

== **INGENIOUS IDEAS** ==

The World Wide Web Gets Local



(NAPSA)—About 550 million searches are conducted daily on the Internet, according to Internet watchdog Jupiter Research. While most searchers now know how to order books, reserve plane tickets or download the latest tunes from cyberspace, many consumers are less confident about the best way to find information about businesses and services close to home—such as pinpointing specialty shops in their neighborhood or finding a phone number for a local pet store that's known for pampering pooches.

According to Yahoo! data, one in four Internet searches is local-specific. Only a handful of search engines are equipped to handle what is known as "local search." Local search differs from general search in that it lets people find business listings by searching within a specific city, neighborhood or zip code. This can greatly simplify the search process because it eliminates listings with similar names that are located in other parts of the U.S.—or the world. For example, if you're looking for the listing for a Chinese restaurant called Emerald Garden in a nearby city, a local search will only give you the information for the one you want—not a clutter of listings for restaurants with similar names that are located hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

Today's local search gives you a much more personalized experience than just a link to the business' Web page. For example, if you search on "garden center" in your neighborhood, you'll see a list of the closest nurseries, with a map showing exactly where they are located. In addition, you'll see a list of categories featuring related businesses such as landscapers and greenhouses. You'll also see ratings and reviews of the business by customers sharing their experi-

ences with the business.

Yahoo! Local (<http://local.yahoo.com>) is one of the best and most popular local search engines online today. It allows you to:

- **Discover new corners of your neighborhood.** If you're spending a day out around town, you can use Yahoo! Local to plan your itinerary. Find businesses you'll need to run errands at and check the business listings for hours and special considerations like sales or promotions. Yahoo! Local's integration with Yahoo! Maps means you'll be able to easily plot your destinations on a map, print multipoint driving directions and even plan your route based on traffic conditions, nearby ATMs or gas station locations.

- **Explore new communities.** Yahoo! Local helps you find businesses and local points of interest when you're traveling to new cities. You can rely on local knowledge by tapping into local ratings and reviews before you make dinner reservations at a restaurant. You can also find out where to get your pants pressed, look up what's playing at local movie theaters and research virtually any other service you may need while on the road.

- **Fill your social calendar.** Yahoo! Local's event listings make it easy to find out what is going on in your town. Impress your friends with knowledge about all upcoming concerts, festivals and shows in your city.

Using Yahoo! Local is easy. Just go to <http://local.yahoo.com> and put your zip code (or town and state) in the box to the right, and what you're searching for in the box on the left. Technology will take care of the rest. Faster searches are right on your doorstep.

For more information or to start searching in your neighborhood, visit <http://local.yahoo.com>.