



LOCAL SEARCH

Managing Listings Across Digital Platforms

APRIL 2013

This document has been developed by the IAB Local Committee, part of the IAB's Mobile Marketing Center of Excellence.

About the IAB's Local Committee: The mission of the Local Committee is to communicate the value of online local interactive advertising to national and local marketers and to provide tools best practice for publishers to effectively monetize their local ad inventory. A full list of committee member companies can be found at http://www.iab.net/local_committee

About the IAB's Mobile Marketing Center of Excellence: The IAB Mobile Marketing Center of Excellence, an independently funded and staffed unit inside the IAB, is charged with driving the growth of the mobile marketing, advertising and media marketplace. The Mobile Center devotes resources to market and consumer research, mobile advertising case studies, executive training and education, supply chain standardization, creative showcases and best practice identification in the burgeoning field of mobile media and marketing. Our agenda focuses on building profitable revenue growth for companies engaged in mobile marketing, communications and advertising, and helping publishers, marketers and agency professionals understand and leverage interactive tools and technologies in order to reach and influence the consumer. More information can be found at: <http://www.iab.net/mobile>

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Executive Summary

Local search can be defined as the experience when consumers search via the web or mobile-based sites and apps with a query that contains a geo-specific term such as a city name or zip code or where location is derived by the publisher to make the search results more relevant. The results that follow are typically comprised of businesses or points of interest with specific information such as name, address, phone number and other enhanced data fields. Consumers are conducting local searches across the internet via search engines, mapping services, internet yellow pages, specialized directories and social media sites on both the desktop as well as mobile devices. According to an immr/YP Local Search Study on “How Consumers Are Using Local Search” 4 in 10 individuals use local search once a day, while two-thirds use local search at least 3-4 times per week. If your business doesn’t appear in local search results you are missing out.

Ensuring a business appears in local search results is not an easy task, yet it is crucial for both small-medium business and multi-location enterprises alike. Beyond the fact that there are multiple publishers providing a local search service, there are multiple sources that publishers leverage to populate their business listings databases. This means local listings come from structured data sets, versus the standard organic search results that come from extracted website information. While these sources are all working hard to have accurate, complete data sets on local businesses, the way they obtain, clean and normalize the data and their process for providing it to publishers vary.

This complicated ecosystem makes it unclear to marketers what they need to do in order to make sure a business is represented accurately across all the places users are searching. Understanding where consumers are searching, what types of results they encounter and how to work with the different sources that provide business listing information is the first step towards having a quality local search presence.

Intended Audience

Those who provide online marketing services to local businesses are seeing an increasing need to manage local search listings and related online content on behalf of businesses. This paper is directed at those marketing agencies and designed to provide a basic overview of the listing management and optimization process as well as some key challenges and best practices.

1 Overview

Local search can be defined as the experience when consumers search via the web or mobile-based sites and apps with a query that contains a geo-specific term such as a city name or zip code or where location is derived by the publisher to make the search results more relevant. The results that follow are typically comprised of businesses or points of interest with specific information such as name, address, phone number and other enhanced data fields. Local search is a booming area within the digital advertising industry attracting the attention of the majority of internet users. Google estimates 97% of consumers seek information about local businesses through online search. For this reason it is critical that small business owners and multi-location enterprises pay attention to how they are represented on websites and mobile apps. Marketers serving local businesses must be well versed in effective methods of local search management and optimization.

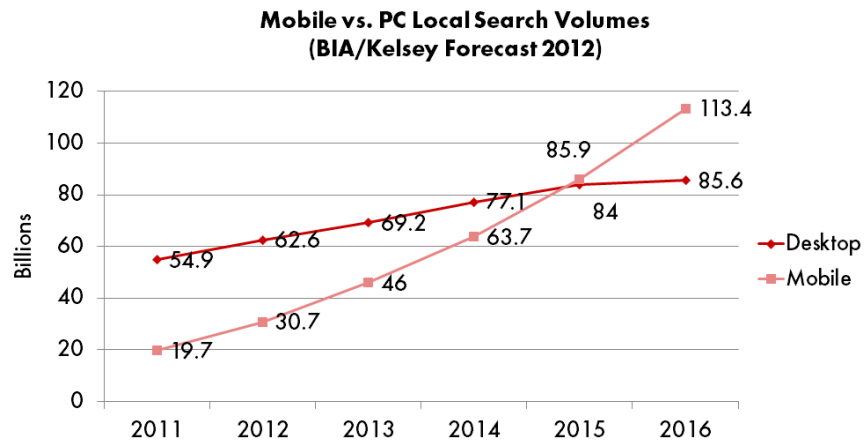
1.1 The Local Search Marketplace

Local search provides a compelling benefit to both consumers and businesses by directly and instantly connecting consumers intending to purchase products and services with local businesses offering them. Digital media including search continues to increase its share of total Local media revenues, growing from 17.4 percent in 2012 to 27.6 percent in 2017 while traditional local media revenues are expected to decrease. Driving this rapid increase in local revenues is the increasing adoption of mobile smart devices, strong web usage, and an atmosphere of innovation in which new services and features are engaging the interest and attracting the dollars of local consumers.

