



The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) increases e-commerce sales by 60%

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Grace Guinand
IDB editorial unit



**Inter-American
Development Bank**

ABOUT GOOGLE BOOK SEARCH

Google Book Search enables authors and publishers to promote their books on Google. Google scans the full text of a partner’s 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. Partners receive a share of the revenue generated from ads appearing on their content.

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

About the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Established in 1959, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has a long-standing tradition of implementing novel tools and approaches to supporting development. The IDB is the primary source of multilateral financing for economic, social and institutional development in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to its lending operations, the IDB fosters sustainable growth through its leadership in regional initiatives, strategic research and knowledge dissemination. The Bank publishes an average of 30 books and 100 working papers per year in four languages: English, Spanish, French and Portuguese.

Challenge

As the leading regional development bank in Latin America and the Caribbean, the IDB’s primary challenge is increasing awareness of its products, services and publications. The IDB is an extraordinary resource for information on Latin America and the Caribbean.

“Our mission is to reach the largest possible audience with information about what we do and why we publish,” explains Grace Guinand of the IDB’s editorial unit.

As part of this effort, the IDB publishes its books and working papers in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese, and has begun to explore new ways to reach its readership of government policymakers, NGOs, business analysts and academic researchers from all over the world.

“At first, we didn’t understand why all of a sudden we were getting a request for this older title. But when we looked at the reports from Google, we saw that it was one of the most-viewed titles over the past 15 days. . . Best of all, this book is not an exception. Our e-commerce sales have increased 60% across the board.”

A second challenge for the IDB is increasing sales. “First and foremost, we want more people to know about our organization and services,” says Guinand. “But we also want to sell more books, and the diversity of our audience makes marketing especially challenging.”

Solution

In an internal editorial meeting to discuss content aggregation, IDB staff members heard about Google Book Search and decided to join the program to gain online exposure and open a new marketing channel for its publications.

“If you’re not in Google, you’re nowhere,” explains Guinand. “We decided to use Google because it’s the best way to reach the largest audience. It doesn’t cost you a thing, but you get such big rewards.”

So far, the IDB has submitted more than a hundred titles to the program. The results have surpassed its expectations and brought welcome surprises. For instance, in April of 2006, the IDB's distributor in Mexico received a request for 600 copies of a Spanish title the organization published in 1999.

“At first, we didn't understand why all of a sudden we were getting a request for this older title,” says Guinand. “But when we looked at the reports from Google, we saw that it was one of the most-viewed titles over the past 15 days. It came as such a surprise that two months later, we were still working to fill that order. Best of all, this book is not an exception. Our e-commerce sales have increased 60% across the board.”

Another surprise for the IDB has been the demand for books in Spanish. “We didn't know what to expect, so in the beginning we sent titles in English and only a few books in Spanish. But when we saw that more people were viewing pages in Spanish, we started moving in more Spanish titles – even older ones from our backlist,” reports Guinand.

In addition to allowing the IDB to identify which titles readers are most interested in, reports from Google Book Search provide the organization with valuable information and motivation for the authors on its research staff.

“The great thing about Google is that you get information about who is reading which titles right away. We're addicted; we check our reports twice a day, and we share those figures with our authors,” says Guinand. “On the web, you never know what you'll get. One day we received a huge number of page views in Google Book Search – more than twice the average. When we tell our authors, ‘you got this number of page views this week,’ they're excited and encouraged.”

Since joining Google Book Search, the IDB has decided to make a higher percentage of its books viewable online: 60 percent, as opposed to the default 20 percent. It has also begun submitting its white papers for inclusion in Google Scholar. The reason: the IDB believes that by giving readers greater access to its content, it will help them become familiar with the organization and increase the likelihood that they will purchase books.

“This is the first stage,” says Guinand. “Once our readers know they can find us on Google and discover the richness of information we have to offer, they'll want more.”

