



# Search Engine Watch

(<http://searchenginewatch.com/>)



(<http://searchenginewatch.com/author/1899/dave-davies>)

## Google Places: How Eye Tracking Heats Up Conversions and Clicks

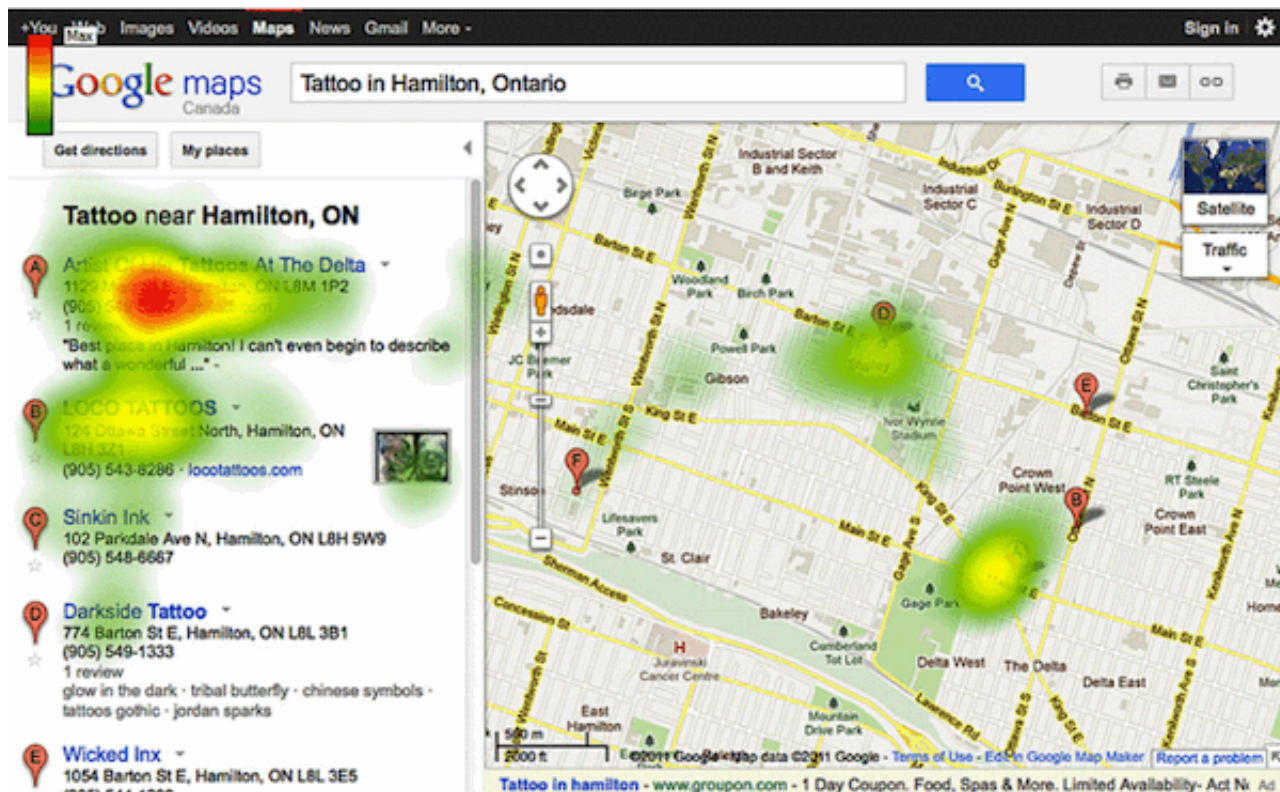
Dave Davies (<http://searchenginewatch.com/author/1899/dave-davies>), November 15, 2011

Advertisers and marketers have known for many years about how a viewer's gaze travels across visual media. The effectiveness of any successful advertisement relies on understanding how the eye moves across a page, why it is drawn to particular areas, and what causes a viewer to linger at a given spot.

Modern persuasive advertisements stem from classical and renaissance artists. The great artists of antiquity were well versed in the use of spatial relationships and how the eye moves across a space.

In the 21st century, we see modern advertising employing these well-established concepts and are so well entrenched in our minds that the same techniques permeate every facet of advertising in use today.

### Eye Tracking and Click Mapping Google Places



A Toronto-based Canadian company, Mediative, spent a great deal of time and research using eye tracking technology, remote surveys, click-mapping and in-person interviews to determine how people interact with web sites.

