Duplicate Listings and Why They're Bad for Your Practice

WHY YOU NEED TO CLEAN UP DUPLICATE LISTINGS

Have you ever had a patient call in to ask where your practice is located because their GPS took them to an old business address, only to miss their appointment? When someone searches the Internet for a dentist in your town, is it difficult for your practice to show up on the map results? Answering yes to either of these questions could mean that you have duplicate business listings for your practice. Duplicate listings are multiple listings within the same online directory with inconsistent business information. People and search engines depend on this information to find you.

A clean presence on local online directories is one of the most important, yet neglected, search engine optimization (SEO) components by dental and medical professionals seeking to improve rankings.

In fact, Moz’s 2015 Local SEO Ranking Factor study found that collectively, local business directories account for 30 percent of ranking factors. Consistency of NAP (name, address and phone) information among online directories is the #2 ranking factor in Google’s map results in search engine results pages, referred to as the Snack Pack. This means your NAP information must be consistent across all online directories to have a chance at ranking favorably in local search results.

You also must ensure that your practice appears in only ONE listing per directory. This is particularly important in Google Maps. Multiple listings for the same practice in a single directory leads to trouble with ranking well within Google’s Snack Pack. Because Google Maps accounts for nearly 15% of local search ranking factors, this article will concentrate on duplicates specific to this directory.

COMMON GOOGLE DUPLICATE SCENARIOS AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM:

Problem #1:
Your practice changed locations but the old address is still showing.

Solution:
Claim your old business listing using phone verification and then change the address. The old phone number will have to be in service for this to work. If you have already claimed the listing with the old address, simply log in to your Google My Business dashboard and update the address (this may prompt re-verification).

Problem #2:
You found a listing for your practice and another one for each doctor at your practice.

Solution:
Find all listings on Google maps and submit a report for each repeated listing that you find. Generally, they will be the listings that contain each doctor’s name. After you find a listing on Google Maps, scroll down to find a “suggest an edit” button near the business hours:

Click on “suggest an edit” then toggle to “yes” when asked if this “Place is permanently closed or doesn’t exist”:

Finally, select the “duplicate” option and submit the form:

If you do this while logged into your Google account, you will get an email confirming the report submission. Once you report each duplicate listing, claim the remaining listing (the one with your official practice name) by going through the phone verification process.

Problem #3:
You bought a practice from another dentist.

Click on "suggest an edit" then toggle to "yes" when asked if this “Place is permanently closed or doesn’t exist”: 
**Solution:**
Do not set up a completely new listing for your new practice! Instead, find the Google listing under the name of the practice that you bought and claim it through the phone verification process. If the listing is verified under the old dentist, simply request an ownership transfer through Google's form. The owner will get an email and will then be able to transfer ownership of the listing to you through an existing Google account.

**OTHER TOP DIRECTORIES TO CONSIDER FOR DUPLICATE CLEAN-UP:**
Following are some of the top directories for doctors, dentists and vets according to Moz Local Citations. You'll need to identify which directories have duplicate listings and then report them according to each directory's guidelines. Then, claim any listings that you did not report by registering with a business account in each directory. Each process will be different, but all may require phone verification through the business phone number so make sure to be at the practice when you do this.
- healthgrades.com
- yellowpages.com
- local.webmd.com
- superpages.com
- yelp.com
- local.yahoo.com
- angieslist.com
- facebook.com

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