According to an immr/YP Local Search Study on “How Consumers Are Using Local Search” four in ten consumers use local search once per day, while two-thirds use local search at least three to four times per week. Local businesses want to be found by local buyers when and where their products and services are needed. A recent AdAge report found that local search consumers show strong buying intent, with about 75% of consumers performing additional actions after seeing a location-specific ad message, such as clicking on the ad, searching for a nearby location, or conducting additional research. As a result, the importance of local search marketing cannot be overstated: it offers marketers the ability to reach consumers in their last mile prior to purchase.

1.2 Influence of Mobile on Local Search Behavior

The rapid adoption of smart mobile devices is accelerating the growth of local search to such a degree that by 2015 it is projected that more local searches will come from mobile phones than PCs, according to BIA/Kelsey. Mobile users have a greater inherent need for location-based information, increasing the necessity and popularity of mobile-local search solutions. The immr/YP Local Search Study shows that 83% of smartphone owners do a local search on their smartphone at least once a week with 42% doing local searches on their smartphones at least 3-4 times a week. BIA/Kelsey forecast mobile search ad spend will grow from \$704 million in 2012 to \$5.7 billion in 2017.



1.3 Consumer Benefit from Local Search

Consumers are increasingly using digital methods to research and select businesses in their local markets. They want instant, relevant, and reliable location information, especially when they're on the go.

Consumers typically encounter local business listings in one of three scenarios:

Searching for a specific business: The consumer searches for information related to a specific business: address, phone number, web address, hours of operation, menus, products, service offerings, directions, etc... These consumers typically initiate their search with a business name query, so local businesses should aim to have an accurate listing surface for matching queries. Consumers will then be enabled to find the information and take desired action.

Using local search as an exploration tool: Here, the user is looking for information to help select a business type or local destination by initiating a search by a keyword and location query combination, like "plumbers in Boston." For these queries, the secondary content in business listings allows the user to find a business. Ensuring that businesses are properly categorized and described in search engines through the use and management of relevant keywords is essential. Monitoring social media is also important because users look to customer reviews and ratings to help them make a decision among similar businesses.

Contextual discovery: Activity by a consumer such as reading online news, participating in a group discussion, or looking at a map can be used to target relevant local business information in the context of the consumer's activity. Local business listings are displayed alongside or within such content based on a related activity, consumer demographic information and perhaps even the time of day. For example, a user reading an article about how to plan a wedding may see listings for local caterers, banquet halls and gown shops. Another user may be looking at online traffic reports at 5pm before starting his commute, and may see listings for local take-out restaurants alongside the information of primary interest.

Over the last few years, locally-oriented social sites and local commerce deal sites have also become more popular resources for consumers, and therefore more compelling places for businesses to seek prominent listings. Many consumers follow local businesses from which they are interested in receiving announcements and special offers.

Consumers also zero in on businesses their friends and family mention online. While they continue to value accurate address and phone number details, for many classes of business, consumers increasingly see local search as a resource for other types of content, such as reviews and ratings, photos and check-ins.

1.4 The Local Search Opportunity

As outlined in the previous section, consumers encounter online business listings in a variety of forms and contexts. In most cases, opportunity exists to positively influence the consumer's ability to find and engage with a particular business.

Local search is making the world a smaller, more precise place. Consumers are discovering new ways to research and select businesses in their local markets. In order to remain competitive, national brands and small businesses alike need to attend to the online and mobile space. As a result, marketers must expand their strategies to include local or risk underserving client goals.

The number of business locations actively managed by marketers is estimated to be around only two to three million versus the estimated 16-20 million businesses most publishers list in local search results. Businesses that operate virtually or from home offices, or that work at the customer's location within a specified service area are often poorly represented in local search venues. Numbers are not widely published on how many businesses have directly "claimed" their listings on publisher sites, though Google reported in 2011 that 8 million businesses had claimed listings worldwide. These statistics indicate a huge opportunity for marketers to serve businesses by helping to syndicate accurate, consistent, and search-friendly business listings across the web and mobile devices.

An effective local search optimization strategy is extremely important for businesses of all sizes. A study conducted by Yext in 2012 estimates that upwards of 40% of business listings are inaccurate, incomplete or missing altogether. The problem is as big for large corporations as it is for small businesses. Taking advantage of the opportunity to assist businesses with this problem requires that marketers understand the local search ecosystem and the best practices for online listing management.

2 How Local Search Works

Local searches are taking place across the web and devices through the likes of traditional search engines, maps, and social media sites. As a result consumers encounter online business listings in a variety of forms and contexts, and primarily through organic or unpaid results. Companies that provide these services offer a method for the business owners to manage business listing content at no cost while paid opportunities such as sponsored listings may also be offered.

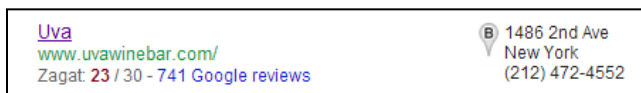
Consumers don't have to directly indicate their desired location by including zip code, city name, or neighborhood etc., within their search criteria. Their location may be perceived by the publisher via a user's IP address, GPS coordinates or registration data in order to make the search results relevant.

The first step to managing business listings is to understand the Local Search ecosystem. It is important to know where consumers are conducting searches, what information you can include in the results and what opportunities you have to manage them for accuracy.

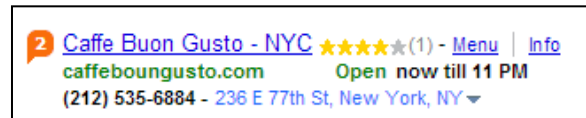
2.1 Where Consumers Are Searching Locally

Local searches take place across devices and thousands of different entities which can be summarized into six types of properties: search engines, mapping services, internet yellow pages, local and vertical directories, social media and mobile apps.

