

Google Book Search: Should You Care?

Contributed by Sid Smith
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You may or may not have heard about the Google Book Search, a sometimes controversial service provided by our friends at that little search engine that can. As a writer is this something you should care about? The answer is a resounding YES! Find out how and why in this article...
Google Book Search: Should You Care?

You may or may not have heard about the Google Book Search, a sometimes controversial service provided by our friends at that little search engine that can. As a writer is this something you should care about?

The answer is a resounding YES!

Google book search is indeed your friend as a writer. First off, people will not be able to read your book online, unless you tell Google that it's OK. So don't worry about losing revenue. However, they are going to index your book and make the contents of your book searchable.

What this means is that you can actually optimize an entire BOOK for the search engine now!

Let me explain a bit about search engine optimization. When you type in a keyword or phrase into Google, it searches its "index" of listings for web pages that have that keyword or phrase somewhere on the page, or somewhere on the web site. Now, there's a little catch here that is important.

See, Google ranks pages (which one displays first, and which displays in position 637) based on a number of factors that I'll refer here as "relevance."

Google won't reveal their exact formula for determining the relevance of a page. But we do know a few things. "Relevance" to Google refers to the relevance of the page or web site to the user who is browsing the web. That is, they want to know that the person searching is finding what they're looking for. They know that if they can't deliver what the customer is looking for, the customer will go elsewhere (to a different search engine, such as Yahoo or MSN).

So, they want to know that the page the list as number one is really relevant to the user's search. They do this in two primary ways:

1. On-page optimization or relevance
2. Off-page optimization or relevance

For example, I have the term "Google Book Search" in the header of this page, as well as a few times in the body. This tells Google that the page is about the Google Book Search.

But that's just part of the story. Relevance is also determined by what we call off-page optimization, which is a long way of saying that others are talking about your web site or web page. In other words, if other industry-related and influential web sites reference your web site, then Google will deem your site to be "more relevant."

OK. So, back to Google Book Search. If you include in your book a number of very specific search phrases for which you want to be ranked in the search engines, then when people do a search, an excerpt from your book may just show up! One thing to remember, though, is that this isn't through Google's regular search.

To search with Google Book Search, you need to go to <http://books.google.com>.

Now, here's what Google says about the Book Search Program

Through the Google Books Partner Program (learn more at http://www.google.com/services/print_tour/) you can send your book to Google in either hardcopy or digital format. They will digitize, host, and index (make searchable) every word of your book.

Since browsing leads to buying, this makes it easy for people to browse books based on key phrases. When you submit your book you can choose how much of your book people can actually view - from 20 to 100 percent of the book (the entire book is indexed). To protect your book, the book is hosted on secure servers and Google disables the print, cut, copy and save functionality.

If readers want to buy your book, Google will provide a link directly to online retailers (like Amazon) and local bookstores via their special BookSense program. If you sell your book directly from your own web site, it gets top billing, appearing first in the list of purchasing links). Google takes no part in the actual sale.

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