Last month, Mediative concluded [an in-depth study \(http://results.mediative.ca/Mediative\\_White-Paper-Eye-Tracking-and-Click-Mapping-Google-Places.html\)](http://results.mediative.ca/Mediative_White-Paper-Eye-Tracking-and-Click-Mapping-Google-Places.html) to determine how people interact within the search results of Google Places listings. The study was designed to determine which ads received more clicks and attention; listings with images, or those with customer quotes.

The main questions Mediative were hoping to answer were:

- How do individuals interact with the search results from Google Places listings?
- Where do people look on a page?
- Do listings with reviews get more attention?
- Do people really look at the maps?
- Does Google's "Golden Triangle" still receive much attention?

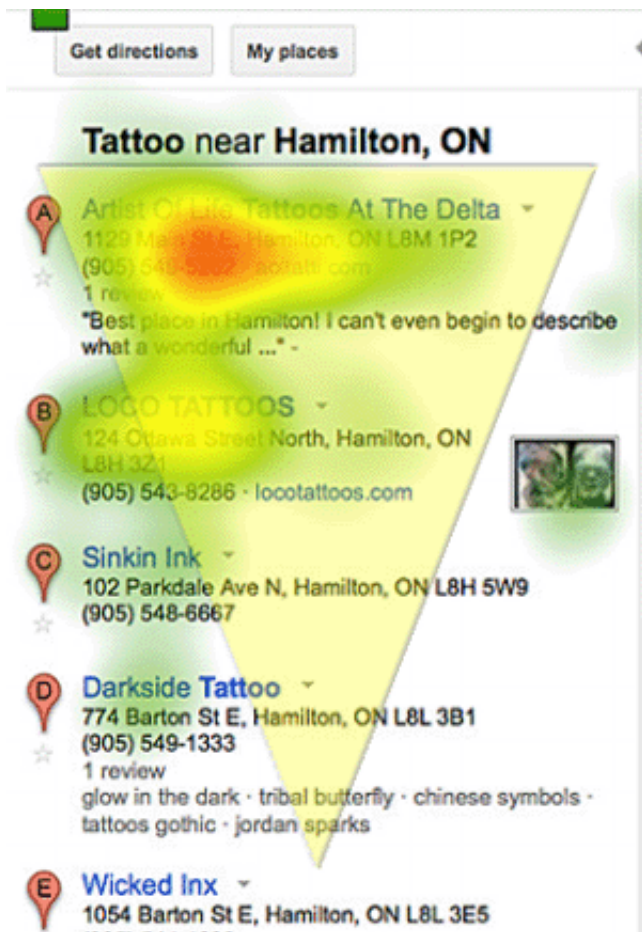
The methodology was based on a simple study using real page captures from Google map searches. The study enlisted 12 participants for in-person research and another 90 online participants to be studied with eye-tracking software.

## **The Main Findings**

Each participant was given the same scenario. They were asked to make an imaginary road trip with stops in Hamilton, London, Winnipeg, and Edmonton and to choose a place for a friend to get a tattoo in each of these cities based on the available information in the Google Places search results.

The main findings of the study concluded that:

- While top-listed results get the most attention, the listings below it received a high proportion of the viewers gaze as well as the map. These results were fairly consistent between both study groups.
- Most clicking occurred on the same spots that the eyes were shown to have lingered on site.
- The third result down in the listings which had reviews seemed to have boosted its popularity suggesting that being in the top-listed position is good, but social signals can be a significant boon to lower ranking sites.



Mediative observed that Google's Golden Triangle is still relevant in understanding how a viewers gaze travels across the screen.

In much the same as printed material, a viewer's gaze begins at the top of the listing. The eye scans from left to right, as it moves down to subsequent listings. The viewer scanned less of the listing's content the further down the result was located.

*(The Golden Triangle is a based on established understanding of various cultural perceptions and interpretations of printed media. In Western cultural we printed media top to bottom, left to right. In other cultures the heat map would read right-to-left and vertically bottom to top.)*

## Additional Findings

Some of the other findings of the study concluded:

- Listings that included images received more clicks and attention.
- Maps generate a significant amount of the viewers' attention.
- When the top results have fewer reviews, lower results get more visual attention.
- When no reviews are present, the top listing receives the most clicks.
- If your site isn't in the top listing, or doesn't have reviews, it will usually be ignored; especially when other listings do have reviews or social signals.

## Marketing Takeaway

The results of this study are significant to those currently employing, or who are considering employing the use of Google Places into their online social presence and marketing strategy. The understanding and implementation of these concepts are shown to have a substantial effect on businesses.

The research offers solid evidence to show that by maximizing your use the listings with SEO (<http://searchenginewatch.com/seo>), maps, images and reviews, businesses can realize significant increases in click through rates and conversions.

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