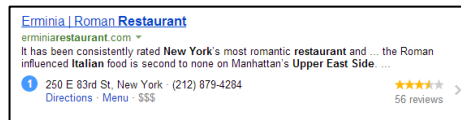
Search Engines generally present a line of results often referred to as search engine results page (SERP) that includes both organic search results and paid listings. Businesses can sometimes have profile pages that can be linked from the listing for more information.



Google



Yahoo!

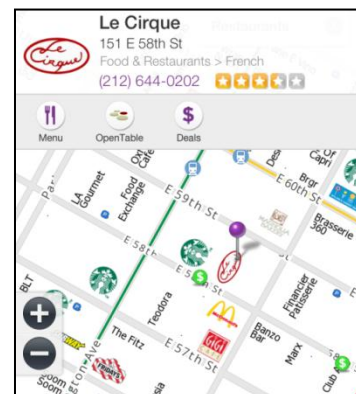


Bing

Mapping Services display businesses with a pinpoint on a map and provide business listing information if selected or clicked. Mapping services can be associated with search engine results, act as a standalone entity or a portable GPS in cars to provide a great visual way for consumers to find businesses. Maps provide an additional benefit for consumers by allowing them to visualize and often provide directions on how to get from their location to the business location including how long it is expected to take.



Google



CityMaps

Internet Yellow Pages are online versions of traditional printed business directories produced by telephone companies around the world. Online directories like this often offer vicinity maps, company profiles, product information, as well as both paid and organic results.

1 The Garage Automotive Services ★★★★★ (19)
 340 10th St, San Francisco, CA 94103 » Map
 (415) 523-6067
 » Website » More Info » Add Photos
 Where: Central East San Francisco, SoMa
 What: Auto Repair & Service, Brake Repair, Automobile Body Shop Equipment & Supplies

YP

Acme Car Service*
 1015 Grove Way
 Hayward, CA zip code
 Car Repair Services. Jaguar, Bentley & More. Call Us Today.
 Phone Website Map it
 SuperGuarantee It

yellowpages.superpages.com

2 Emerald Auto Repair (415) 564-1331
 2941 Geary Blvd
 San Francisco, CA 94118 | Map
 Website Quick Info
 Hours:
 Mon: 8:00AM-5:30PM
 Tue: 8:00AM-5:30PM
 Wed: 8:00AM-5:30PM
 Thu: 8:00AM-5:30PM
 Fri: 8:00AM-5:30PM
 Payment types:
 AMERICAN EXPRESS MASTERCARD VISA
 - Personal Check

yellowbook.com

Local and Vertical Specific Directories are similar, more focused directories specialize in a specific category such as an industry/profession, medical, hotels or a local neighborhood.

AAAA AGENCY SEARCH Click on column
 Search Criteria (Click key word to remove filter)
 Type of Service: Business-to-Business
 Location: New York
 Compare Selected Agencies
 Save Selected Agencies

AGENCY NAME	CITY, STATE	GROSS MEDIA	TOTAL U.S. EMPLOYEE
300 LLC (Main Listing)	New York, NY		201-500
Alibony	New York, NY		201-500
Atmosphere Proximity	New York, NY		
Barker DDP	New York, NY	Under \$50 Million	0-50
BCA Marketing Communications	Ply Brook, NY		0-50
Berlin Cameron United	New York, NY		\$1-100
Delta Fennia Rothchild Jaary + Partners	New York, NY	\$101 - 300 Million	\$1-100
DevilloVerdi	New York, NY		\$1-100
Eric Moser + Associates	Syracuse, NY		201-500
Grey New York/Headquarters	New York, NY	Over \$ 1 Billion	500+
Kaplan Thaler Group	New York, NY	Over \$ 1 Billion	201-500
Konny, Kay & Partners, Inc.	New York, NY		0-50

American Association of Advertising Agencies

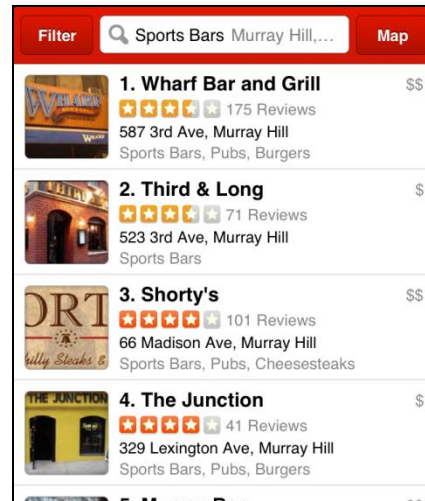
FortGreene-ClintonHillPatch 69°
 Home News Events Directory Pics & Clips Commute Real
 SEARCH RESULTS
 Search in: Articles Directory Events
 SEARCH: citibank
 Showing 1-10 of 20 results SORT BY: Relevance Date
 FINANCIAL SERVICES, BANKING
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 411 Grand St, New York, NY 10002-4701
 (800) 627-3959
 Citi Card Offer. Low Intro Rate or High Rewards
 Photos (1)
 FINANCIAL SERVICES, BANKING
 Citibank
 50 Avenue A, New York, NY 10009-7363
 (800) 627-3959
 Citi Card Offer. Low Intro Rate or High Rewards
 Photos (1)

AOL's Patch in Fort Greene

Social Media sites and apps allow consumers to discover businesses based on other customers' reviews, check-ins etc., including their own connections of friends and family. This information is sometimes integrated into other local search publishers.

