

# Google adds Zagat reviews to push local search (Update)

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Google on Wednesday added the Zagat restaurant review content to its Google+ social network, as it rolled out a new local search feature that takes on services such as Yelp.

The Internet giant added a "Local" tab to its Google+ social network to allow users to search for specific places or browse for nearby businesses or services.

"If you click on a restaurant, or a museum (or whatever), you'll be taken to a local Google+ page that includes photos, Zagat scores and summaries, reviews from people you know, and other useful information like address and opening hours," Google's Avni Shah said in a blog post.

"Google+ Local helps people like my husband turn a craving -- 'Wow, I need brunch' -- into an afternoon outing: 'Perfect, there's a dim sum place with great reviews just two blocks from here. Let's go.' It's integrated into Search, Maps and mobile and available as a new tab in Google+ -- creating one simple experience across Google."

Google, which bought the popular Zagat review operations last year for a reported \$125 million, will compete against services such as Yelp, which offers local business reviews, and Open Table, which has restaurant reviews and reservations.

Yelp, which went public this year at a \$15 initial public offering price, fell four percent to \$16.40 in morning trade. Open Table slid five percent to \$37.10.

The Zagat reviews, which had been available by paid subscriptions, will now be free, the website said.

"We're excited to announce today that our content is now free on Zagat.com and a cornerstone of the new Google+ Local experience," the creators Nina and Tim Zagat said.

"Now, the world's highest quality reviews are available to more people, whether they are at their desks or on the go."

Analyst Greg Sterling said the new service improves on the "Google Places" which it replaces.

"These are major changes that Google is making in the fabric of Local -- for both consumers and marketers," Sterling writes on the Search Engine Land blog.

"They will enhance the consumer experience with a relatively small

adjustment and learning curve. People will be able to go on using Google as they have but get the benefit of the richer pages and Zagat ratings."

But Sterling said the Google service might be limited on Apple's iPhones because Apple is expected to replace Google Maps in June with its own maps service.

"None of this experience will probably ever show up on the (Apple) iOS map," he said.

"Instead, Apple users will be able to access this Google+ Local experience through the Google Places app and the Google+ app on the iPhone."

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