

# Managing your digital reputation

Your website is your 24/7 salesperson. It is the champion of your business, the informative interface when people are researching your company, and the digital representation of your brand. You have control of your website's content, as well as the user experience — or at least someone in your company does.

Hopefully, you have worked hard to keep your website up-to-date, running smoothly and looking good. You may have even taken the extra-credit steps of making your site mobile-friendly or tracking your site's statistics and performance to optimize your sales funnel.

But there may be one key piece of your company's online presence that you are forgetting.

Your presence on the Internet is your company's digital reputation ... and the Internet likes to gossip. The majority of prospective customers do online research before engaging with a company. They are most likely typing into a Google search the name of your business to find your website and whatever else pops up about your company.

Do you know what comes up when someone Googles your business? Are you even showing up? Are your competitors showing up? Is a bad review of your business showing up? Is your phone number wrong?

In the first part of this three-part series on



managing your online presence, let's explore the major websites where people are most likely to find you — search engines.

## Google: The alpha dog

Google is the largest and most widely used search engine. Luckily, they make it very easy for businesses to claim their listings with them so that business owners can input and verify vital company information.

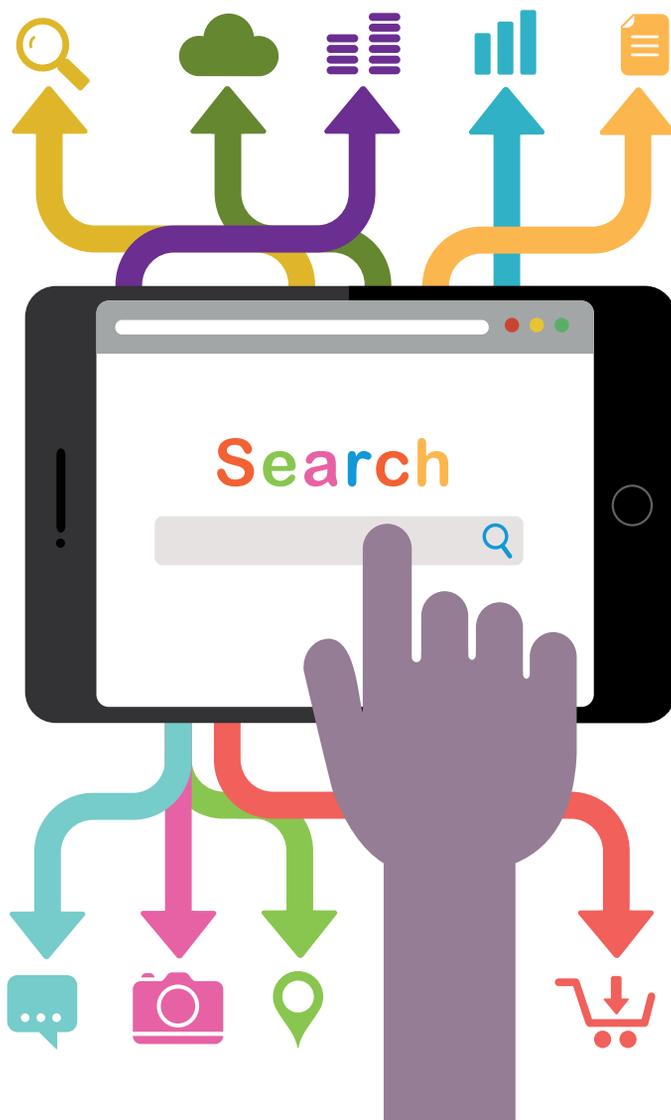
There are several benefits to signing up for Google My Business. It automatically inputs your business to Google Search, Maps and Google+, which makes it especially easy for people to find or call you on mobile devices. It basically gives you another listing on top of your website when people search for you.