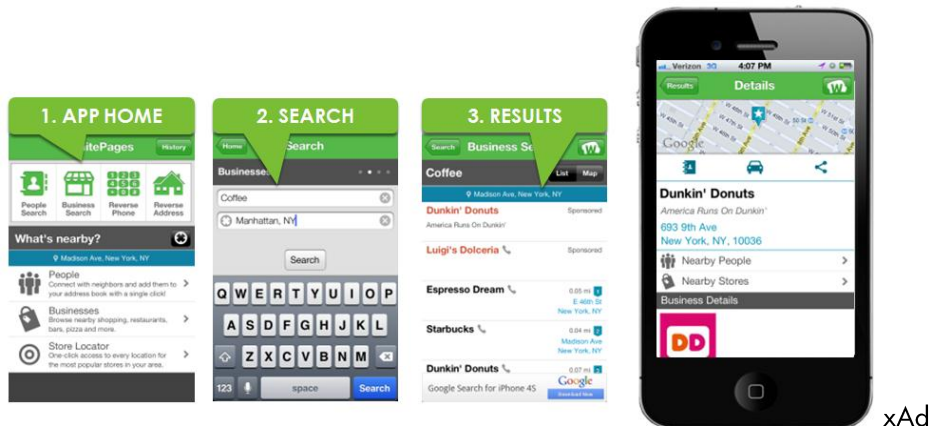


FourSquare



Yelp

Mobile Apps are software applications designed to run on smartphones, tablet computers and other mobile devices. As mobile search has grown year after year, apps have become a popular place for local search. While the 5 other types of properties mentioned can be accessed on both computers and mobile devices, mobile apps are important to mention due to mobile only properties.



xAd

No matter what type of search property consumers use, many of the same features and options are available to them. The most important thing to know is which of these types of properties customers are using to find your business.

2.2 Types of Local Search Results

Depending on the propriety there are three core types of local search results that consumers may engage with to discover a business.

Organic Business Listings Publishers manage their own database of business listings derived from a variety of sources. These listings are displayed with a minimum of the business's name, address and phone number.

Sponsored Business Listings While providing consumers with the same information as an organic business listing, sponsored listings are offered by publishers allowing marketers to pay for their business to appear in the results when specific search criteria is used. These listing are always labeled as sponsored or advertisement to distinguish from organic listings.

Local Organic Search Results In addition to business listings, organic search results may appear typically below business listings with links related to a business such as the business's website, articles about the business etc.

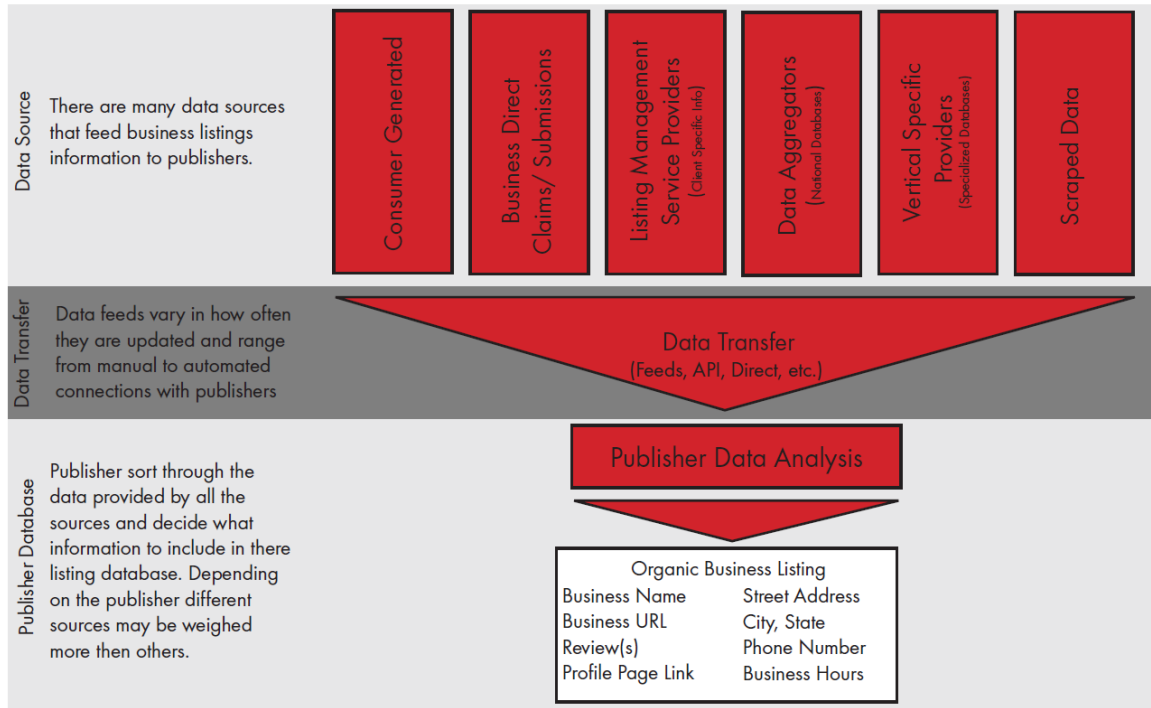
2.3 Organic Business Listings Sources

Publishers populate their business listings database by gathering and validating data from a variety of sources that all have different relationships with businesses and publishers. While there are many companies that aggregate business information for publishers, they can be categorized into six types of data sources, as seen in the diagram below:

