

# 50 SEO & WEBSITE TIPS

FOR THE International Marketer



Learn how to create a culturally-optimised website & get more traffic.

A publication of

HubSpot



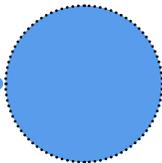
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Advanced content is for marketers who are, or want to be, experts on the subject. In it, we walk you through advanced features of this aspect of inbound marketing and help you develop complete mastery of the subject. After reading it, you will feel ready not only to execute strategies and tactics, but also to teach others how to be successful.

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## 50 SEO & WEBSITE TIPS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETER

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Diana is a regular contributor to the HubSpot blog, and maintains her own social media blog [U Stand Out](#).



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“ *How can I optimise my website for a global audience?* ”



There are many different strategies that go into getting more traffic to your site. But if you're a European marketer targeting your country or a U.S. marketer with customers in multiple countries, the information on how to optimise your website is scattered and hard to find. This guide compiles all the best tips international marketers should know, and links to the resources you can use to learn more.

CHAPTER 1

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# LAUNCHING YOUR GLOBAL WEBSITE





# 1

## USE COUNTRY EXTENSIONS... OR REDIRECT THEM

If you have the resources, build language- or country-specific sites at each respective domain extension (.co.uk, .ie, .nz, etc). Refer to tip #2 if you're worried about duplicate content. If you'd prefer not to have separate domains for each target country or language, buy the domain extension and redirect it to a subdirectory, e.g. <http://yoursite.com/uk>. Whichever you choose, we will be referring to a country- or language-specific site as a "locale site."

## SET UP CROSS-DOMAIN CANONICAL TAGS

# 2

Google now supports using the [rel="canonical" link element](#) across different domains. This means that you can have similar content on both the .com and .co.uk extensions of your site, and use the canonical link element to indicate the exact URL of the domain preferred for indexing. This will make duplicate content a non-issue. Also, keep in mind that this is not required when using different languages. Google does not consider foreign-language translations to be duplicate content. But it is something to consider for multiple locale sites in the same language.

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### 3

## SET UP LOCAL SERVERS

In the past, Google has stated that the country within which a website is hosted is a very small factor in their [international ranking algorithms](#). So try to have servers set up in your target countries. For example, if your company is based in the UK and you have a .fr extension of your site, have the .fr domain extension site hosted on a server in France.

## GET A LOCAL MAILING ADDRESS

### 4

[Establish a physical location](#) or mailing address in each target country if possible. Then add this mailing address to the “About” section of each locale site.

### 5

## SEND WEBSITE VISITORS TO THE RIGHT DOMAIN

Use the country, IP, or browser language auto detection to [automatically redirect people](#) to the right locale site.

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## 6

## USE THE LANGUAGE META TAG

Bing recognizes the language meta tag: `<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="en-us">`, so include this in each locale's website pages

`<head></head>` section. [Click here for a complete list of meta tags](#). Here are some of the most common language meta tags:

- ✓ English (U.S.): `<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="en-us">`
- ✓ English (U.K.): `<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="en-gb">`
- ✓ English (Australia): `<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="en-au">`
- ✓ Irish: `<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="ga">`
- ✓ Spanish (Mexico): `<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="en-mx">`
- ✓ Spanish (Spain): `<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="es">`
- ✓ French (Standard): `<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="fr">`
- ✓ Italian (Standard): `<meta http-equiv="content-language" content="it">`

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# 7

## SET PROPER GEOTARGETING IN GOOGLE WEBMASTER TOOLS

Google allows webmasters to [geographically target certain websites](#) or sections of your website to certain locations and regions via Google Webmaster Tools. You can find these settings by logging into your Webmaster Tools account, looking under Site Configuration, and changing your geographic targeting in the Settings tab.

## MAKE YOUR WEBSITE LOAD QUICKLY

# 8

[Less than 10% of the users](#) in the most active internet countries have broadband. The faster your website loads, the better rank your site will have on Google and other major search engines. Local hosting will also typically help reduce page load speeds, so this is another benefit of setting up local servers.

# 9

## USE UTF-8 COMPLIANT CMS/SOFTWARE

Accommodate for [international character handling](#) so that you can view the output in Chinese, Japanese, Russian, etc.

