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Hal Hallstein
Project Manager



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're 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.com>.

Wisdom Publications sees a marked improvement in online visibility, increasing web traffic by 74%

About Wisdom Publications

Wisdom Publications is dedicated to making available authentic Buddhist works for the benefit of all. With only a tiny percentage of Buddhist texts available in English, Wisdom takes an ecumenical approach to publishing, bringing original works from the Tibetan, Chinese and Zen traditions to readers in the West. In addition to producing translations, Wisdom publishes the work of modern teachers. Wisdom operates as a nonprofit charitable organization, with all profits reinvested into the creation of new works. Formally founded in London in 1983, the organization is currently located in Somerville, Massachusetts. Wisdom has 240 titles in print and publishes 24-28 new titles per year.

Challenge

Wisdom Publications is a mission-driven publisher that pursues digitization initiatives so its books can be discovered by more readers and green initiatives to reduce the impact of its printing operations on the environment.

“Our mission is to make Buddhist works available to people all around the world,” says Tim McNeill, Publisher and CEO of Wisdom Publications. “We’ve also made a commitment to environmental mindfulness. For instance, whenever possible, we’re using a paper called Glatfelter Natures Book that’s made from 50% post-consumer recycled material. So we’re interested in digitization from an environmental as well as a marketing perspective.”

To reach more readers worldwide, Wisdom is exploring ways to build its brand and increase its profile on a global scale. “We have a strong identity – if it’s published by Wisdom, you know it’s authentic,” explains Wisdom project manager Hal Hallstein, who spearheads initiatives to increase direct sales and develop Wisdom’s web presence. “The challenge is to take it to the next level. We’re already an international publisher – some of our titles have been translated into as many as 20 different languages, and 20-25% of our sales are international – but we’d like to expand our global reach.”

“Some of our older books have a following, but it’s no longer economical to maintain them in print. We envision using Google Book Search’s online access feature to maintain access to these older books, in keeping with our mission to make them available – while at the same time reducing our impact on the environment.”

Solution

Wisdom heard about Google Book Search through media reports when it was introduced in 2004, and shortly afterward became one of the first publishers to join the Partner Program. In addition to joining Google Book Search, Wisdom began using Google AdWords to drive traffic to its site and Google Analytics to monitor the impact of its online marketing initiatives.

“All of the Google services together work much better than a single one,” reports Hallstein. “Traffic to our site has increased 74% since we started using Google Book Search, AdWords and Analytics. Currently, Google provides 45% of our overall monthly traffic.”

A significant portion of the new traffic comes from outside of the United States. “Since we use Analytics, we can see that we get a ton of hits from Asia and Australia. We’re reaching an international audience we might not otherwise have been able to reach.”

The increased traffic has led to more exposure for Wisdom titles. “Google Book Search has picked up steam,” explains Hallstein. “In the beginning, we saw single-digit daily impressions for our books; now we’re up to four-digit impressions for some titles.” In fact, during a one-week period in September 2006, one of Wisdom’s books, *Ultimate Healing: The Power of Compassion*, made the top-ten list of most-searched titles in Google Book Search. “We were very excited to hear that,” says Hallstein.

Looking ahead, Wisdom plans to explore the possibility of selling online access to its backlist titles through Google Book Search. Explains Hallstein, “Some of our older books have a following, but it’s no longer economical to maintain them in print. We envision using Google Book Search’s online access feature to maintain access to these older books, in keeping with our mission to make them available – while at the same time reducing our impact on the environment.”

In the meantime, says Hallstein, the online accessibility of Wisdom titles through Google Book Search is enhancing their value, especially for the academic audience. “A lot of our books are for the academic community. The search experience that Google provides is something that definitely adds value. Once in a while, I’ll have a professor on the phone, and it’s nice to be able to point them to our book in Google Book Search. It saves time for everyone, as the professor can explore a bit of the book online.”

People who browse Google Book Search have the opportunity to buy books directly from the Wisdom website and online retailers. And according to Hallstein, online browsing also leads to increased sales in bookstores. “We’re not at all surprised when people learn about our books online, and then buy them offline.”

