

Status of the ALA Internationalization

and Next Steps

ALA-LAs Workshop (Madrid, March 2025)

Vicente J. Ruiz Jurado (@vjrrj), 2025/03/13

Introduction

- Several issues exist with the internationalization (i18n) of ALA software.
- Despite improvements, **many problems remain.**
- ALA, NBN-UK, or Kew do not currently require multilingual portals.
- So it's a **job for the rest of the LA community.**

Lets coordinate better

- Multilingual support is **essential** for multilingual LA portals (Austria, Brazil, Croacia, Flanders, France, Spain among others).
- **We are not very coordinated.**
- When I tried to bring up this topic and coordinate efforts, I received no response from the other members.
- I'm personally with fear to **duplicate** i18n coding **efforts**.

Current Issues (1/3)

1. **Hard-coded English text** in the code, making it untranslatable via Crowdin.
2. Some modules **lack UTF-8 support** (new modules of species lists, events, spatial has only part support, ...).
3. **Australia references here and there** that are not yet configurable.
4. **Outdated JavaScript i18n library**, leading to maintenance issues.
5. **User language preferences** are not stored in multilingual portals.

Current Issues (2/3)

6. Hidden i18n issues beyond simple text strings.
7. **Lack of translation context**, making translations ambiguous.
8. **Unnecessary translations** of messages not used now in the code.
9. **Fixed usage of “Atlas”** in system messages, causing inconsistency especially in portals that does not use Atlas as a Portal Name.

Current Issues (3/3)

10. **Incorrect portal branding** in page descriptions (e.g., ALA/Atlas name in link previews).
11. **Emails and notifications are only in the default portal language**, not the user's preferred language.
12. Lack of support for **non-Latin characters** (I always like to think in Asian languages).

Key Challenges

- These are **long-term issues** even milestones, requiring structured effort.
- Solutions need collaboration between **non-English LA portals**.
- Some tasks require **fundamental code changes**.

Proposed Next Steps

1. **Prioritize tasks.**
2. Maybe **create GitHub milestones & issues** to track progress.
3. Consider a **dedicated ALA i18n project** for structured milestones & issues tracking.
4. **Coordinate among LA non-English portals** for shared development efforts.
5. Don't duplicate efforts.

Tracking Progress

- We can monitor our progress via GitHub `i18n` label:
 - ALA i18n Issues & Pull Requests

Immediate Actions

- Identify **critical** vs. **nice-to-have** issues.
- Auto-assign tasks to teams within the LA community.

Long-Term Goals

- Replace outdated i18n libraries? Probably is better to use new i18n libs in new code.
- Implement **user language preferences** storage.
- Improve **multi-language email and notification support**.
- Enhance **translation tools** to provide context.

Conclusion

- **ALA i18n has improved**, but challenges remain.
- **Collaboration is key** to solving major issues and not duplicate efforts.
- A structured approach is necessary for sustainable progress.

Open Discussion

- What are your main concerns?
- Which issues should be prioritized?
- How can we better coordinate efforts?