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## SUBMIT A SITEMAP FOR EACH LOCALE SITE

Create and submit sitemaps for each country in Google Webmaster Tools. This is only necessary if you're using subdirectories for each of your locale sites, but it is very important that Google indexes and understands all the pages on your site. The best way to do this is to submit a sitemap for each country or region you are targeting. [According to Trimark Solutions](#), many webmasters will simply keep one single sitemap for the entire website, which is not nearly as efficient to maintain and update.

## ADD GOOGLE TRANSLATE TO YOUR SITE

11

You may not have the resources to create locale sites for each country or language you want to target. In that case, [add Google Translate to your site](#) to ensure that your website visitors can see your content in their language (even if it's not a perfect translation).

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CHAPTER 2

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# KEYWORD RESEARCH





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## BUILD A KEYWORD LIST FOR EACH COUNTRY OR LANGUAGE

Pick a list of words relevant to your business. Then create separate lists of these keywords for each country. Focus on “long-tail keywords” -- keywords that are very specific to your business and the products/services you offer. For example: *marketing* is a broad keyword that will be hard to get traffic for, and *inbound marketing software* is a long-tail keyword with less competition that will be easier to get traffic for.

## DO INTERNATIONAL KEYWORD RESEARCH

13

See what keywords are most popular in [each country you're targeting](#), and optimise the pages on that country's section of your website accordingly. Also, remember that even a correct and accurate translation of a keyword or term may not be what people actually use to search for a product or service locally.

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## USE CORRECT SPELLING VARIATIONS

American and British folks may speak the same language, but there are nuances that are important to address (color vs. colour, optimization vs. optimisation, etc.) To all you U.S. readers: you thought we were misspelling “optimise,” didn't you? \*Wink.\*

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## 15 PROVIDE NATIVE TRANSLATIONS

Don't take all the content of a website page and put it through Google Translate. It will sound Google Translated to anyone who speaks the language natively. Get help from someone who is fluent in the language you're creating content for. Here are just some of the translation service providers you could choose from:

- ✓ Milengo - <http://milengo.com>
- ✓ Translations.com - <http://translations.com>
- ✓ Lingo24 - <http://lingo24.com>
- ✓ Verbatim Solutions - <http://verbatimolutions.com>

## CREATE NEW KEYWORDS FOR TERMS WITH NO TRANSLATION

16

Understand that you cannot translate certain keywords, as not every term or phrase has an exact translation. In these cases, you must [recreate those keywords](#). Work with someone who speaks the language fluently and can write in that country's vernacular.

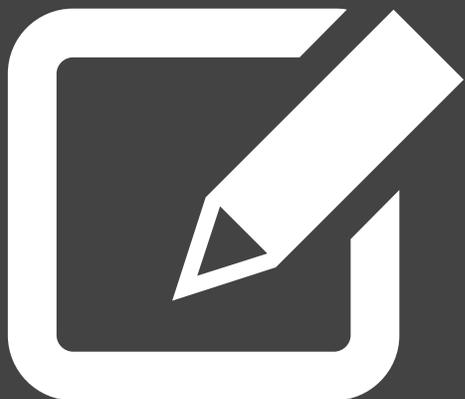
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CHAPTER 3

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# ON-PAGE SEO ELEMENTS





# 17

## PUT KEYWORDS IN THE PAGE TITLE

The page title is one of the most important things that Google and other search engines evaluate to determine what is on a web page. Put your keyword or phrase in the title, and keep it short. The page title should follow these guidelines:

- ✓ Be under 70 characters with no more than two keywords per page title
- ✓ The primary keyword should appear first
- ✓ Each keyword phrase should be separated by pipes (|)
- ✓ Each page title on your website should be unique

[London Vacation Rentals, London Apartment Rentals | HomeAway](http://www.homeaway.com/vacation-rentals/united-kingdom/london/r482)

[www.homeaway.com/vacation-rentals/united-kingdom/london/r482](http://www.homeaway.com/vacation-rentals/united-kingdom/london/r482)

Find **London** vacation **rentals**, **apartments** and more with HomeAway. ... Visiting **London, England** is a great way to experience a different culture, and can be ...

↳ [City of London - Westminster & West End - Camden & Covent Garden - Ealing](#)

## PUT KEYWORDS IN THE PAGE URL

# 18

Google and other search engines also use the text of the URL of the page to determine the content of the web page. You should use your keyword or phrase in the URL of the web page - either the folder/directory structure or the HTML file/page name itself.

