

Welcome to “ITS Technology Tips,” where we bring you some useful information about the technology here at Loyola and effective ways to use the technology. Remember to visit the weekly [Tech Tips Blog](#) for the latest tips and the [Technology Tips Archive](#), to find all Tech Tips in PDF format, categorized for easy access.

The New 411

Imagine being able to search Google without relying on a computer or Internet connection. Now you can with Google’s Voice Local Search ([GOOG-411](#)), a brand new beta service that makes local business search accessible by phone. The service is free and enables users to find local businesses the same way you would search Google Maps on-line. Just dial **1-800-GOOG-411** from a landline or mobile phone to receive local business information via a recording; with a cell-phone you can also get the details sent via text message (SMS). There’s no need to make two calls because Google will even connect you to the business for free!

How it Works

GOOG-411 is voice activated; using your phone keypad is optional. To try out the service, dial **1-800-GOOG-411** from a landline or mobile phone. First you will be prompted for your city and state, then you can ask for a specific business name or a category.

Some features of the service include:

- Search for business listing by category. For example you can say “Movie Theater.” You can also narrow your selections down by providing a zip code or street name.
- You may choose to hear all of the listing details or have them sent via text message (SMS) to your mobile phone. While Google’s service is completely free, keep in mind that your phone service may apply regular charges for making calls or receiving an SMS.
- The service is fully automated and does not rely on human operators. If you get stuck or the voice recognition isn’t working, you can say “go back” to start over. Google provides a handy cheat sheet (<http://labs.google.com/goog411/shortcuts.html>), which gives suggestions on how to navigate through your search results.
- You are automatically put through to the number requested, free of charge.

Google does provide a disclaimer that Voice Local Search is in the experimental phase and that they are working on fine-tuning the service to get better at recognizing requests. Users of the service are encouraged to provide feedback by emailing (labs+goog411@google.com) or by visiting the GOOG-411 user group (<http://groups.google.com/group/goog411/>).

Resources

Google Voice Local Search:
<http://labs.google.com/goog411/index.html>

Local business information can be corrected or added by visiting the *Google Local Business Center*:
<http://www.google.com/local/add/lookup?hl=en-US&gl=US>

That’s our technology tip for this week. If you have found the information helpful, please drop us a line at Training@luc.edu . If you’d like to go back to our archive of technology tips, please visit us on the Web at <http://www.luc.edu/its/techtips.shtml>.