

CGIAR Teams up with Google to Expand the Reach of Agricultural Research

When the custodians of years of research team up with the most popular Internet search engine in the world, you can expect something extraordinary to happen.

Imagine if you could search over 30,000 pages from books published by the largest agricultural research consortium in the world; browse that library online and immediately download the full text of any book or order a print copy with a few clicks of a mouse ... Well, imagine no more, because you can now do just that!

Over the years, the individual CGIAR Centers have amassed significant libraries that reflect the results of CGIAR agricultural research across the globe. Until recently, though, many of the scientific titles contained within these collections (books that cover research on fisheries, livestock, forestry, plant genetics, water management, food policy and the cultivation of food crops, among others) have only been accessible to a limited readership. Today, all of that has changed, and CGIAR publications are now collectively available at one of the biggest searchable online libraries.

CGBooks (<http://books.cgiar.org/cgiar>), a collaborative effort involving CGIAR Information Managers, Web Managers and Google staff, has effectively expanded the reach of CGIAR research, simply by making publications instantly searchable over the Internet. In addition, having the option of searching the thousands of CGIAR publications available through the **CGVlibrary** (<http://vlibrary.cgiar.org>) further increases the access to CGIAR research results.

In the beginning

Since 2005, CGIAR Centers have been turning over their books to Google Book Search (GBS) for scanning – a huge undertaking that was funded entirely by Google.

There are now thousands of titles taking the results of CGIAR research to thousands of users around the globe.

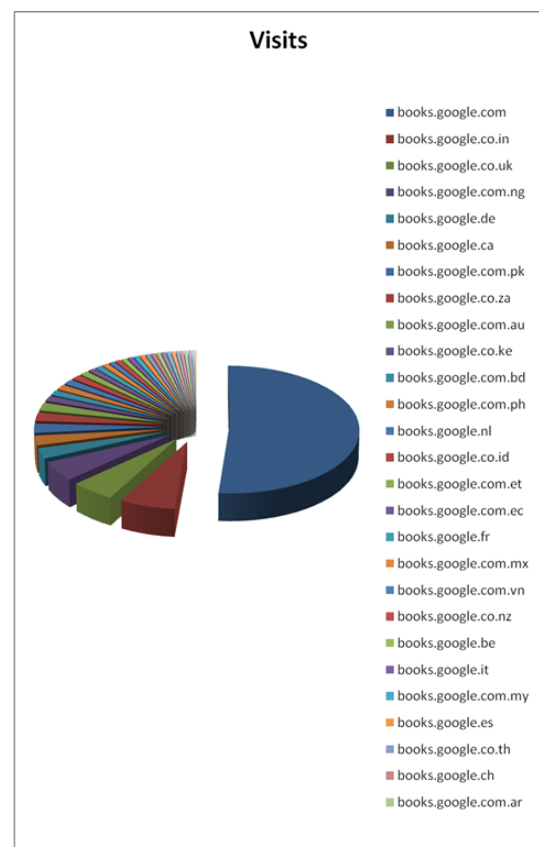
Although 2005 witnessed a flurry of activity as far as the digitalization of some CGIAR publications was concerned, the idea to have

the individual CGIAR libraries united in one searchable location was mooted a year earlier.

As **Luz Marina Alvare**, the Library & Knowledge Management Head at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) recalls: "It was Danielle Lucca (CGIAR Fund Office) who first suggested that we join GBS, way back in December 2004. We joined shortly thereafter, and Google launched IFPRI's books in July 2005. Then many other Centers started following suit. Round about this time, it was suggested that we create an overall CGBooks search. However, the real champions behind the realization of CGBooks were **Nick Maliha**, Manager, Library and Information Systems at the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA); **Yuan Oktafian**, the Information Systems Administrator at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); and **Chandima Gunadasa**, the Electronic Library Resource Specialist at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

Google's Reach

Over 100 Google Book sites bring visitors from all over the world to the CGIAR Web sites – see diagram below.



The perfect marriage

In the Philippines, **Gene Hettel**, who heads the Communication and Publications Services at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), has this to say about his Center's relationship with GBS:

"I have been working with Google for nearly three years now, and IRRI began posting most of its new books on GBS in January 2008. These books join nearly 300 historic titles from the Institute's rich publishing history. You see, we envisioned a time when it would be fundamental to have our scientific books—current and historic—available digitally via our own Web site, so we began scanning titles in our archives in 2000. This was a slow process because we were scanning at a high resolution (300 dots per inch) and doing optical character recognition (OCR) at 99% accuracy. This process started long before there was a GBS, but just as we finished the critical mass of the project, GBS was online and ready for the 'perfect marriage.'"

Marco van den Berg, who heads IRRI's Information Technology Services and was heavily involved with Gene in getting the Center's books online, feels that GBS has opened up new markets for the Institute's books.

"Books used to be our major vehicle to disseminate our knowledge, and to some extent they still are," he says. "We want our knowledge to be accessed by as many people as possible, preferably to have something done with it as well. GBS is just one of several channels (we have taken great care to include non-exclusivity in our GBS contract) we use to push out our knowledge. One thing that impressed me in our GBS experience is the geographic spread. IRRI books are being used in locations that we've never sold books in before, in significant numbers. For example, one of our main download locations is Iran!"

Chandima Gunadasa, the technical person responsible for the CGBooks site and database, recalls how IWMI got involved with GBS. "About two years ago, when almost 90% of IWMI's books were already digitalized and on our Web site, Google approached us to ask if we would consider putting them on GBS," he says. "As a result, we made about 100 books available to the public, to download free of charge. Later, following the discussion between Luz Marina and Danielle, I teamed up

with Yuan and Nick and liaised with Google about the technical aspects of CGBooks.

"A single search now covers all the CGIAR publications on Google, but the most important thing about GBS is that it searches deep into every page, word by word."

A mutually beneficial arrangement

The three Centers interviewed agreed that having a presence on Google Books is beneficial to all parties concerned. They feel that the non-exclusive CGBooks association with Google is a win-win situation for everyone: the CGIAR System as a whole, individual Centers, and Google itself as it strives to make the world's books available to everyone.

Enrica Porcari, CGIAR Chief Information Officer and Leader of the ICT-KM Program, has this to say about CGBooks: "I am happy to see such a successful collaboration. Once again, the community of CGIAR Information Managers, the same people who made the [CGVlibrary](#) possible, has worked successfully with others to help bring our publications to a bigger readership. CGBooks also connects to our [CIARD pathways](#), which show us how we can make our research outputs more available, accessible and applicable, all necessary steps if we are to put research results in the hands of those who need them. Of course, at the same time, we are helping Google achieve its goal of becoming the largest library in the world."

To be part of the largest online library is something that will surely benefit everyone.

The logo for CGBooks, with "CG" in green and "Books" in a yellow, cursive font.

powered by


<http://books.cgiar.org/cgiar>



ict-km
collaborate, create, communicate