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## 19

**PUT KEYWORDS IN THE META DATA**

While the page meta data (page description and keywords) are not nearly as important as they used to be, they still count. Take advantage of them by putting your keyword or phrase there. The meta description should follow these guidelines:

- ✓ Be under 150 characters (but not under 100 characters)
- ✓ Provide a compelling reason for why someone should visit the page
- ✓ Include your target keywords in a conversational format
- ✓ Don't just cram in keywords for the sake of including them

**PUT KEYWORDS IN YOUR HEADER TEXT**

## 20

The header text, or H1 text, is usually the title of an article or some larger bold text at the top of your page. Google and the smaller search engines can see this and they put extra importance on the words in the H1 text. Make sure your target keyword or phrase is there.

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## 21

### USE KEYWORDS IN THE PAGE CONTENT

Putting the keyword in your page content also signals to search engines that the page is actually about the keyword and should show up in search results. “Experts” advise you to use your keyword anywhere from 4-6 times to 10-12 times. HubSpot’s advice: just write naturally.

### USE KEYWORDS IN THE ALT TEXT

## 22

Any images used on the page should be optimised so that search engines can “read” the image. [You can edit an image’s ALT text via the HTML.](#) ALT text should not include any dashes.

## 23

### USE ONE LANGUAGE PER PAGE

You [shouldn’t mix languages](#) on the same page. Even though you might think this will help your website visitors understand that the website is based out of another country, it will not help your overall user experience.

### OPTIMISE FOR LOCAL SEARCH ENGINES

## 24

The U.S. may use Google, but other countries use [different search engines](#). In China, you must optimise for [Baidu](#), and in Russia you must optimise for [Yandex](#).

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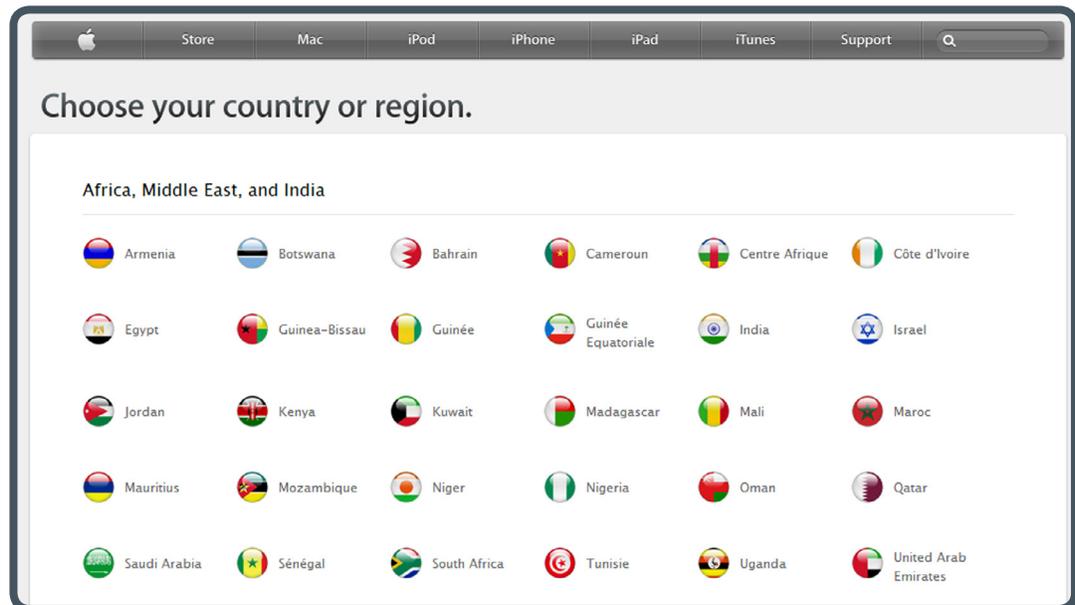




## 25

# LET VISITORS NAVIGATE TO DIFFERENT LOCALE SITES

If you have several versions of your site in different languages, add visual cues linking to your multilingual content in or near your top navigation. For example, you can use [flag icons](#) to link to each country or language's site. [Apple](#) even has a page that lists all the countries for which they provide a website version.



## ADD LOCALE SITE LINKS TO YOUR FOOTERS

## 26

Add links to your multilingual content across all of your domain footers. Not only will this help your site visitors navigate to the content most relevant to them, but you'll also be interlinking all of your content.