Type of Data Source	Definition
Consumer-Generated	Content added to a website or application by a member of the general public who may or may not be affiliated with a particular business. Some publishers allow consumers to add actual locations, while others simply allow consumers to add photos or reviews to existing locations.
Business Direct Claims/ Submissions	Marketers directly provide business information to a publisher per location. This is often a manual process and varies by publisher.
Listing Management Service (Client Specific Databases)	Work with small businesses and enterprises to manage their listings across multiple websites, mobile apps and navigation systems via the use of manual uploads, bulk distribution and/or database-level integrations.
Data Aggregators (National Databases)	Compile, cleanse, normalize, and enrich business listing information from hundreds of data sources that is then licensed directly to online publishers. The source information is validated/verified on a weekly/monthly basis and may originate from public records, surveys, utilities, merchants, agencies and web mining efforts.
Vertical-Specific Providers (Specialized Databases)	Organizations that gather and sell category specific business information to others (such as an industry/profession, medical, hotels or a local neighborhood.). In some situations business may need to pay to be included. (Often also host their own search directory)
Scraped data	Business information obtained by publishers via a technique of extracting information from websites and public databases.

Multiple Sources Compete To Populate Publisher's Business Listing Databases:

*This is a simplified illustration as there are multiple companies that fall under each type of data source. Many of these companies have relationships with each other to share data to ensure accuracy.



3 Managing Organic Business Listings

Due to multiple sources providing publishers with business information, confusion can exist in understanding how marketers manage business listings to ensure accuracy.

3.1 Managing Location Information Internally

The first step in business listing management is to prepare the data internally. Someone in the organization should manage this list and update it in a central location. This may not be difficult for small businesses with only few locations, but can be quite tasking for large organizations with multiple branches.

Next the company website must have accurate information for each location. This needs to be in a highly visible area of the website and tagged with microformats for search engines and other data sources that collect this data robotically (e.g. contact pages, footers). For companies with multi-locations having a "Store Locator" directory formatted similarly to business listing or creating individual pages per location are effective strategies.

Once everything is set internally, then it is time to think about managing your listings across other entities.

3.2 Direct vs. Intermediary Management

When ready to manage your listing across publishers, determine if it is something that can be managed directly by your organization or if you would benefit from an intermediary to provide a listing management service.

Direct Management

Small medium businesses (SMBs) that have one or a few locations often choose to manage directly to save money and because they have less locations to monitor and update. They typically choose to focus on the main sites only; devoting the dozens of hours necessary for ongoing management in the same way they might manage their own website. The upside of this is that they can choose which sites matter to them and their specialty while the downside is lack of expertise in content and site selection.

Multi-location Enterprises may also choose to manage submissions themselves as part of their website or marketing activities; sometimes managing key sites themselves, though typically working in tandem with intermediary groups. Some very large companies will send files directly to major publishers such as the key search engines and directories through bulk upload or direct relationships.

Intermediary Management

Agencies or some form of an intermediary facilitator control the largest volume of business-controlled listings. This can range from a one-person web shop serving neighborhood businesses, to divisions of the world's largest interactive agencies, SMB marketers and specialized submission services. As local search has grown in impact, increasing numbers of interactive agencies are building or acquiring specialized divisions to manage customer listings. Identity or presence management (listings, local analytics and reputation monitoring) is seen as a lucrative component that serves a client need.

3.3 Manual Claiming vs. Bulk Uploads

Despite who manages the listing, there are two main ways the information can be distributed, manually or in bulk. Both have their benefits and limitations, you may find it best to do a combination of both.

Manual - Claiming individual listings

For businesses doing manual entry the process is one of laboring through the different sites and filling out the forms, paying special attention to the options for specific data and formats of such items as logos. The largest benefit of manual submissions is the ability to achieve "owner verified" or "claimed" status, which not only raises the status of the listing in the eyes of the search engine algorithms, but it mostly locks out external data from over-writing or corrupting the business's own view of its location. A verification process of the claim is done by phone, email or postcard which is a lot easier for an individual business ready to answer on the spot, compared to a multi-location entity or franchise attempting this for each branch. However, the claim on a listing does not last forever. It needs to be re-confirmed on a regular basis to ensure nothing has changed. The downside is that many businesses forget to update these or lose the passwords and so the records can become outdated.

Bulk Uploading

For multi-location Enterprise or SMB resellers the main method for syndication involves a bulk template or API. This assembles all the locations under management in structured data frameworks, including descriptions, categories (or their code numbers) and binary links to images and videos. Google, Bing

and Yahoo! have their own bulk upload systems, as do the database services and many of the local listing facilitators. Generally these files are updated and uploaded monthly (or more often) to include adds, changes, deletes, and allow for long-term improvements to listings. Some consider the frequent updates to also provide a higher freshness score in search algorithms that increases prominence in search results.

3.4 Data & Formatting of Listings

Whether you are submitting claims manually or in bulk there is a lot of different information you can provide about your business. Depending on the publisher they may ask for anything from the basic name, address and phone number to more enhanced information such as hours of operation and product offerings that can answer searchers questions without them having to dig deep into a business's website. Here are the main types of data that can be provided and tips for submission.

