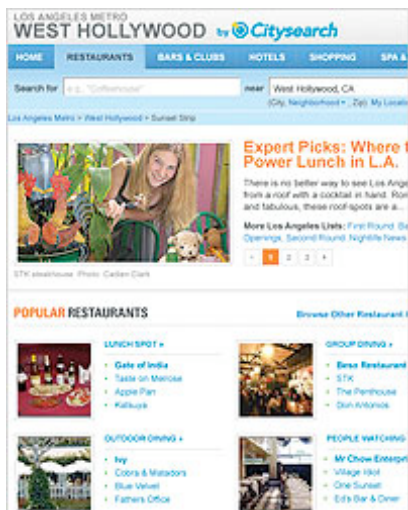




## Citysearch Geo-Targets Locations, Ads

by Laurie Sullivan, Wednesday, Nov 19, 2008 8:00 AM ET



Citysearch has ripped out its backend system and overhauled the local online guides to offer social and mobile application. The redesign is intended to let consumers uncover hidden gems in local businesses, and share opinions in views and reviews.

Features unveiled today offer a quick registration process, easy review writing features, and search and navigation tools. The follow-along map has content that moves as users scroll down pages, making it easier to see

everything in one place.

Citysearch, an IAC/Interactive company, relies on Maponics, a Norwich, Vt. company that provides mapping services and map data for businesses. It helped Citysearch Web engineers to redesign the backend, giving brands the ability to target consumers with ads based on specific neighborhoods.

"We have all the voices to provide feedback, from the owner of the cafe to editors that go out to review the locations, and user reviews from the community," said Brandi Willard, senior marketing manager at Citysearch. "It gives you a balanced view."

Searchers can drill down to specific neighborhoods in geographic locations. Rather than provide targeted listings in 140 local city guides, the site now offers information on more than 75,000 cities and neighborhoods nationwide. Searchers can pinpoint exact locations, down to the neighborhood, by ZIP code.

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For advertisers, the site makes geographical targeting possible. Sushi restaurants located in downtown Los Angeles on the West side, for example, will reap a better return on investment (ROI), with ads that target foot traffic coming from professionals on their lunch hour at work.

Online geo-targeting is an advertiser's dream come true, according to Amy Shea, EVP at New York-based Brand Keys. "A geographic location Web site provides a boon for advertisers, even large brands like Coca-Cola and Toyota that want the breadth of thousands of consumers rather than the local targeting," she said. "It's difficult to get your arms around TV metrics, but metrics and targeting are the strengths behind click-through ads online."

Shea said the ability to attract advertisers that targets local residents and businesses has kept newspapers alive, but as online geographic targeting improves, the services will become the closest threat to their survival.

Citysearch is now available on mobile, too. Mobile by Citysearch makes the platform available through devices supporting Web browsers through apps like Android and Safari. A social network feature integrates with Facebook Connect, an application that lets searchers log into Citysearch with a Facebook ID and ports pictures and friends from one app to the other.

The app prioritizes the "best of content" on Mobile by Citysearch, "so if you're out and you want a quick bite you can click on the link and it will pull up the information," Willard said. "It's all about quick content on the go."

Consumers can write and post reviews from their mobile device. By June, Willard said, consumers could see a feature on Mobile by Citysearch that allows consumers to shoot videos and upload them from their phone.

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