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## ADD A CALL TO ACTION (CTA)

Every website page, including your blog, should have at least one call-to-action above the page's fold – in other words, don't make your website visitor scroll down to see the call to action. Calls to action can help SEO by creating an internal link on your website to a specific landing page. Most calls to action are images; therefore you can optimise the image filename and alt text for the primary keyword you're targeting on the page.

## MONITOR YOUR RANK

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Give the search engines some time to do their thing (a couple days, or even weeks) and then keep checking your rank to see what happened and track your progress.

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CHAPTER 4

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# OFF-PAGE SEO ELEMENTS





## 29

**CREATE REMARKABLE CONTENT**

You might get caught up in creating different versions of content for your locale sites. But remember, creating remarkable and unique content should be your highest priority, above any other off-page seo tips. Create interesting and valuable content that other people will want to link to, no matter where they live.

**REGISTER EACH LOCALE SITE ON LOCAL DIRECTORIES**

## 30

If you have different sections of your site, or domains for each country, enter each one in the relevant directories: [Google Places](#), [Bing Business Portal](#), or any other directory that's relevant to your region.

## 31

**GET INBOUND LINKS FROM TARGET COUNTRIES**

The number and quality of links to your website are quite important to Google and other search engines for your rank on different terms. You should aim to increase [inbound links from sites of the same country](#). Get sites in the UK to link to your co.uk extension, sites in Ireland to link to your .ie extension, etc.

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## ASK FOR LINKS FROM PEOPLE YOU KNOW

One of the best ways to get links when you're first starting out is to ask people you know to link to your site from their site using a target keyword as the anchor text -- the text being used as the link to your site. Use your network of customers, partners, vendors, and even friends/family around the world to link to your site, and ask them to link to the right locale site.

## GUEST BLOG ON SIMILAR NICHE INDUSTRY BLOGS

33

Build a list of other niche blogs in your field. Start commenting on their blogs with insightful comments, and then reach out to them and ask if you can write one guest post for them. If they accept, write NEW content for their blog (don't just copy and paste something already existing on your blog). Remember to include a couple links within your post linking back to your site, using anchor text with your relevant keywords.

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## INTERVIEW AN INDUSTRY EXPERT IN EACH LOCALE

Interview an industry expert who has a website or blog, and then create a blog post about the industry. When the post is up, send the link to the person you interviewed, thanking them for the interview. They'll be likely to promote the post on their own site in order to promote themselves!

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## 35

## AVOID BLACK-HAT LINK BUILDING STRATEGIES

It's also important to know what kinds of link-building strategies to avoid, so that you don't waste your valuable time and effort doing something that can make Google sandbox your site (remove it from their search engine). Here are the strategies to avoid:

- ✗ Link buying
- ✗ Link farming
- ✗ Article submissions (e.g. Ezine articles, InfoBarrel, etc.)
- ✗ Too many 1:1 link exchanges

## TEACH YOUR WEBSITE VISITORS SOMETHING USEFUL

## 36

Educational content can be described as content that teaches people something or helps answer one of their questions. Having a blog is a great way to consistently provide your readers (and search engine surfers) with new, informative content. The articles are typically short and have key takeaways or downloadable resources attached to them. These types of resources make great pages for other sites to link to.

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CHAPTER 5

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# WEBSITE DESIGN ELEMENTS





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## USE GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED FONTS

It's best to use common fonts on your website that are recognized around the world. This will help ensure the text is displayed correctly on most screens. To be safe, choose from the following fonts:

- ✓ Times New Roman
- ✓ Arial
- ✓ Verdana

## CREATE A FLEXIBLE WEB DESIGN

38

Cross-cultural websites should have [pages that are as flexible as possible](#).

One reason is because of word length; German tends to use much longer words than English, while many Asian languages require less space.

Avoid fixed structures with text in it; space should be allowed to expand or contract according to word size.

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## 39 LEARN COLOR CONNOTATIONS

Figure out [what certain colours mean](#) in different countries before designing your website. In most of Europe and the Americas, white is associated with purity and marriage. In Japan, China and parts of Africa, white is traditionally the colour of mourning.

## USE THE RIGHT DATE FORMATTING 40

Make sure the dates on your webpages, blog post bylines, etc. are set up the way other countries have their dates. For example: November 15th, 2012 is 11/15/12 in the United States but is 15/11/12 in the United Kingdom.

