



Osprey Publishing - driving book discovery and sales through a new channel with Google Book Search

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Managing Director

OSPREY
PUBLISHING

ABOUT GOOGLE BOOK SEARCH

Google Book Search enables publishers to promote their books on Google. Google scans the full text of participating publishers' titles so that Google users can see books that match the topics they are searching on. When users click on a book search result, they are taken to a Google-hosted web page displaying a scanned image of the relevant page from the book. Each page also contains multiple “Buy this Book” links, which enable users to purchase the book from online retailers. Users may also see contextually targeted Google AdWords ads on these pages. Publishers will receive a share of the revenue generated from ads appearing on their content.

For more information, visit
<http://books.google.co.uk>

Established in 1968, Osprey Publishing is a UK-based publisher of books on the history of war and warfare. Osprey books combine detailed and authoritative text, color artwork, maps, photographs and other images. In 2004, Osprey opened new offices in Oxford and New York, and in 2005, Osprey Publishing Inc., its newly formed subsidiary, began trading in North America. Osprey's list totals nearly 1,300 books, and the company typically produces 120 new titles a year. Osprey's customer base embraces enthusiasts, hobbyists, professionals in education and media, and the wider universe of readers whose interest has been sparked by some facet of the history of war.

Challenge

Osprey Publishing faces a dual challenge: connecting with buyers with an established interest in the specialized information it offers, and expanding its market by reaching more general-interest readers.

“We produce highly focused information for people with a deep interest in war and warfare,” says William Shepherd, Managing Director of Osprey Publishing Ltd and President of Osprey Publishing Inc.

“We're pleased to see Google providing links to other places where people can buy our books, including local retailers. We see these channels as absolutely complementary in terms of customer choice, access to our books and the kind of sales they drive.”

“We do have a few outlets that carry a large number of our titles, going deep into our backlist, but no bricks-and-mortar store can carry the complete line,” explains Shepherd. “We need to be able to reach the people most likely to buy our books, even if they've never heard of Osprey. Our website, www.ospreypublishing.com, attracts more traffic every year, but it is a small star in the web galaxy. We knew we needed to put up much more content to increase its visibility, but, as a smallish business, we were balking at the investment of time and resources.”

Solution

After hearing about Google Book Search at BookExpoAmerica (BEA) and the London Book Fair in 2005, Osprey joined the program in order to open a new online channel through which readers could discover its books.

“Now there are three places where all our books can be found: our website, Amazon and Google,” says Shepherd. “On Amazon, discovery isn't driven by people doing a web search, as such – they're looking for a book in a bookstore. The great thing about Google Book Search is that you get there through a general search. If you put in the name of a particular battle, for instance, or a much more granular search term, we're pretty much always right there in the results, in the top half of the first page.”

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As a result of joining the program, Osprey is beginning to gather useful information about its customers, including which titles they’re interested in and how they choose to purchase books. “When we looked at the first six months of stats, we saw that 30 percent of Google Book Search clicks went directly to our site, while roughly 40 percent went to Amazon. Considering that a visitor is likely to view several pages of a book before clicking on a retailer link, the conversion rate we’re seeing seems to be very good,” says Shepherd. “And we were also very happy to see the rapid build-up of hits and page-views. We have a large range of titles and every single one was accessed within weeks of being indexed.”

Currently, Osprey has 1,263 titles in Google Book Search, and is submitting each new release on publication. “It was very easy to join the program because Google does all the work, really,” reports Shepherd. “We’re very happy with what it’s doing for us so far. We look forward to seeing how it develops in the months and years ahead, both as a selling medium - especially for our backlist - and a source of valuable marketing information.”

