



Marketing for specialist documentation centres of the Government: Promotion of a product in the Basque Data Protection Agency and in the Consumer Affairs Directorate of the Basque Government



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Abstract

This deals with a plan to promote a “Short guide to the Google search engine” in two specialized documentation centres in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (ACBC). The paper describes the product, subject of this promotion, as well as the documentation centres themselves and the institutions to which they belong; it defines the methodology and aims of the project, the chosen target, message, slogan, tools and channels, budget and control mechanisms. One of the studies made prior to the plan, the enclosed DAFO Analysis, is set out in the appendix.

Keywords

Marketing, Google, user guides, special libraries, government libraries

1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives

Our paper will focus on the promotion of a product conceived recently with a very clear “marketing orientation”. It involves a novel product, designed to satisfy the needs of internet users who use Google habitually when searching for information on the web. These users are, therefore, self-sufficient and do not resort to documentalists as intermediaries when seeking information.

Nevertheless, a questionnaire distributed in September 2009 among 1215 users in several specialist libraries of the government not only revealed the extremely high use of Google among regular and occasional Internet users but also detected¹ that a large

¹ “Report on the results of Google surveys (quantitative-qualitative)”, de Castelló, Belén; González, Inmaculada; Revilla, Elena and Rodríguez, Elisa. 2009.

number of these people are happy just to use it as a simple search engine and are not aware of many of the resources offered by the search engine to get the best results. As reflected in the responses to the aforementioned questionnaire, this leads to a number of problems relating to “excessive information”, “lack of relevance of the initial results” and “waste of time”, in that order. It is clear therefore that there are a large number of users who are very interested in using this tool, which offers a wide range of enhanced search strategies. We would find our market niche among such users.

The product was conceived within a reorientation strategy of the documentation centres involved: it seeks to overcome weaknesses (especially those relating to a lack of visibility and a lack of knowledge about library work) in order to take advantage of opportunities associated with the Google search engine. And to the extent that Google has absorbed a large part of the demand for information-documentation that was previously channelled through libraries, we can also talk about a survival strategy.

As a result of the collaboration of four documentation professionals belonging to the Inter-institutional Committee of Specialist Libraries (CIBE-LEEB), a hybrid product has been created, between the bibliographical information service (as this is oriented towards the recovery of specific information) and the training of users (guiding them in a more efficient use of the search engine). This involves a very schematic user guide for the Google search engine, containing a list of operators, commands and other resources, each which provides access by means of a link or hyperlink to a short explanation and to one or several illustrative examples. The ultimate aim of the Guide is to be an effective aid to improving the speed and efficiency of searches.

This product is also indicative of the new orientation of specialist documentation libraries/centres as information intermediaries and of the new air of collaboration that exists between them.

Having completed the preparation of the final product in January 2010, which we have called “*Short guide to the Google search engine*”, there remains the challenge of publicising this product: promotion.

1.2. Working methodology

This promotion plan was drawn up jointly by the documentalist of the Basque Data Protection Agency and her counterpart in the Documentation Centre of the Consumer Affairs Directorate of the Basque Government. This collaboration has involved a number of difficulties deriving from the fact that both centres are independent, belong to different government departments and potentially their respective users are very different. However, since the drafting of the DAFO report itself, the aim has been to seek out and exploit the common interests of both institutions, not only with respect to the nature of both documentation centres but also to the fact that both documentalists had collaborated previously in the preparation of the product, subject of the promotion.

Another difficulty that arose right at the beginning was the fact that it was impossible for both professionals to meet face-to-face due to the distance between their respective

work centres and other circumstances. For this reason, all the work done on an individual basis was put together via telephone or e-mail.

Once a common DAFO had been made (see appendix), the respective universes were segmented (separately). When choosing the strategic segments, once again consensus was sought in order to select similar targets in each segment so as to guarantee the coherence of the project and in order to choose the most effective tools, channels, etc. in order to obtain the proposed objectives.

Once the target persons aimed at in the promotion had been clearly defined, specifying the most practical aspects of the project was relatively easy. The message and slogan had been established spontaneously in previous conversations held during the “Marketing strategic planning of libraries and documentation centres”² course that had propitiated this work.

