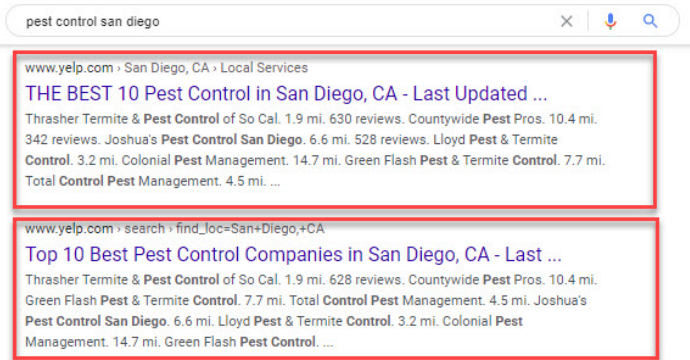
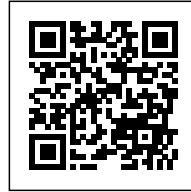


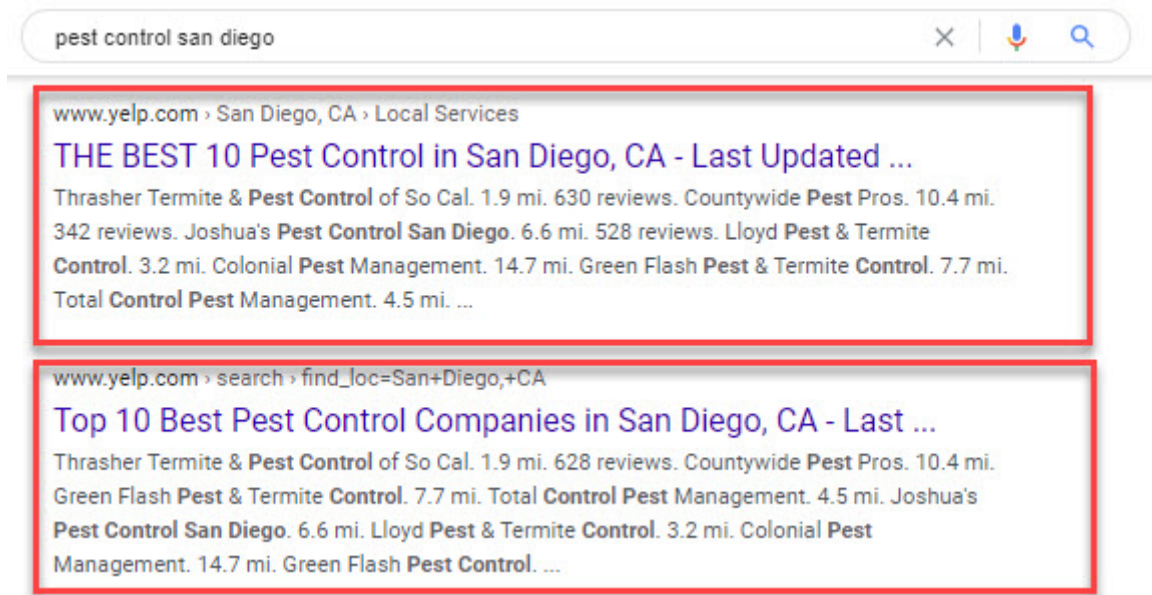
# WHY YOU SHOULD NEVER BUILD LOCAL CITATIONS!



Posted on September 27, 2020 by Fabian Pott



Categories: [Level: Advanced](#), [Local SEO](#), [Off-Page SEO](#)



## ... before you haven't read this post about building citations

I've been working in local SEO for several years now and it's becoming very much my area of expertise. Since there are always some knowledge gaps in the field of local search engine optimization, I wanted to start with this article to discuss some of the most important topics - how to build Citations!

Why are Citations important and which mistakes should you avoid by all means? In this first article about local SEO, I've summarized this and much more and also added some additional tips and tricks. Let's start with the first chapter about local Citations.

## What are citations?

Wherever a company is mentioned online, it is known as a citation. This involves the citation of name, address, telephone number and website of a business location on any online platform. Business locations can have Citations on major online platforms for local listings such as:

- Map services (Google Maps, Apple Maps)
- Search engines (Google, Bing)
- Local business directories (Yellow Pages, Yelp. etc.)
- Social media channels (Facebook)

(Source: [Moz.com](https://moz.com))

## Why are citations important?

According to a [Moz survey](#), citations are the fifth most important ranking factor for local search.

In short, they are an essential ranking factor. Good Citations can improve your ranking, bad (or rather wrong) Citations lead to the opposite. What bad citations are exactly, I explained in more detail in one of the chapters below.

The more often your brand is listed on platforms with correct NAP information (name, address, phone), the more positively it influences your position in a local search. This is because search engines like Google can recognize your business location as genuine - but ONLY based on consistent data!

If the information on different platforms is inconsistent instead (outdated or simply wrong), this would cause confusion: Google cannot validate the location clearly! By focusing on accurate and relevant citations, you can maximize your brand's online visibility and reputation.

## Why do you build citations?

The purpose of building citations is to mention your brand on as many platforms and directories as possible. This means that citations increase the credibility of specific information (e.g. name and address of a location) because it's spread over various directories in a consistent way.

Both Google and Bing recognize whether company information is consistent, accurate and up-to-date. But other local search engines also check if your business location is actually real. To do so, they match NAP information across multiple platforms and directories.

