



Best Practices

Alternate Hreflang Tags for Magento 2

These are the recommended ways to configure the [Alternate Hreflang Extension](#) based on what we've seen work well. We've included a few real-world examples - simple multi-language stores, B2B vs B2C setups, multi-brand configurations - so you can see how others are using it. There's also a list of common mistakes people make and how to avoid them.

Recommended configurations and common pitfalls.

General Guidelines

Do's

- Enable canonical URL integration to prevent duplicate content issues
- Use region-specific language codes (en-us, en-gb) when targeting different markets
- Group only store-views that share the same products/categories
- Test configuration with `?show-alternate=1` before going live
- Enable NoIndex handling if using noindex directives
- Regenerate sitemap after configuration changes
- Consult with your SEO partner for complex setups
- Run self-test after major configuration changes
- Keep language codes consistent (lowercase with hyphen)
- Clear cache after configuration changes

Don'ts

- Don't add hreflang to pages with noindex directive
- Don't mix different product catalogs in the same group
- Don't over-complicate x-default (skip it for simple setups)
- Don't use inconsistent language code formatting
- Don't forget to disable debug mode in production
- Don't change store groups frequently (impacts SEO)
- Don't enable page types that aren't translated
- Don't skip testing after configuration changes

Common Scenarios

Scenario 1: Simple Multi-Language Store

Use case: Single store with multiple languages, all sharing the same product catalog.

Example: International e-commerce site selling to Europe

Configuration:

Targeting Settings:

- English (US) → en-us → Group 1
- French → fr-fr → Group 1
- German → de-de → Group 1
- Spanish → es-es → Group 1

Page Types:

- Enable on Homepage: Yes
- Enable on Product Pages: Yes
- Enable on Category Pages: Yes
- Enable on CMS Pages: Yes

Canonical Integration:

- Enable Hreflang Only on Canonical URLs: Yes

NoIndex Handling:

- Enable: No (all content should be indexed)

X-Default:

- Not configured (skip for simple setup)

Result: All products/categories link across all 4 languages. Search engines show the correct language to each user.

Scenario 2: Multi-Regional English Store

Use case: Same language but different regions with pricing/shipping differences.

Example: Global store targeting US, UK, Australia, Canada

Configuration:

Targeting Settings:

- United States → en-us → Group 1
- United Kingdom → en-gb → Group 1
- Australia → en-au → Group 1
- Canada → en-ca → Group 1

Page Types:

- Enable on Homepage: Yes
- Enable on Product Pages: Yes
- Enable on Category Pages: Yes
- Enable on CMS Pages: Yes

Canonical Integration:

- Enable Hreflang Only on Canonical URLs: Yes

X-Default:

- Target Store-View: United States (en-us)

Result: Search engines serve the correct regional version based on user location, even though language is the same.

Scenario 3: Multiple Product Catalogs

Use case: Separate stores for different product lines or brands that don't share inventory.

Example: Fashion company with footwear and apparel divisions

Configuration:

Targeting Settings:

Group 1 - Footwear:

- Shoes EN → en-us → Group 1
- Shoes FR → fr-fr → Group 1
- Shoes DE → de-de → Group 1

Group 2 - Apparel:

- Clothing EN → en-us → Group 2
- Clothing FR → fr-fr → Group 2
- Clothing DE → de-de → Group 2

Page Types:

- Enable on Homepage: Yes
- Enable on Product Pages: Yes
- Enable on Category Pages: Yes
- Enable on CMS Pages: No (different content per division)

Canonical Integration:

- Enable Hreflang Only on Canonical URLs: Yes

Result: Footwear products only link to other footwear stores. Apparel products only link to other apparel stores. No cross-linking between divisions.

Scenario 4: B2C and B2B Stores

Use case: Separate customer-facing and business stores with different products and pricing.

Example: Manufacturer with retail and wholesale channels

Configuration:

Targeting Settings:

Group 1 - B2C:

- Retail EN → en-us → Group 1
- Retail FR → fr-fr → Group 1

Group 2 - B2B:

- Wholesale EN → en-us → Group 2
- Wholesale FR → fr-fr → Group 2

Page Types:

- Enable on Homepage: Yes
- Enable on Product Pages: Yes
- Enable on Category Pages: Yes
- Enable on CMS Pages: Yes

Canonical Integration:

- Enable Hreflang Only on Canonical URLs: Yes

Result: B2C products link only to other B2C stores. B2B products link only to other B2B stores.

Scenario 5: Enterprise with Sitemap Integration

Use case: Large catalog with automated sitemap generation for faster search engine discovery.

Example: Major retailer with 10,000+ products in multiple languages

Requirements: [Magmodules Sitemap and Robots Module](#) for XML sitemap integration and NoIndex attribute handling.

Configuration:

Targeting Settings:

- EN → en-us → Group 1
- FR → fr-fr → Group 1
- DE → de-de → Group 1
- IT → it-it → Group 1
- ES → es-es → Group 1

Page Types:

- Enable on Homepage: Yes
- Enable on Product Pages: Yes
- Enable on Category Pages: Yes
- Enable on CMS Pages: Yes

Canonical Integration:

- Enable Hreflang Only on Canonical URLs: Yes

NoIndex Handling:

- Enable: Yes
- Product Attribute: mm_meta_robots
- Category Attribute: mm_meta_robots
- CMS Column: mm_meta_robots

Third Party:

- Enable: Yes
- Sitemap Products: Yes
- Sitemap Categories: Yes
- Sitemap CMS Pages: Yes
- Sitemap Homepage: Yes

Result: Complete hreflang implementation with XML sitemap integration for efficient search engine crawling. NoIndex pages are excluded automatically.