- **NAP (Business Name, Address, Phone):** Needs to be consistent across publisher sites.
 - **Business Name:** Businesses may have different "street names" than their corporate names or may have changed their name through mergers or new branding strategies. Submit the exact same iteration of a display name to avoid duplicate listings; e.g.: 7-Eleven vs. 7-Eleven #1234.
 - **Address:** Provide complete address and be consistent; e.g. if you submit 123 Maple Street for one source then don't vary from that nomenclature; e.g. 123 Maple Street vs. 123 Maple St.
 - **Phone:** A local phone number is preferable to a toll-free or call-tracking number because it can be verified against public records and won't expire; provide multiple phones for a business when possible for maximum exposure
- **Service Areas:** If listing a business service that does not publish a physical street address, then always supply the service area for publication.
- **Business Categories:** Select the most relevant business categories for your business; remember categories are key words people use to locate a specific business, product or service; e.g. restaurant, Vietnamese restaurant, Asian food, take-out food
- **Business Description:** Include a description of the business; even though space is limited, be sure to include the city and state in the summary.
- **Keywords:** Use keywords as much as possible to give local customers the information they need to make a positive buying decision.
- **Enrich the listing:** Add elements such as web address, Facebook link, Twitter handle, hours of operation, brands, services, products sold, payment options, company logo, parking options, business email address; etc.
- **Supply Web Links:** Include photos, videos, coupons, menus, directions (e.g.: Just off I95 exit 39 in the same plaza as ABC Hardware)

Businesses without a public address

•Some publishers present service-oriented businesses with the option (or the requirement) to hide the business address if customers are serviced in the field only. For example, a plumber serving the Redmond, WA area might have a published listing with a phone number but no public street address. It is advisable to make use of this option where provided.

3.5 Monitoring Social Media

Publishers are adding social media to business listings with the addition of reviews and customer comments whether they are good, bad or neutral. These have an effect on search results and the consumer's perspective. As a result, online Reputation Management, the managing businesses' online appearance for prospective customers has become a growing service by companies within the business listing ecosystem. This is very important as recent studies have shown that 70% of local buying decisions can be affected by a business' online reputation according to BIA/Kelsey.

In order to have a strong reputation monitoring and management strategy you need to:

Monitor and learn. First, understand that consumers are out in the online community actively speaking "about the business, without them". Understand what and why they say what they do by using a tool that brings it all together.

Identify and resolve. Next, identify negative information and determine if consumer issues are people related, service related or product related. Use the tools that are readily available to you in today's online reputation platforms to discover the source of the problems.

Listen and respond. Create a plan that fundamentally addresses the issues. Is there a concern with a manager or staff member? Is there a product or service problem (cold coffee, hard cake, etc.)? Customers want to be heard, and they want an immediate response from the business.

Ask and value. Learn to ask satisfied customers to write genuine online reviews. Repeat customers feel valued if you ask them to add a review on your business listing.

See results! Proactively institute checks and balances to provide consistent quality service so positive reviews are routinely posted.



I am not surprised to see so many bad reviews here. I went for a consultation, and I was overwhelmed with the negative energy at this medical center. I will be taking my business somewhere else.



I am a 24 year old Female, I had my lasik surgery on December 2010. After getting my eyes done, I never got any calls to check up on me or to go back in for a check up!!



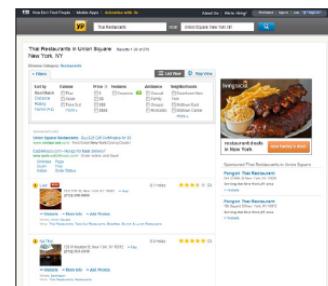
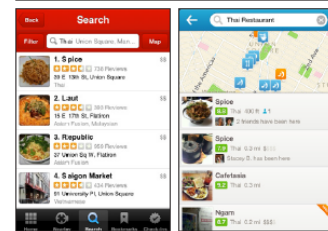
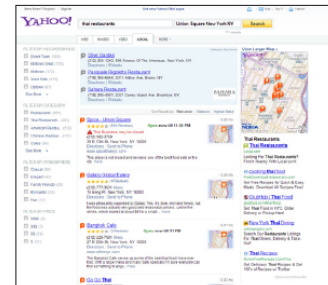
ALWAYS a 40+ minute wait. Does not matter what time your appt is....you will wait 40+ mins and they will always tell you and EVERYONE around you that they are sorry they are running late today. They are running late everyday. If you value your time. Go somewhere else.

3.6 Taking Control over Your Listings

There are benefits to all the different ways you can manage your listings whether you are a large enterprise with multiple locations or an SMB. The best strategies come from doing a mix of them all. Here are key actions you can take to create a cohesive presence across the local search sites and apps.

Take Control Over Your Listings:

Action	Benefit
Optimize website with location specific information via store locator or individual pages	Publishers collect this data to populate their business listing databases.
Provide location information to data aggregators	Data aggregators provide listing data to publishers in large scale.
Leverage listing management service providers	Providers offer efficient optimization of listings from a central location.
Build profiles with vertical specific providers	For some verticals it helps to ensure coverage on highly specialized publishers.
Engage with consumers via social media and encourage reviews, check-ins etc.	Social media affects search result rankings. It is also becoming a source for local searches. Influences consumer's opinion.
Claim your listings	Has a positive effect on local search rankings and provide control and security of listing.
Buy sponsored listings	Can improve prominence/visibility by showing up at top of results.