2. Context (short description of the institution, mission, departments, location, etc.)

The professionals who drew up the promotion plan are responsible for two documentation centres belonging to different institutions: the Consumer Affairs Department of the Basque Government and the Basque Data Protection Agency. Both have their headquarters in Vitoria-Gasteiz, belong to the institutional fabric of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country and are subject to current legislation concerning the use of Basque in the public administration³. The bilingual nature (Basque and Spanish) of any marketing plan in general, and of their promotion in particular, would be an important factor in their design.

In spite of the fact that these centres operate in different areas, both have similar functions: management of the institutional website, responsibility for the hardcopy collection and the overall management of the information and organisational capacity of the services themselves.

Both belong to the Inter-institutional Committee of Specialised Libraries of the Basque Country (CIBE-LEEB) and since their creation in 2008, they have played an active role in the projects developed within the aforementioned Committee.

This Committee came about as a consequence of the need to share experiences and resources in a common organisational and technological infrastructures environment. It is made up of libraries and documentation centres belonging to the Basque Government and other administrations of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country.

2.1. Basque Government Consumer Affairs Directorate

² Course organised by the Basque Institute of Public Administration and given by Viviana Fernández Marcial, lecturer at the University of A Coruña, in Vitoria-Gasteiz (3-2-2010/11-2-2010).

³ [Law 10 of November 24, 1982](#), the basic on the standardisation of the use of Basque; [Law 6 of December 22, 2003](#), on the Statutes of Consumers and Users.

2.1.1. The institution

Throughout its history, the Consumer Affairs Directorate has belonged to a number of different departments of the Basque Government (Autonomous Administration). As a Directorate, it has belonged to the Health and Consumer Affairs Department since May 2009⁴, although, by virtue of Law 9 of June 29, 2007⁵, it will shortly become an autonomous organisation as soon as the decree that regulates its structure and organisation is passed under the name of Kontsumobide-Basque Consumer Affairs Institute.

Today, the Directorate performs a number of functions⁶ that can be divided into four groups: resolving conflicts, controlling the market, co-operating with other organisations and training and information, logically, in matters regarding consumer affairs.

2.1.2. The Documentation Centre

The Documentation Centre of the Directorate (an exception within the General Administration of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, as other specialist libraries of the Basque Country are assigned to a Department or Autonomous Organisation as a whole, within its General Services) was created as the library of the CEC-European Consumers Centre, which, from 1993 to January 2007, was located in Vitoria-Gasteiz, on the premises of the Consumer Affairs Directorate.

When the CEC was closed officially in Vitoria-Gasteiz (with the enlargement of the EU, the European Commission decided that there would be a single centre per State and therefore its powers and those of the Catalonia centre were transferred to Madrid, to the Consumer Affairs Institute) the Library reoriented its functions to internal services: the central services of the Directorate, the territorial offices and permanent training centres in consumer matters; and at the same time took on responsibility for making the work of the entity known to the public at large, especially when the person responsible for the Library also became responsible for the website of the Directorate: www.kontsumo.net (within the Euskadi.net portal). As a consequence of all these changes, there was a gradual increase in the use of electronic documentation and also of electronic means for

⁴ Decree 4 of May 8, 2009 of the President of the Basque Government, on the creation, removal and modification of the Departments of the Administration of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country and the determination of their functions and areas of activity. Official Government Gazette no. 86 of May 9, 2009.

⁵ Law 9 of June 29, 2007 on the creation of the Kontsumobide-Basque Consumer Affairs Department. Official Government Gazette no. 140 of July 20, 2007.

⁶ Decree 579 of November 3, 2009, on the establishment of the organic and functional structure of the Health and Consumer Affairs Department. Official Government Gazette no. 214 of November 6, 2009 (the functions of the Consumer Affairs Directorate are compiled in the Second Transitional Provision, point 2).

disseminating information (distribution lists by e-mail to make DSI, websites, intranets, consumer affairs blog, etc.).

In this changing situation, the role of the documentalist was redefined, becoming more an editor of website contents with responsibility for electronic publications and less as a searcher of information. This circumstance is favoured by the fact that the entire staff of the Centre, as well as the workers of the company that manages the Kontsumo Gelak (or permanent training centres in consumer matters), have access to Internet in their workstations.

