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Search Engine Confidence Score Has A Google-Like Feel

by [Laurie Sullivan](#), Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 4:44 PM
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Attempting to add credibility to online business listings, Localize has unveiled a tool dubbed Localize Confidence Score. The latest feature from the online content manager's Enhanced Business Registry aims to help search engines return more

relevant search results based on queries from consumers looking to find up-to-date information across the Web.

The Localize Confidence Score assesses local business names, phone numbers and addresses, and validates the information that search engines can apply to their search algorithms. The Confidence Score allows search engines to consider a business score when serving up local listings to consumers.

Localize collects information such as names and addresses on local business and publishes the information on local search engines such as Google Maps, Yahoo Local, Superpages.com and Yellowpages.com.

Search engines have been struggling to serve up the most relevant and accurate information as the content across the Internet continues to grow, according to David Dague, Localize VP of marketing. "We hope the scoring will validate the information, so users don't feel like they are looking at spam all the time and get frustrated," he said.

Similar to creating a personal listing in Google Profile, which launched last week, businesses can control information in their online listings. They can keep scores high by updating the content periodically to guarantee accuracy.

Marty Weintraub, search guru and aimClear President, doubts the tool will significantly clean up spam. "If you build it, they will spam it," he said. "It's the only thing we can truly count on."

Weintraub said even Google with its hybrid algorithms and best-in-class resources can't manage to keep Google Maps clean.

Nevertheless, Localize already has nearly 500,000 of the 15 million businesses updating their profiles. The confidence score ranges from zero to 100. The scores rely on 14 parameters and proprietary algorithms to score each listing each month.

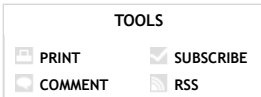
The best score comes from the businesses that recently validate or change listings. The higher the score, the more frequently the business updates and checks the information. Listings with low scores do not necessarily mean the information is "bad." This means the listing has not been validated by the best sources, which includes the company. Consumers might also see a logo next to the list that indicates the merchant verified the information.

Dague said search engines are integrating the scores into their indexing, but the goal is to have the score factored in search algorithms.

MSN, Yahoo Local, Yellowpages.com and other major search engines have begun to integrate the score into their indexing, according to Dague. "Google is experimenting with the confidence score,"



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he said. "It's not official yet. They are not near putting it into their algorithms, but they are working with it."

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