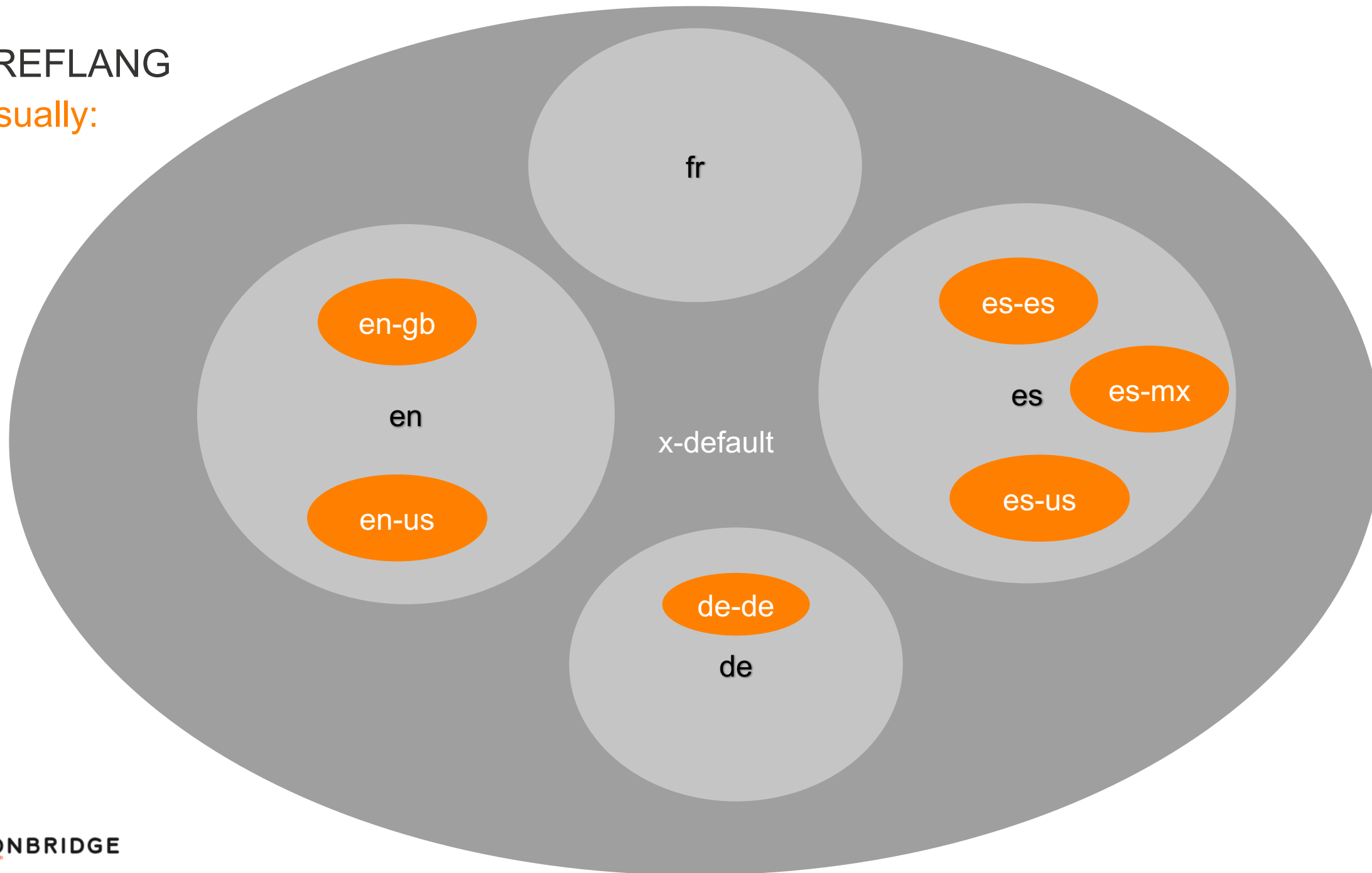# WHAT IS HREFLANG?

DEFINITIONS:

- If you have multiple versions of a page for different languages or regions, tell Google about these different variations. Doing so will help Google Search point users to the most appropriate version of your page by language or region.

- Use hreflang to tell Google about the variations of your content, so that we can understand that these pages are localized variations of the same content.
  - Google

- Hreflang is an HTML attribute that specifies a webpage's language and sometimes the target geographical region.

- It's useful if your website has the same webpage(s) in multiple languages. So, search engines can determine which version of a page to show searchers depending on their location or preferred language.
  - Semrush

- Hreflang is an HTML attribute used to specify the language and geographical targeting of a webpage. If you have multiple versions of the same page in different languages, you can use the hreflang tag to tell search engines like Google about these variations. This helps them to serve the correct version to their users.
  - Ahrefs

- Introduced by Google in December 2011, the hreflang attribute allows you to show search engines what the relationship is between web pages in alternate languages. It's useful when you've created content that's specific to a local audience. The hreflang attribute adds a signal to search engines that a user querying in language "x" will want this result instead of a page with similar content in language "y".
  - Moz

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HREFLANG
Visually:

IS HREFLANG NECESSARY
CAN WE LIVE WITHOUT IT?

