on the features that conform to the cultural values of interest.

The cultural values of interest for Argentina and Brazil are a combination of collectivism, masculinity, high power distance and high context. The scores are calculated using “content analysis” of a given website.

Internet and search engine marketing

A search engine marketing campaign for South America should be multidimensional for both short-term and long-term success. Using Pay-Per-Click campaigns on targeted Argentine websites and search engines is one way to produce immediate results. It is also a way to become familiar with the consumer segment being targeted in Argentina or Brazil.

The top level domain in Argentina is .ar. Other domains that are popular in Argentina are .com.ar, .com, .org, .net, .info and .biz. At present, there are approximately 2,159 internet hosts in Argentina.

The top-level domain in Brazil is .br. Other domains that are popular in Brazil are .com, .org, .net, .info and .biz. It is advisable to have a local legal representative if a non-Brazilian company would like to obtain a local domain, such as .com.br. The domain needs to be registered at registro.br (www.export.gov/sellingonline/internet_environment/brazil.asp). **M**

To obtain the complete reports on Argentina and Brazil, go to www.globalizationpartners.com/white-papers.aspx

Examples of culturally customized sites in Brazil and Argentina



Collectivism: Brazil is a collectivist culture. Websites may be culturally customized by emphasizing collective themes such as family and community. For example, Häagen-Dazs has a section titled *Imprensa* in which it features pictures of customers enjoying Häagen-Dazs at their own social gatherings.



Masculinity: Argentina is a culture that leans towards masculinity. There are numerous ways that masculinity can be depicted on a website, including highlighting achievement, success and product durability, as well as adventure and fun. For example, Colgate has an interactive presentation on its Argentina site on how to preserve the smile. This is culturally customized due to the interactive nature and highlighting the achievement of the products, as well as ensuring that the Argentine need to "look good" is met.



Uncertainty Avoidance: Brazil is a risk-averse society. It is important to reduce risk, anxiety and uncertainty that Brazilian consumers might have shopping online. For example, Motorola Brazil has the product features of the phone clearly listed along with a picture of the product so that the consumer knows exactly what he or she is buying. Stating the company's business practices and offering online or live customer support are other ways to build online shopping confidence.