As such, the library has 2824 records of copies in ABSYS⁷ of which 2672 are books and brochures and 152 are audiovisual documents. Moreover, 44 subscriptions to periodicals relating mainly to the subject of consumer affairs and the rights of consumers are maintained.

2.2. Basque Data Protection Agency – Datuak Babesteko Euskal Bulegoa (AVPD-DBEB)

2.2.1. The institution

The Basque Data Protection Agency (AVPD) was set up in 2004 through [Law 2/2004 of the Basque Parliament](#)⁸, which established its functions.⁹ The AVPD is an independent control authority which protects the rights of the public to the protection of data of a personal nature, applicable in the institutions of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country¹⁰.

It was set up as an independent public entity with the right to operate in the public and private domain. Its functions include protection, inspection, resolution of conflicts, registration of data files, giving advice and the dissemination of good practices.

The AVPD has defined a strategic plan and is currently in the process of implementing an EFQM quality management system.

2.2.2. The Documentation Centre

In May 2009, the Documentation Centre of the AVPD was set up, defined as a resources and information services unit at the service of the aforementioned institution; it falls within the framework of specialist libraries belonging to the public administration¹¹ and its field of specialisation covers subjects dealing with data protection and privacy.

⁷ Data as of December 31, 2008 (provided in Library Statistics 2008. INE, National Statistics Institute. 2009)

⁸ [Ley 2 of February 25 2004](#), on Files of Data of a Personal Nature owned by the Public and the Creation of the Basque Data Protection Agency

⁹ Ditto, [article 17](#)

¹⁰ Ditto, [article 2](#)

¹¹ [Law 11 of October 26 2007](#) on the Libraries of the Basque Country, art. 2, 2- 2)b)

It has a collection of some 700 monographic works and 9 periodicals that deal mainly with matters relating to the protection of personal data, but most of its activities focus on the overall management of the information and documentation of the AVPD.

On the one hand, it provides its internal users (personnel and management of the AVPD) with access to external information and services relating to the subject of data protection. It favours internal information flows and takes part in information functions and the external dissemination of the expert knowledge generated in the institution. In this way, it develops a variety of services and information resources, takes an active part in the project to create a corporate Intranet and its future maintenance and manages the contents of the website of the AVPD (www.avpd.euskadi.net).

Likewise, it also collaborates with other areas of the AVPD, in a number of its institutional projects.

Although it does not have a formal relationship with other libraries of the General Administration of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, it can establish with them and other documentation centres belonging to other institutions, such as the Dialnet Foundation (www.dialnet.unirioja.es), any relationships (alliances) it considers to be appropriate in order to develop its functions in an adequate manner. It also forms part of the Euskadi.net portal and uses its infrastructures and other common tools, facilitating the collaboration of this Documentation Centre with the libraries of the Basque Government.

3. Promotion Plan for the short Google user guide

3.1. Specific aims

This plan intends to:

- Publicise the “Short guide to the Google search engine” among target users.
- Promote its use in the searches that these users normally make with Google.
- Increase the visibility of both documentation centres as generators of useful, quality information products.
- Foster the image of documentalists as training agents in information/document-related matters.
- Increase an awareness of the needs of users by offering them a product adapted to their requirements.
- Update the image of the libraries as modern centres that keep up to date with the latest trends.

3.2. Segmentation carried out and target

3.2.1. Segments

The universe of both libraries/documentation centres consists of all the workers in each centre as they have access to the Internet and in all cases are users of the Google search engine.

Each one of the libraries has segmented its universe, resulting in tables with completely different dimensions and complexity.

In the case of the Consumer Affairs Directorate, the table has a multitude of segments due, especially, to the physical dispersion of its human resources (seven different locations in three provinces).

- **Universe:** Personnel in the Library area: staff of the Consumer Affairs Directorate, headquarters and collaborating company personnel (in total 17 people including the documentalist).
- **Variables used for the segmentation:** location (7: 3 in Alava, 2 in Bizkaia, 2 in Gipuzkoa); professional category (3: technical personnel, admin personnel, headquarters and management); working relationship (2: Admin staff, company staff) = $7 \times 3 \times 2 = 42$ segments.