*NAP represents name, address and phone number. It's often also spoken of as NAPW - which is almost the same, except that the website is given under the NAP.*

So when prospects search for your product or service on their device, the map will show the location of your business nearby.

## Which type of citations is available?

### Structured citations

A structured citation is in some instances the best kind and is most likely to be found on a high-quality internet directory like Yell.com. This will have the business name and address correctly formatted and possibly even with schema microdata to further help the search engines. Additionally, these Yellow Pages types directories or IYP's (*Internet Yellow Pages*) should be organized by

business type and area much like the traditional Yellow pages books of old (*but obviously, online*).

Examples of UK sites to gain structured citations from include Yell, Yelp, Qype, Scoot, Thomson, and pay particular attention to any directories that are specific to your location, business area. Also, look at business organizations you are a member of where you could potentially gain a listing.

## Unstructured citations

An unstructured citation usually shows up in blog posts, forum posts, or as a result of press mentions. But they can also come from a whole range of places like social media profiles – have you got your name and address there? On Twitter, you can add your location and then maybe your phone number into the bio. In your Linked In bio, you can add your address to your bio. The opportunities for unstructured citations are only bound by your imagination so if you have a Youtube channel if you podcast if you do guest blog posts – all of these can be an opportunity to get another unstructured citation that will only help build more trust and improve your local and organic search ranking efforts.

(Source: [Bowlerhat](#))

## Why citations always have to be consistent

<b>Correct NAP:</b> SEO Buster 710 South Bradshaw Road Apopka, FL 32703 (407) 889-9123	<b>Wrong street:</b> SEO Buster <b>600 South Bradshaw Road</b> Apopka, FL 32700 (407) 889-9123
<b>Wrong name:</b> <b>SEO</b> 710 South Bradshaw Road Apopka, FL 32703 (407) 889-9123	<b>Wrong number:</b> SEO Buster 710 South Bradshaw Road Apopka, FL 32703 <b>(407) 889-9000</b>

The consistency of your company data is very important so that Google can find out that it's always the same company and therefore a real and running business. This applies to both structured and unstructured citations. This means that your citations should always contain the same data.

This ensures that this company is given more relevance in local search, which means that it will also receive higher rankings. The more often the company is mentioned with consistent data, the more confident Google is about the fact that it's a real and running company. Besides, consistent data is very important for both prospects and existing customers to ensure that they do not find any wrong information about the company.

This is not only bad for local SEO but also lowers the trust of customers. In fact, [one study found](#) that no less than 80% of customers lose their trust in local companies if they find incorrect or inconsistent contact information or company names online.

The more mistakes are made, the more difficult it becomes for search engines to identify a company as unique in the different directories. This can also be a reason for not being listed for relevant local search queries.

Before starting with building more citations, you should first define your own company NAP and then check where your company is listed on the web - everywhere! Here, older locations or old telephone numbers should also be included in the analysis. Duplicate listings in a directory should also be avoided at all costs.

However, building citations requires continuous maintenance of your data: Check and update your location information regularly to ensure that your information is always consistent across the web. Only then you should start building new citations.

## **How to manage citations?**

### **Manual citation management**

Here you manually build, edit, and manage all citations. To execute this well, create a database listing all existing citations, their accuracy, and their status.

1. good for saving money
2. helpful to build additional citations on geo/industry platforms
3. Good for getting citations which not all you competitors have (to get a better "bang")
4. requires SEO experience, effort, and lots of creativity!

### **Semi-automated citation management**

In this scenario, you engage a service that automates the push of local business data to some platforms and then manually builds additional citations on platforms beyond the boundaries of the automated data push.

1. it's important to work with a solid and professional service provider
2. you save lots of time
3. your competitors might use the same service - try to stand out (see manual citation management)

## Automated citation management

In this case, you typically purchase a service, enter your business data, and then that data is automatically pushed out to a set number of platforms with no further effort on the part of the business owner. Moz Local is an automated solution of this kind.

1. almost no time investment
2. changing data of lots of citations happens automatically and very fast!
3. if you need to clean up, manage your bad data, user reviews, and need lots of reports - this is how you scale the system!

(Source: [moz.com](https://moz.com))

## Where can you build citations?

There are of course also manual ways to find citations. You should make sure that you don't just build up locally relevant citations, but also those that are specific to your niche.

Here you can find:

- [citations by category](#)
- [citations by city](#)

## How can you optimize citations?

There are different ways to do this. However, it's important to know that the more authority a business directory (structured citation) or, for example, a blog (unstructured citation) has, the more it affects the ranking - both for Google Maps and locally optimized websites.

But I also got very good experiences by using automated link building to the citations. Many people think that this can have negative effects. But this isn't entirely true: Especially business directories have high authority. So it's perfectly ok to build links of a lower quality because these websites can easily handle that.

Also, keep in mind that the links you get through these directories are almost always no-follow. Therefore, it's definitely a good idea to also build lower quality links on them, as this will definitely not have a negative effect on your ranking.

**You can use these methods:**

- GSA
- RankerX
- PBNs

- [sape.ru](http://sape.ru)
- WEB20

## Final thoughts

Do you want to know how to even get Citations that are not only very strong, but that your competitors will never have? Would it be interesting for you to learn how to find an incredible number of directories via ScrapeBox where you can spread your NAP? Do you want to know how local Google News sites influence the ranking of a locally optimized website?

Then subscribe to our newsletter now! It will pay off!

All the best,  
Fabian

**There are no comments yet.**