Language Code Best Practices

Use Region-Specific Codes

Better:

en-us (United States)
en-gb (United Kingdom)
en-au (Australia)

Less specific:

en (English - any region)

Why: Regional codes help search engines target the right audience, especially when content/pricing differs by region.

Common Language Codes

Code	Language	Region
en-us	English	United States
en-gb	English	United Kingdom
en-au	English	Australia
en-ca	English	Canada
fr-fr	French	France
fr-ca	French	Canada
de-de	German	Germany
de-at	German	Austria
es-es	Spanish	Spain
es-mx	Spanish	Mexico
it-it	Italian	Italy
nl-nl	Dutch	Netherlands
pt-pt	Portuguese	Portugal
pt-br	Portuguese	Brazil

Store Grouping Strategy

When to Use the Same Group

- ☐ Stores share the same products
- ☐ Stores share the same categories
- ☐ Content is translated/localized but structurally the same
- ☐ Different languages/regions of the same business

When to Use Different Groups

- ☐ Different product catalogs
- ☐ Different brands or business units
- ☐ B2B vs. B2C
- ☐ Products/categories are NOT shared
- ☐ Completely separate businesses

Example Grouping:

☐ Good:

Group 1:

- EN Store (en-us) - Sells shoes in English
- FR Store (fr-fr) - Sells shoes in French
- DE Store (de-de) - Sells shoes in German

Group 2:

- EN Store (en-us) - Sells clothing in English
- FR Store (fr-fr) - Sells clothing in French
- DE Store (de-de) - Sells clothing in German

☐ Bad:

Group 1:

- EN Shoes (en-us)
- FR Clothing (fr-fr)
- DE Shoes (de-de)

Testing Workflow

Initial Setup

1. Configure in development/staging first
2. Enable debug mode
3. Test with `?show-alternate=1` on key pages:

- Homepage
 - Popular product
 - Main category
 - Key CMS page
4. Run self-test tool
 5. Review debug logs for errors
 6. Verify all expected stores appear in hreflang tags
 7. Disable debug mode
 8. Deploy to production

After Going Live

1. Submit sitemap to Google Search Console
2. Monitor International Targeting report
3. Check for hreflang errors in Search Console
4. Monitor organic traffic by language/region
5. Review crawl logs for efficiency

Regular Maintenance

- Run self-test quarterly
- Check for module updates monthly
- Review hreflang errors in Search Console monthly
- Audit configuration when adding new stores
- Test after major Magento updates

Performance Optimization

For Large Catalogs

- Enable only necessary page types
- Use sitemap integration for faster discovery (requires [Sitemap and Robots Module](#))
- Monitor sitemap generation time
- Consider sitemap index files for 10,000+ products
- Enable compression (gzip) on sitemaps

For High-Traffic Sites

- Disable debug logging in production
- Use full-page cache for hreflang tags
- Monitor server resources during sitemap generation
- Generate sitemaps during off-peak hours

Common Mistakes

Mistake: Enabling all page types by default

Why it's wrong: Adds hreflang to untranslated pages, creating noise

Correct approach: Only enable page types that are actually translated/localized

Mistake: Not using canonical integration

Why it's wrong: Hreflang tags appear on duplicate/filtered URLs, causing duplicate content issues

Correct approach: Always enable "Hreflang Only on Canonical URLs"

Mistake: Using inconsistent language codes

Why it's wrong: `en_US`, `en-us`, `EN-US` are treated differently by search engines

Correct approach: Always use lowercase with hyphen: `en-us`

Mistake: Over-complicating x-default

Why it's wrong: Unnecessary complexity for simple setups, can introduce errors

Correct approach: Skip x-default for straightforward multi-language stores

Mistake: Not testing before going live

Why it's wrong: Errors in hreflang can negatively impact SEO

Correct approach: Always test with debug mode and run self-test before production

Mistake: Mixing product catalogs in same group

Why it's wrong: Creates links between unrelated products

Correct approach: Use separate groups for different catalogs

SEO Considerations

Consult Your SEO Partner

While this module handles the technical implementation, strategic decisions should involve your SEO team:

- X-default strategy
- Language/region targeting approach
- Store grouping strategy
- Which page types to enable
- International content strategy

Monitor Performance

Use Google Search Console to:

- Check for hreflang errors
- Monitor international traffic
- Review language/region distribution
- Identify indexing issues
- Track crawl efficiency

Best Timing for Changes

- Deploy during low-traffic periods
- Allow 2-4 weeks for search engines to process changes
- Monitor Search Console for errors after changes
- Don't make frequent changes to grouping/codes

Need More Help?

Documentation:

- [All Help Articles](#) - Complete documentation overview

Support:

- [Contact Support](#) - Get help from our team

For a complete overview of features and configuration options, see the Alternate Hreflang Tags extension on magmodules.eu

All articles for Alternate Hreflang Tags

Installation

1	Installation using Composer (recommended)
2	Installation using the Adobe Marketplace
3	Install through FTP and SSH

Configuration

1	Quick Start Guide
2	Configuration Guide
3	CMS Pages and Homepage Setup

Troubleshooting

1	Troubleshooting
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Background

1	Best Practices (current)
2	Alternate Link Groups for Products and Categories
3	Understanding Hreflang Tags