In the AVPD, however, the table is simple and with few components due to the fact that it is a small-size entity with a single headquarters:

- **Universe:** Personnel of the Basque Data Protection Agency: Staff and management (total of 16 people including the documentalist).
- **Variables used for the segmentation:** professional category (3: technical personnel, admin personnel, headquarters and management) and subject or dedication (3: legal, computer, general services) = $3 \times 3 = 9$ segments.

3.2.2. Target

An attempt has been made to ensure that the target is made up of similar segments of both institutions in order to adapt the promotion to the needs of both of them. Once we had analysed the segments and the needs of each, the target of this promotion was defined as the segments of the AVPD and Consumer Affairs corresponding to non-computer technical personnel and admin personnel. We based ourselves on the criteria or values of physical proximity to the documentation centre, interest in the product (computer personnel are aware of the techniques and members of the management teams generally request ready-to-use computer products) and the possible impact on the environment with a view to a broader promotion in the future (the “knock-on” effect is greater among government personnel). In total, the targets include 25 people, 15 from Consumer Affairs and 10 from the AVPD.

3.3. Product characteristics

Message: from the very beginning of the project we understood that we were not going to stress the excellence of the product as much as the benefits it provides users. **We**

wanted to sell a number of values: time-saving, security, knowledge, proximity. In order to convey this message we had to resort to the written word, we were going to give much more importance to the image and to the repetition of a slogan on different supports and in different formats. Experience shows that readers can be overwhelmed by excessive amounts of explanatory texts. We would also appeal to the curiosity of users in order to arouse their interest in the product as a desire to “know more” must come from the users themselves. We would take advantage of the expectation created by the questionnaire on Internet searches.

On the other hand, the product itself required the involvement of the target persons because it is based on Hypertext. For the sake of coherence, we must base the promotion on interactive, expeditious media also based on Hypertext and image.

Brand:



The product is intended for Google users who recognise this brand and have a positive opinion of it. It was decided therefore to take advantage of this circumstance and incorporate the aesthetics of the search engine brand into the product based on it in order to ensure its recognition. Now we had the first part of our logotype.

Conceptually, we wanted to emphasise that the product represents an added value, over and above the value of the search engine itself - the value of "taking more advantage" of the tool. This is what we want to convey with the “Google plus” slogan. The choice of the word “plus” came about due to its intrinsically positive content and because, in spite of being a Latin-based term, is easily understood by users with an academic background. Moreover, in this way, in a bilingual Government (Spanish and Basque), we avoid the need to develop a brand in each language. For this, the second part of the logotype, we chose a dynamic secondary colour: orange (which goes well with the colours used by the search engine itself in its logotype: blue, red, yellow, green) and italics, which gives an even greater sense of vitality. Following a number of style tests, the typeface chosen is Lucida Console, a “clean” typeface with a certain “air of speed”, especially in the aerodynamic shape of the “l”, which conveys a sense of swiftness. The result is therefore a short logotype that identifies the product clearly and immediately and has a visual aesthetic that alludes to its added values.

Advertising slogan and image: the brand “Google plus” will be advertised together with the slogan “Are you tired of wasting time playing around with Google?” Google plus teaches you the best tricks to make the best use of this search engine!”, which, during the second stage of the campaign, could be used in an abbreviated manner, maintaining the essence of the slogan: “Get the best out of Google!”. To reinforce the idea we want to convey and record this in the visual memory of our users,



we will use, together with the text slogan, an icon resource not without a certain touch of humour: the image of the orange squeezer in which full use is made of the Google search engine, represented by the word “plus”. We have taken advantage of the fact that the term chosen to identify the product has been coloured orange, therefore creating an unconscious association of ideas in the minds of our users.

3.4. Promotion tools and channels

It must be remembered that we have few human resources and a low budget and therefore the promotion campaign cannot be very ambitious. Moreover, the promotion must be maintained over a period of time, beyond the initial launch.

