

Internet Yellow Pages Complement Today's Print Book

(NAPSA)—“Honey, can you hand me the Yellow Pages? I need to find a plumber to fix our leaky bathroom faucet.”

Sound familiar? While most of us regularly grab our handy Yellow Pages directory when we need to find a plumber, an auto repair facility, or the nearest Italian restaurant, a surprising number of consumers are also using computer keystrokes to access local business information.

According to a 2002 National Industry Usage Study by the Yellow Pages Integrated Media Association, Americans have made an estimated 1.3 billion references to an Internet-based Yellow Pages directory in the past year. And, 67 percent of those Internet Yellow Pages users made contact with a business after getting an online reference, while 40 percent of those who made contact go on to make a purchase. Internet Yellow Pages have become a powerful tool for matching consumers with businesses, and directory publishers are utilizing this popular medium to extend the reach of their customers' Yellow Pages print directory advertising.

“Research shows that heavy users of the Internet are also heavy users of the Yellow Pages, and the Internet offers a great way for information-hungry, technology savvy users to supplement the print Yellow Pages quickly and efficiently,” said Larry Small, director of research for the Yellow Pages I.M.A. “It's as natural for today's generation to go to online Yellow Pages for local information as it is for our parents to flip through their Yellow Pages print directories.”

But it's not enough anymore to simply replicate Yellow Pages listings in an online directory. Consumers want access to detailed information in the print ads to



Online directories have acquired enthusiastic fans but print directories remain a staple.

ensure they are calling local businesses that meet their specific needs. They want to know if the closest tire store carries their particular brand preference. Or, does the restaurant they're planning to go to for dinner take checks or a specific credit card? Does the physician they plan to make an appointment with accept their insurance plan?

One of the first online Yellow Pages to offer fully “searchable content” capabilities is DexOnline.com—the Internet Yellow Pages of Dex Media, the world's largest privately owned incumbent directory publisher. Dex Media publishes more than 270 phone directories in 14 Midwestern and Western states under the Dex brand name, and recently launched its fully searchable Yellow Pages site, allowing consumers to search the way they think to get the specific information they need.

“For the first time, we can provide consumers with access to Dex Yellow Pages display ads online, not just a listing name, address and phone number,” said Greg Austin, product manager for DexOnline.com. “So, when an advertiser's display ad specifies brands, payment options, and

business hours, that information will now be searchable when a consumer searches our site.”

With its greatly enhanced local search capability, Dex Media expects consumer searches on its redesigned DexOnline.com site to increase from 95 million in 2003.

But does the growing popularity of Internet-based Yellow Pages spell gloom for today's popular phone book?

It doesn't appear so, as the popularity of today's print Yellow Pages remains strong, with an estimated 15.1 billion references made by U.S. adults in 2002, according to Yellow Pages I.M.A. In general, Internet subscribers use paper Yellow Pages at levels similar to that of all adults in the U.S. However, Internet subscribers are about 20 percent more likely to be among the heaviest users of the paper product, according to CRM Associates in Boulder, Colo.

Still, while the traditional printed Yellow Pages remain popular, most Yellow Pages publishers embrace the Internet as yet another content delivery option for consumers to access information in a way that's convenient for them. Advertisers embrace it because it provides another means of extending the reach of their Yellow Pages advertising program.

Yellow Pages publishers aren't stopping with print and Internet directories. Dex offers many of its Yellow Pages directories on CD-ROMs. Directory information could also eventually be delivered to personal PDAs, cell phones and other digital devices using wireless and satellite technology.

So, it looks like today's Yellow Pages are getting better than ever at helping consumers find local information by anticipating and offering options for how they find it in the future.