4 Challenges of Managing Local Search

The fact that consumers encounter online business listings in a variety of forms and contexts combined with the multiple data sources feeding the information to publishers you can see why managing listings to ensure they are complete and accurate could be challenging. Here are two things to watch out for and address when managing business listings.

4.1 Duplicate Listings

Probably the single biggest challenge to marketers trying to manage location data is the idea of duplicate listings. Whereas with paid search, an advertiser chooses exactly what copy appears in an ad and which keyword query that ad will show up for, this sort of control is not currently possible in local search. The primary reason control is difficult is because each publisher gets its local search data from a number of sources which

means they may be receiving overlapping information about each location. If the data from each of the various sources does not match up precisely, duplicate listings are created for the same location.

Duplicate listings cause a less-than-optimal consumer experience. For instance, if a particular publisher is showing two listings for the same location, the consumer might be unsure of which listing contains the correct information about that business. This may degrade consumer confidence and force the user to choose another location, or worse, a competitive business.

John's Print & Copy Shop www.johnsprintandcopy.com 123-456-7890	123 Main St. Lakeview, NY
Johns Print & Copy www.johnsprintandcopy.com 123-456-7890	123 Main Street Lakeview, NY

4.2 Inactive Listings

Inactive listings, listings that are no longer tied to a valid business location, are another challenge that results in a poor experience for searchers. When companies go out of business, are acquired or change their name, the existing listing is often not removed. Particularly for businesses that have multiple locations this poor experience can negatively affect the customer's perception of the company as a whole. In addition it muddies the local listings results and could cause searchers to mistrust the publisher's results including the accurate listings.

The clean-up of these listings, especially claimed listings, is complicated and often results in tracking down the listing owner. Some data aggregators compile lists of inactive listings which are provided to publishers for review. However, publishers are often reluctant to remove these listings unless they are authorized by the business owner. With the churn of SMBs and the lack of incentive or know-how by former business owners to clean-up listings that are no longer valid, this is a problem that is not going away soon.

5 Measuring Success

Just as anything else that takes resources and money to manage, you should be measuring the effectiveness and success of your local listing management. How you measure success depends on your goals. There are specific metrics and common reports that can show you how accurate your business listings are and where they exist across the internet. This is helpful when focused on brand awareness and making sure your business is discoverable. Other metrics can inform you about how consumers are engaging with your listings and your brand in general.

Are you trying to drive in-store traffic? Do you expect customers to call to make an appointment? Different metrics will be appropriate depending on the action you expect the customer to take.

5.1 Coverage and Accuracy to Ensure Discoverability

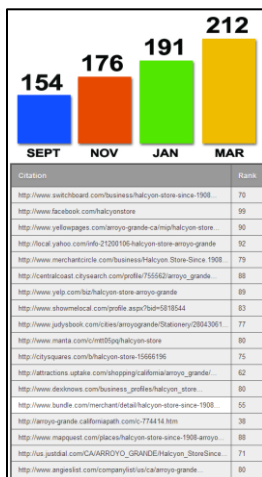
In order to make sure your business is discoverable it is imperative that your business listings be accurate and show up on searches where existing and new customers are looking. Here are some metrics and reports that can help you monitor your progress:

Metrics

- **Coverage:** tells you how many publishers your business listing appears on.
- **Accuracy:** checks for correct or incorrect information per site your business listing can be found on and identifies what information is inaccurate.
- **Enhanced content and media:** optimizing location listings with media such as logos, photos, videos, menus, product catalogs, events calendar, etc.
- **Search impressions:** reports the number of times your listing shows up in search results which supports the idea that your business can be found

Reports

Citation Report: Reports on coverage by showing the total number of places where search engines find the listing online. Citation Reports typically look at this number over time so you can see the growth of your listing presence across the internet. The expectation is that as a listing syndication effort is undertaken, a marketer will expect to see a growing number of citations as the data populates new directories, search sites, and local-social or review sites. This is also the way to show a return on investment beyond accuracy of data. This report is based on keywords and is often seen as an extension of search engine optimization.



Snapshot from UBL Report

Rating	Avg. Citation PR	Avg. Domain PR	Avg. Domain mozRank	Avg. Domain Backlinks	Avg. Domain Page Authority	Avg. Domain Authority
3.5	1.27	6.33	6.19	127,924	74.42	77.11
3.5	1.12	6.21	6.2	128,943	74.91	75.41
4	0.75	6.75	6.38	126,214	78.06	80.81

Rating	Citation Page Rank	Domain Page Rank	Domain mozRank	Domain Backlinks	Domain Page Authority	Domain Authority
60%	2	7	6.99	251,069	92.07	90.52
70%	1	8	7.11	407,108	91.53	89.92
70%	2	7	6.53	94,164	86.26	83.52
70%	0	7	6.58	212,972	87.36	84.87
80%	3	7	6.47	35,705	81.97	79.43
90%	0	8	6.78	107,592	65.33	92.93
80%	1	5	5.86	13,570	61	53.59
90%	0	6	4.72	940	46.69	84.19
100%	0	7	6.48	98,360	78.99	74.99
80%	0	6	6.71	162,373	81.4	78.02
80%	0	8	6.74	113,116	91.1	92.11
80%	0	5	5.63	17,391	71.06	65.66

Snapshot from Places Scout

Visibility or Presence Audit Report : Reports on the accuracy and presence across the main search sites, looking for variations on key data elements such as name, address, phone number and URL. They also indicate if a location is Owner Verified or “claimed” and can suggest additional opportunities for publication. The information on this type of reports is often built out via API access and web data extraction (scraping) which do not always reflect exactly the data that a user sees.