Tool	Channel
Personalised text messages with enclosed product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail
Short non-personalised text messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail
Project home page printed in hardcopy and laminated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work committees • Displays • Common areas • Meeting rooms
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal meetings
HTML content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intranet (under development)
Product logotype and image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In different product formats and supports • Point-of-sale advertising (posters)

- **Personalised messages:** the document containing the product (“*Short guide to the Google search engine*”) will be sent by e-mail. Characteristics:
The messages will be sent in two different languages (Basque/Spanish) in order to arouse the interest of users according to the language they use on a regular basis.
In each message, the unified PDF document announcing the possibility of different versions (printable version) or text document for handling is attached.
- **Short, non-personalised text messages** which will be sent by e-mail. These will represent the last stage of the promotion and their function will be to remind users of the contact details of the documentalist (e-mail address and telephone number) to enable them to ask questions about the product.
- **Product home page:** The home page of the product (which contains its basic elements) will be placed, once it has been laminated, in strategic, common areas of the respective buildings, such as meeting rooms, rest areas, displays in corridors, etc. At the bottom of the page, where the product brand will be placed, users will be told that the rest of the document is available at the documentation centre and/or at the URL address indicated.

- **Oral communication:** in informal meetings, typical in small institutions with close inter-disciplinary relations.
- **HTML content:** website for internal distribution or INTRANET, where an access point to the complete contents of the product will be added by means of a banner with its logotype. In the News section, an advertisement on the new product will be included. As this involves an exclusively internal promotion, channels such as the institutional website or the blog and social networks (in the case of Consumer Affairs) have been discarded.
- **Product logotype and image:** these will be used on all the supports and formats on which the product is presented or on which this is alluded to. It will also be used as a central motif for the preparation of posters to advertise the product at the same “point of sale”: the documentalist’s desk and point of access to the documentation centre.

3.5. Budget

Minimum possible. The only tool that will represent a budgetary expense will be the one we have called the “abbreviated product template” which refers to the home page with all the basic indications and includes links to more extensive explanation. This budget will need to comprise:

- Design and layout
- Printing the template
- Lamination

3.6. Control

Indicators to evaluate the impact of the promotion may be based fundamentally on the level of use and satisfaction with regard to the promoted product:

- **Percentage of accesses** to Google plus content in the Intranet over the total number of accesses, for one month following the promotion launch.
- Formula:
- Number of content hits / total hits.¹²
- **Level of satisfaction** with the product received: Questionnaire sent to the same people to whom the previous questionnaire had been sent. Period: 6 months as of the date when the product was sent (September 2010).

4. Conclusions

Promoting products and services offered by specialist libraries in the government, which are not generally large, is possible and advisable not only because it increases the visibility of the work of information managers but also because as it requires a prior market survey, it facilitates the adaptation of documentary and library services to the requirements of users (marketing approach).

¹² This is the only product format that offers a hit or enquiry counter.

Free and voluntary collaboration between specialist libraries of the government, belonging to institutions between which there is no hierarchical dependence is possible and advisable, even though their respective fields of expert knowledge may be totally different, as the environment in which they operate and the services they offer may be similar in nature. In this way they can take on more ambitious projects than those they would normally be able to undertake on an individual basis. This type of collaboration projects also does away with the traditional isolation of documentation professionals (let us not forget that these often involve single person documentation centres).

We believe that support should be given to “living” projects (which can be developed in accordance with changing circumstances, with the new requirements of users, with the new situations of the institutions of which they form part, which are never ending) and “open” projects (open to the participation of other centres, to share similar experiences with other professionals, to explore new lines of research, etc.).

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APPENDIX

DAFO REPORT

WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Individual documentation centres. • Work load. • Service for users with different interests. • Undefined functions in the job description of documentalists. • The Library is not represented as such on the institutional web site. • Little experience in joint projects with other libraries or documentation centres. • Low level of consolidation of the CIBE “brand” (Specialist Libraries Committee). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of appreciation by society of the work of libraries and documentation centres. • Overabundance of information. • Generalised use of information sources other than libraries (Wikipedia, blogs, digital press...) • Efficient Internet search engines that compete with documentalists as information suppliers. • Economic crisis leading to budget cuts.
STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The product/service to be promoted and the web site and the corporate intranet project are in the same hands. • Knowledge of the needs of users (based on a survey). • The documentation centres that are launching the product belong to the Specialist Libraries Committee. • Documentalists have attended Marketing courses. • Good computerised resources. • Service adapted to the needs of potential users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popularity of the Google search engine. • In general, people have an intuitive knowledge of Google resources. • Growing appreciation of leisure time. • Self-sufficiency of users. • High response rate to survey. • The strategic plans of institutions (AVPD and the Consumer Affairs Department) favour the promotion of new products and services.