

yext

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LOCATIONS DEMYSTIFIED

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There's no doubt that Google is a formidable player in search. Hundreds of millions of consumers turn to the search engine giant every day, and businesses know that appearing in Google search results is a key step in getting found by the consumers around them.

However, for businesses, getting found on Google hasn't always been a simple or painless task. Google compiles information from a variety of sources on the web, which means that the results it returns about a brand are not always based on information provided by the brand itself.

To help brands control how they appear online, Google developed a variety of tools, including Google Places and Google+ Local. Now, Google is simplifying those tools with a new offering for businesses with more than 10 locations: **Google My Business Locations**.

Launched in June 2014, Google My Business Locations cleans up and unifies Google Places listings and Google+ Local into a single dashboard. Google began to migrate enterprise clients from the Google Places dashboard to the new Google My Business Locations dashboard in June.

This whitepaper aims to help marketers understand how to use Google My Business Locations with an overview of the offering and a list of key things to know as you adjust to this new tool.

Overview

Designed for enterprises with more than 10 locations, Google My Business Locations is the latest iteration of how Google can help brands connect with the consumers around them. It allows brands with more than 10 locations to manage all those locations through bulk and individual tasks.

From the Google My Business Locations dashboard, users can perform the following tasks in bulk for all their locations at once:

- Bulk import locations from a file
- Request that imported locations be bulk verified, which takes about a week
- See a roll-up view of the current status of their locations, including whether they are verified, have data or ownership conflicts, have errors, need to be reviewed, are in the process of being synced, or are deemed duplicates of other locations



For each individual location, Google My Business Locations users can also perform the following tasks:

- Edit an individual location’s information
- Resolve data conflicts, such as those that arise when a location’s info has changed on Google Maps since the user last updated that location’s information
- Resolve ownership conflicts, such as when a location is claimed by another owner
- Resolve duplicate errors, like removing duplicate listings in the account or reporting duplicates on Google Maps
- Assign or remove managers or other users to and from the location
- View the location’s listings on Google Maps and Google+
- View stats associated with the location’s Google Maps listing and Google+ page

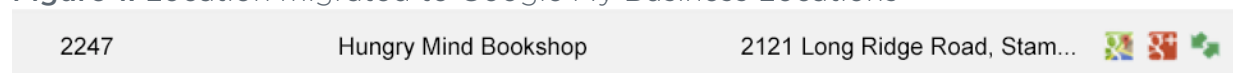
Upgrading from Google Places Dashboard

It can be confusing to determine whether you’ve been migrated to Google My Business Locations, because Google updated the front-end prior to the migration of the back-end — which means the Google Places dashboard looks mostly the same as the Google My Business Locations dashboard.

The only way to tell whether you’ve been migrated to Google My Business Locations is to hover over one of your locations in the dashboard, check whether the location is “Live”, and verify that it:

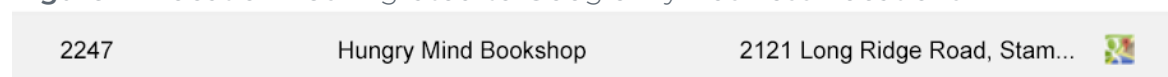
- a) appears on Google Maps,
- b) has a Google+ page, and
- c) has a link to the location’s analytics.

Figure 1: Location migrated to Google My Business Locations



A location that has *not* been upgraded to Google My Business Locations will only show the Google Maps icon, and will be missing the Google+ and analytics icons.

Figure 2: Location **not** migrated to Google My Business Locations





Once you've been migrated to Google My Business Locations, you'll be able to take advantage of expanded functionality that includes:

- Uploading more photos
- Seeing and responding to reviews
- Assigning and removing additional location managers
- Requesting location ownership
- Posting

In addition to these functionality enhancements, the content Google accepts in the bulk upload process has changed with the migration to Google My Business Locations. Please refer to the Location Management section below for more information.

In terms of when you can expect to be upgraded to Google My Business Locations, Google's migration process is automatic, which means there's nothing anyone can do to expedite it. Google is currently in the process of migrating all users.

Location Upload and Management

Another result of the migration to Google My Business Locations is that Google has modified the content they accept in the bulk upload process. In short, the changes to the bulk upload spreadsheet are as follows:

- Latitude and longitude are no longer accepted, and
- Google My Business Locations uses a new set of categories. Unfortunately, to date, official exhaustive lists of categories for each country/language permutation do not exist.

To assign the correct categories to your locations, Google recommends going to the Google My Business Locations UI, where you should simply begin typing after you select a country to view available categories.

Once you've been migrated to Google My Business Locations, it's important that you upload data using the new categories. Otherwise, per Google, your locations may have data conflict errors.

For a deeper dive into these changes, refer to [this Google article](#) about the new bulk upload spreadsheet format.



Local Managers

You may want to give local managers the ability to view reviews and post content on the Google+ pages for the locations they manage. To do this, simply add those location managers as **Communications Managers** to their respective locations.

Data Conflicts and Closed Locations

For businesses with multiple locations, it's possible you may run into issues like data conflicts, ownership conflicts, or duplicate listings. And, if your locations close or move, you'll need to ensure that Google shows the latest information.

To review and resolve data conflicts, click the **Review Data Conflicts** link on the left side of the Google My Business Locations dashboard.

Owner conflicts are marked on the account. If you and another owner have both claimed a location and are both listed as managers of that location, you can resolve the issue by requesting ownership from the other owner or removing the location from your account. If you are *not* listed as an owner or manager of a location — that is, if your listing already exists and is claimed by someone else — you'll need to contact Google to resolve the issue.

Duplicate errors can be resolved by first selecting the location that is tagged as a duplicate. If the duplicate is in your *own* account — i.e., managed by you — you can simply delete it. If the duplicate exists on Google Maps, click on the **Report a Problem** link from Google Maps to report the duplicate.

When it comes to closed locations, you'll need to explicitly mark them as moved or closed on Google Maps. To do so, find the location on Google Maps and click **Report a Problem**. Select the **Place is permanently closed** option, and leave the location's new information in the comment box if the location has moved. Additionally, if a location has a Google+ page, you must manually delete the page.

For more information on marking locations as moved or closed, refer to [this Google article](#).

International Listings

If you operate in multilingual countries, you may want to create different language versions of your listings. Unfortunately, that strategy is not supported by Google's system. Google encourages users to create listings for the location's primary language



and rely on Google Translate to translate the listing for consumers who speak other languages.

Essentially, you have two choices when it comes to listings in multiple languages:

- a) bulk upload all the locations in English and trust Google Translate, like Google recommends, or
- b) create a different login for each desired language and upload each location in the account that corresponds to that location's primary language.