Google understands language, if you have a 2-language site, Google will understand it.

If your site is <u>not</u> using multiple versions of the same language, Google will usually display the right page.

On a language driven site, it is not always needed, but it can be useful. Use it to direct users who are not covered by the languages listed to your chosen fallback language e.g. English.

If you are targeting multiple regions with the same language but separate pages.

Frequently sites will have multiple instances of a page for different countries – currency, delivery options, product options, product availability.

Hreflang is useful in handling these pages which are almost duplicates.

If 2 pages are actual duplicates, review approach.

Tell Google what page to land in each market that you support.

Tell Google what page to show to a user who speaks one of the languages you support but doesn't live in one of the markets you support.

Tell Google what page to show a user who doesn't match one of the countries or languages you support.

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HREFLANG
TAGGING RULES

Hreflang tags should be applied on all localized pages (and the source pages).

Every version of a page should have the same hreflang tags.

If a page is omitted from the solution, duplication is a likely outcome.

The page on which the tags are put must also be included in the tags (self-referencing).

Tags must reflect the language of the on-page content.

Language codes must be accurate and generally conform to ISO formats, with minor exceptions – zh-hans (Chinese simplified), zh-hant (Chinese traditional), and es-419 (Spanish LATAM).

X-default is recommended for complete solutions (should never be used in partial solutions). It represents the fallback for users who do not conform to any of the listed rules.

Language level fallbacks are usually recommended. This allows you to direct users to their most appropriate language page, if their country is not listed in the rules.

Links in the solution should not redirect and should not 404.

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HREFLANG EXAMPLE

If you are looking for a good example of a solution which is comprehensive, visit Stripe.com.

- A significant number of options
- Multiple page versions necessary due to regulations, currency etc.
- Lot of English, lots of options for Google.


```html
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/" hreflang="x-default">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/" hreflang="en-US">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/es-us" hreflang="es-US">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/zh-us" hreflang="zh-US">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/ae" hreflang="en-AE">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/at" hreflang="de-AT">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://Stripe.com/en-at" hreflang="en-AT">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/au" hreflang="en-AU">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/nl-be" hreflang="nl-BE">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/fr-be" hreflang="fr-BE">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/de-be" hreflang="de-BE">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-be" hreflang="en-BE">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-bg" hreflang="en-BG">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/br" hreflang="pt-BR">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-br" hreflang="en-BR">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-ca" hreflang="en-CA">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/fr-ca" hreflang="fr-CA">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/de-ch" hreflang="de-CH">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/fr-ch" hreflang="fr-CH">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/it-ch" hreflang="it-CH">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-ch" hreflang="en-CH">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-cy" hreflang="en-CY">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-cz" hreflang="en-CZ">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/de" hreflang="de-DE">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-de" hreflang="en-DE">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-dk" hreflang="en-DK">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-ee" hreflang="en-EE">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/es" hreflang="es-ES">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-es" hreflang="en-ES">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-fi" hreflang="en-FI">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/sv-fi" hreflang="sv-FI">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/fr" hreflang="fr-FR">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-fr" hreflang="en-FR">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/gb" hreflang="en-GB">
<link rel="alternate" href="https://stripe.com/en-gi" hreflang="en-GI">
```

Australia	France	Lithuania	Slovakia
English	Français English	English	English
Austria	Germany	Luxembourg	Slovenia
Deutsch English	Deutsch English	Français Deutsch English	English Italiano
Belgium	Gibraltar	Malaysia	Spain
Nederlands Français Deutsch English	English	English 简体中文	Español English
Brazil	Greece	Malta	Sweden
Português English	English	English	Svenska English
Bulgaria	Hong Kong	Mexico	Switzerland
English	English 简体中文	Español English	Deutsch Français Italiano English
Canada	Hungary	Netherlands	Thailand
English Français	English	Nederlands English	ไทย English
Croatia	India	New Zealand	United Arab Emirates
English Italiano	English	English	English
Cyprus	Ireland	Norway	United Kingdom
English	English	English	English
Czech Republic	Italy	Poland	United States
English	Italiano English	English	English Español 简体中文
Denmark	Japan	Portugal	
English	日本語 English	Português English	
Estonia	Latvia	Romania	
English	English	English	
Finland	Liechtenstein	Singapore	
English Svenska	Deutsch English	English 简体中文	

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SITE STRUCTURE
TARGETING A GLOBAL AUDIENCE

There are multiple ways of targeting a global audience.

Local TLDs in each target market, can work really well, particularly if you support a small number of markets. Some larger companies still use this approach e.g. Sony.

- Expensive to manage.

- Be careful if you also have a global TLD, for the US for example, as this has a right to rank globally.

Subdomains on a global TLD, these are technically different websites, which can have benefits.

- Less expensive to manage but still managing separate websites.

- Not that common.

Directories on a global TLD, easiest to manage but requires a little effort to ensure Google shows the right page in each market.

- Most common approach, easiest to manage.

- With everything on the same domain / site, Google needs help delivering content to the right market.

You may also see parameters, but this is not a recommended approach.

- You can see a site like Google Store where they are transitioning from a parameter driven approach to a directory driven approach.

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THANK YOU

We break barriers and build bridges
to new opportunities. Everywhere.

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