WEBSITE	LISTING STATUS	ERRORS	REVIEWS	RATINGS
Google+ Places	✓		4	★★★★★
Yelp	✗	NAME	1	★★★★★
YahooLocal	✓		1	★★★★★
BingLocal	✗	NAME	0	
YellowPages	✓		1	★★★★★
Facebook	✗	NAME	0	
FourSquare	✗	PHONE	0	
SuperPages	✗	NAME	1	
AOLYellowPages	✓		0	
YellowBook	✗	NAME	0	

Snapshot from Acxiom Report

Snapshot from GetListed Report

Aggregate Presence Report		
Site Name	Locations Scanned	Missing
Yahoo!	200	6 3%
MapQuest	200	34 17%
Superpages	200	67 33.5%
YP.com	200	84 42%
WhitePages	200	54 27%
Citysearch	200	2 1%
Local.com	200	122 61%
YellowBot	200	10 5%
Total	1600	379 23.69%

Snapshot from Yext Report

Local Ranking Analysis attempts to define where a client’s listing appears on major sites. While this might appear a clear determinant of value, the major sites such as Google are displaying data very differently depending on the user’s location, the user’s history, if the user is on a maps page or a main results page. So the results literally are not always what they seem to the client. A method used by such tools is to make the search machine anonymous and location-less. These tools will also analyze the results by keyword used, by zip code, or location name and other variants, as well as against competition.

Search Engine	↑ Up	↓ Down	○ No Change	➕ New	➖ Lost
All Search Engines	6	1	3	3	2
Google	2	0	1	2	0
Google Places	2	0	0	0	1
Yahoo!	1	1	0	1	0
Yahoo! Local	0	0	2	0	0
Bing	1	0	0	0	1
Bing Local	0	0	0	0	0

BrightLocal

5.2 Driving Engagement With Listings

While ensuring discoverability is an ongoing effort that continually needs to be monitored, you may want to look into how searchers are engaging with your listings. If your goal is to drive specific actions such as calling to make an appointment different metrics should be analyzed, but keep in mind the user's intent. If they are looking for business hours or other information that is provided in the listing result, a low click through rate and short dwell time is not necessarily a bad thing.

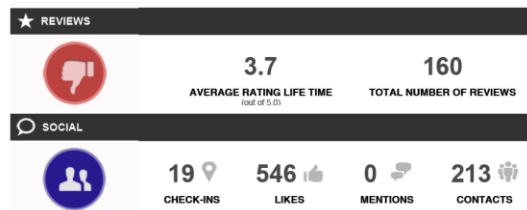
Metrics:

- **Clicks:** the number of times a user clicks on a link within a location listing
- **Calls:** the number of times a user calls a phone number from a location listing, can be measured using tracking phone numbers or click-to-call stats on mobile devices
- **Business profile page views:** the number of times a user clicks through or views location detail pages
- **Additional actions:** measured as specific actions taken while interacting with location listings, examples might be printing directions, viewing a menu, looking at products or offers
- **In-store coupon redemption:** the number of times a coupon from a link in a location listing is redeemed in store either via a mobile device or printed version.
- **Number of Reviews and Average Rating:** Identifies if consumers are talking about your business and looks for negative feedback to address.
- **Social Media Data:** Check-Ins, likes and mentions monitor consumer engagement with your business beyond listing. These are important to monitor as they could affect your local search ranking and are part of monitoring your overall presence.

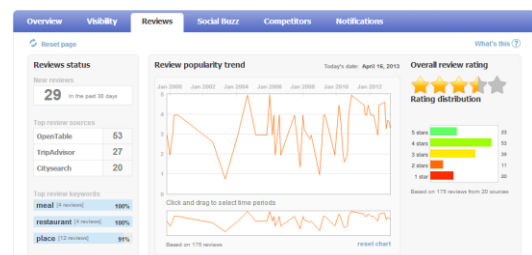
Report:

Profile Page Activity Reports on individual listings is provided by many publishers. The data includes views, clicks, click-to-map, click to call etc., however most sites such as Google, Bing, Yahoo and Yelp have done so with the individual location in mind, so reports are inside specific listing dashboard views or emails, and not easily rolled up for comprehensive analysis for multi-location entities.

Reputation Monitoring Reports analyze customer reviews and social mentions flagging anything that can negatively impact your business. It also identifies what sites customers are engaging with your business on.



Snapshot from Acxiom Report



Snapshot from UBL/LocationMonitor.com

No matter how you are analyzing your organic local listings it is important to know that limited analytic data is available today. Data on impressions and actions is typically limited to a specific timeframe (say the last 30 days) and while citation and visibility reports can look across publishers, more detailed reports on specific actions are typically available on a site by site basis and vary by provider. The key is to understand what reports are available to you, set goals and continually monitor your listing presence.

6 Conclusion

There is a huge opportunity for businesses, both SMBs and multi-location enterprises, to improve their local search presence and for marketers to help them accomplish this. It is crucial that business listings be consistent and accurate across search providers to ensure the best user experience and encourage customers to engage. While business listing management can be a significant task it is an important part of developing a cohesive online brand for your business.