## 41 OPTIMISE YOUR PRICING PAGES

Make sure countries can pay in [their local currencies](#). If customers are forced to pay in other currencies, they will find a company that allows them to pay with their own. Appealing internationally means accepting multiple forms of currency. Also [ensure global delivery](#) by making sure international visitors can purchase your products overseas, and the experience is user friendly.

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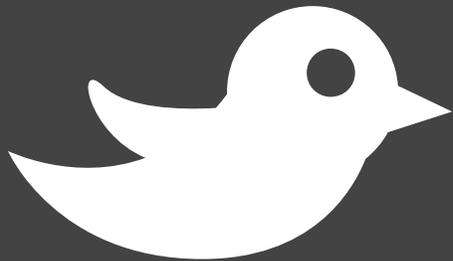


CHAPTER 5

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# PAID & SOCIAL MEDIA





## 42 GEO-TARGET PAID SEARCH CAMPAIGNS

If you plan to use Google AdWords, be sure to [geo-target your campaigns](#). This way you can create ads for particular countries and languages, and target country- or language-specific keywords for those ads.

## GET YOUR CONTENT RETWEETED 43

[Generating retweets of your content](#) can be a great way to expand your tweets' reach beyond your direct network. When you are tweeting, leave some space in your tweets to allow for "RT @Username" and room for users' commentary. The more retweets you get relating to the keywords you want to rank for, the better your SEO will be.

## 44 INCLUDE LINKS BACK TO YOUR WEBSITE FROM SOCIAL MEDIA SITES.

Your ultimate goal of participating in social media is likely to drive traffic back to your website so you can convert visitors into leads. By using specific keywords and [linking back to your site](#) on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+, you will not only get visitors searching for that particular keyword, but you will rank better for that keyword.

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## 45 ADD A HASHTAG TO YOUR TWEETS

Are you tweeting something relative to a campaign you're running or an event you're hosting? [Include the hashtag](#) so others can easily find your tweets, even if they're not directly following you. If the hashtag becomes a trending topic, more people will visit your website, increasing your SEO on that particular topic.

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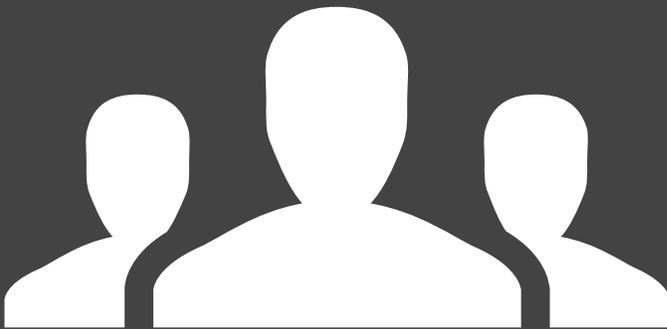


CHAPTER 6

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# CULTURAL ELEMENTS





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## KNOW THE LOCAL INTERNET MARKETING RULES AND LAWS

Understand any [rules related to advertising in different countries](#). For example, the EU Privacy directives are important to all businesses with customers primarily in Europe, and will require you to make changes to your website to be in accordance with these directives.

## LEARN CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

47

If your business targets customers in countries foreign to yours, [learn about the different countries' cultures](#) to understand what appeals to them versus your country. Certain markets are much more difficult to break into than others and may require an agency to get you a head start. If the business culture requires an agency to get you started, don't be afraid to work with one.

48

## UNDERSTAND LOCAL PURCHASING MENTALITY

[Different countries make purchases online differently](#). In some markets, people will purchase online but then call a 1-800 number to complete the purchase. Ensuring that your website meets the needs of different countries is essential for the ideal customer experience.

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## 49 RESEARCH THE LOCAL COMPETITION

[Competition may be far different](#) in other countries. In some cases, there are countries without any competition, and they are able to completely dominate the market. But if there is competition, it is important to be able to identify who the other players are, what they do best, and how you can compete with them.

## LEARN BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENCES IN EACH CULTURE 50

[Input methods drive behavior](#), including mobile, PC and tablet. Different keyboards in different countries have different layouts. Understanding a country's habits and how that impacts usability should determine how pages are set up. For example, sometimes you may choose to use a link instead of filling out a box to accomplish your purpose.

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