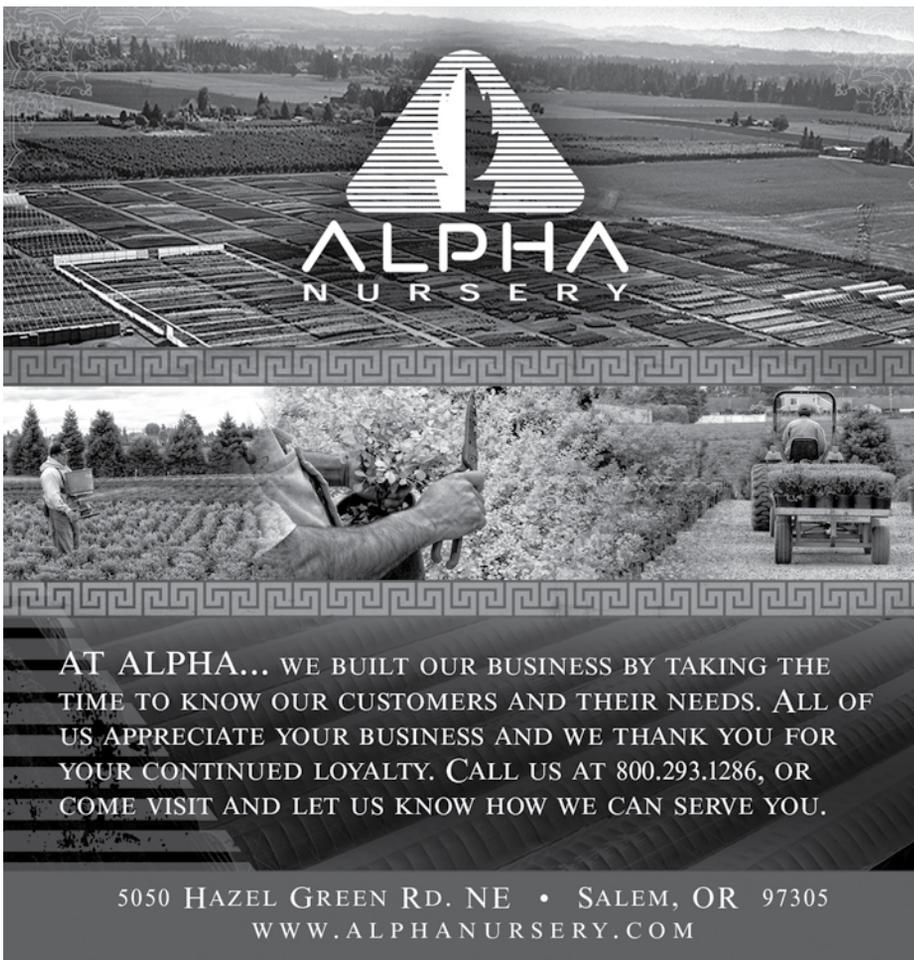
Registering is free: all you need to do is go to [www.google.com/business](http://www.google.com/business) and follow the directions from there.

## Bing: The sneaky second

Many people may not realize it, but Bing has snuck into second place behind Google in search engine usage. Although it may not seem worth your time to manage your web presence on any search engine other than Google, the growth of Bing and the benefits of claiming your listings here make it a bit of a no-brainer.

When you claim your listings on Bing, you confirm that your listed information is correct; you also have the opportunity to add photos and services that showcase your business to potential customers. To get started, go to [www.bingplaces.com](http://www.bingplaces.com). ▶





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## ▲ PIVOT POINTS

### Yahoo: Pay to play

The third-largest search engine has one major drawback: you have to pay to claim your listing to do most of the things that Google and Bing allow you to do for free. However, depending on your website traffic, the monthly fee may be worth it.

If you have analytics set up on your website, you should be able to tell where your web traffic is coming from and how that traffic is performing.

If you have a high volume of performing traffic coming from Yahoo, your business may consider spending a little bit of money to make sure your listings are correct, to enable folks to find you easier, and to include additional photos and information about your business.

To weigh the pros and cons, log on to [www.smallbusiness.yahoo.com/local-listings](http://www.smallbusiness.yahoo.com/local-listings).

### Helping people find you

Registering with one or all three of these search engines can have a major impact on people trying to find your business when they are searching online for you, with very minimal time and (excluding Yahoo) money.

All it takes is a few minutes a month after you have claimed and verified your listings to make sure that everything is running smoothly and that you are showing up how you should to the people who are actively trying to find you.

So please, do an Internet search for your company and make sure your competition isn't claiming all your online glory. Then make it your New Year's resolution to sign up for at least one of the services mentioned above.

Look out for part two in the series in the March issue of *Digger*, where we explore online review sites! ☺

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