

Google Tests Local Ads on Maps

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Google is experimenting with plotting local advertisers' locations on its Maps product, giving marketers a visual and spatial accompaniment to their locally targeted ads.

A search on "hotels" in New York City returns an organic list of local hotels, plotted on the map with red markers and bracketed by sponsored hotel listings, plotted on the map with blue markers. The same search in other locations, such as San Francisco, doesn't yet return the paid listings.

So far, InterContinental Hotels and Starwood brands appear to be participating in the test.

Clicking on a blue marker brings up a balloon with more information about the hotel advertiser, such as address and phone number. It also includes a logo for the hotel brand. Logos haven't previously been part of Google paid listings, but in talks of its recent deal with AOL, the company said it would likely begin offering logos in the future.

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