The Internet Never Forgets:  
Protecting and Managing Your Organization’s  
Online Reputation

By:

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The New Marketplace

• A majority of consumers now look to online sources for information about local businesses.
• Until recently, online local information was carefully controlled by a few companies (InfoGroup, Acxiom)
• Today, social media and mobile technology are opening up the local marketplace – according to Google 40% of mobile searches are local in nature.
• Soon, the marketplace may become as open as Wikipedia, with contributions from many sources
• How does the small business owner stay informed and competitive? What tools can help?
The Great Migration

Thickness of Print Yellow Pages in Charlotte, NC, home of UBL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Thickness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2009</td>
<td>2 3/8 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2010</td>
<td>1 3/4 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2011</td>
<td>1 3/8 inches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42% reduction in size over the past 2 years! Meanwhile local search is growing about 9% per year.

(Sources: Michael Lowery, ComScore)

Who Controls Online Data?

• Despite the decline of the yellow pages, most local data still comes from phone books and telephone company records!
• A small number of companies used to be the only source of local data for hundreds of online directories.
• For a long time, it was harder to get into these directories than to get listed in the phone book.
• But that is changing. Many local search sites like Google+ Local now let businesses take control of local listings, and agencies and tools can help.

(Sources: Michael Lowery, ComScore)
What Is Local Search Optimization?

• It’s not SEO – but it’s a good complement.
• It’s a set of tools and techniques for promoting your **physical business location** in local and mobile search.
• It’s focused on three things:
  – Placing accurate, detailed information about your business on as many local search sites as possible
  – Optimizing listings on key sites like Google Places
  – Engaging with customers via social networking

Optimize Your Google Listing

On sites like Google Places, businesses can control much (if not all) listing information.
Get Mobile with Foursquare

Anyone can add a venue on Foursquare. The business owner can claim the venue and offer specials. With Foursquare, search becomes democratic.

More than 1 billion check-ins and counting! This is one of many opportunities for business owners to get involved in the mobile space.

Connect with Fans on Facebook

500 Million People Logged in Each Day

350 Million People Logged in via Mobile Device

(Source: Mobile Marketing Association)
Ultimately, Local=Mobile=Social

• Better and deeper local content is increasingly provided by businesses themselves
• Mobile technology brings online and location-based capabilities to the local marketplace, and mobile consumers have higher intent
• Social media gives businesses and consumers new ways to interact -- *if* the business has a social media presence

What Does This Mean for Businesses?

• SMBs *must* ensure their name, address, phone, and URL are present, correct, and consistent across core directories or they’ll be left out of the conversation
• All the places where consumers and businesses interact online are opportunities for new business
• Business owners can enlist the help of agencies who specialize in local search optimization
• Reputation management tools help businesses track social activity (such as reviews) and engage with customers
Local Search Optimization Checklist

- Claim your Google Places page
- Create a Facebook Page and Twitter account and use them to reach out to your customers
- Claim your listings on check-in sites like Foursquare and use them to run promotions
- Claim your listings on other sites like Bing, Yahoo, Yellowpages.com, Citysearch, Superpages, Yelp, etc.
- Use reputation management tools to monitor social activity such as reviews
- Or hire a specialist who can do all this for you and more

Web Equity: Owning Your Local Web Presence by Mike Blumenthal
Thank You