

Dictionary Review:

Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business

by Thomas L. West III

By Lisa Carter, C. Tran.

I purchased the first edition of Thomas L. West III's *Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business* not long after it was published in 1999. My slim hardcover is tattered, the pages stained from constant use. This dictionary saved me on more than one occasion when working with complex trademarks, contracts and financial documents. When the second edition was released in June, I knew it, too, would find a home on my reference shelf.

As a lawyer and owner/operator of Intermark Language Services, West has extensive, first-hand knowledge of his subject matter. This expertise is evident in every term found in both the first and second editions of his dictionaries.

This second edition of the *Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business* (SEDLB) has been greatly enhanced, expanding from a trim 319-page hardcover to a robust 516-page paperback.

The following are highlights of what each entry offers:

Apart from a straight translation, many entries contain information on country of use, area of law, definitions and examples, even references to specific articles of law.

Comunicación edictal *Esp.* [PRO CIV] **notice by publication on the court bulletin board** --> Art. 164 LEC

West quite often includes examples of the Spanish word in context, along with a full English translation.

fehaciente reliable, authoritative, authentic <mediante notificación fehaciente al banco – through reliable notice to the bank>

As any Spanish-language legal translator knows, terminology is not always consistent from country to country. The SEDLB addresses this by providing synonyms according to country of origin.

interdicto de obra peligrosa / ruinosa [PRO CIV] **petition for an order to have a dangerous old building repaired or demolished** (SYN) **denuncia de obra ruinosa** *Chi*

Note that West usually cross references these terms, but not always. For example, the Chilean *denuncia de obra ruinosa* is not found under its own entry.

Entries frequently include translations in both American and British English.

crías *Chi* **stock dividends USA, bonus shares UK** (SYN) **acciones liberadas** *Arg, Chi, Per, Esp*, **acciones gratuitas**

There is no designation for Canadian terminology, but this has not impeded my own work. In reviewing the dictionary, I asked a lawyer for her perspective on six randomly selected English words and phrases. In her opinion, Canadian legal professionals would understand these words and phrases, all of which are commonly used in our legal system.

Comparing the first and second editions of the SEDLB, the following points are noteworthy:

Font size. The typeface in this new edition is a point or two smaller than it was in the first edition, making it slightly more difficult to read.



Bolding. Having the lemma bolded in both Spanish and English can be a bit hard on the eyes, even though the two languages are differentiated by font size. The first edition (where Spanish terms are bold and English translations are not) is much easier to skim.

English to Spanish. The first edition SEDLB contained a small section toward the back that was English into Spanish. This has now been omitted, but I have not missed it.

Appendices. There were two appendices with abbreviations and acronyms in the first edition that are no longer in the second edition. However, the author has written and published a separate *Diccionario de siglas y abreviaturas: A dictionary of Spanish-Language Abbreviations and Acronyms* (2002) that is available for purchase.

Bibliography. The bibliography in the second edition is more than double the size of the first and quite valuable for those needing specific additional reference materials.

In his preface, West says, "...my goal now is for this book to be the first place every translator of Spanish-language legal and financial texts will look (and find what they are looking for)." Having found terms like *beneficios penitenciarios* (used in Spain to refer to "privileges granted to prisoners") here and nowhere else, I for one will be turning to this new edition of the *Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business* before any of my other reference materials.

I do wish the SEDLB were available in electronic format for ease of reference and portability. Regardless, this is an essential dictionary for all Spanish into English translators who specialize in business, legal and financial texts. The price (USD 49.95) is very reasonable for a book of this depth and calibre, making it an easy investment decision.

Note: I received a complimentary copy of the dictionary from the author in exchange for an honest review of the work.

Spanish English Dictionary of Law and Business, 2nd edition. Revised, corrected and expanded.

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