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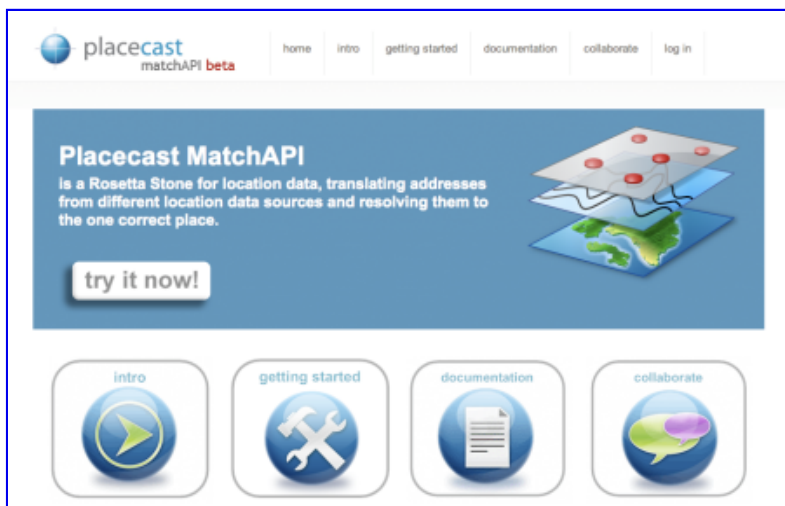
Greg Sterling's Thoughts on Online and Offline Media

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Placecast Cleans Dirty Location Data

By Greg Sterling

In the couple of months since Placecast launched its [Match API](#) the company has seen great traction and discovered how compromised much of the location data is “out there” — especially when it’s user-generated. The Match API “cleans” individual data sets and helps de-dupe and correct data where publishers are drawing upon multiple data sources.



Placecast CEO Alistair Goodman described it like a laundromat: dirty data in, clean data out. According to the press release out this morning:

Placecast is finding traction with its solution for cleaning and managing location-based data. The creators of Placecast MatchAPI announce that in fewer than 60 days since it was initially launched, more than 200 LBS-related companies have signed up to use the data management tool, including WCities, Socialight, Buzzd and AlikeList . . .

Initial experience with location-based companies using the MatchAPI platform reveals interesting insights about the quality of location data. Statistics from datasets uploaded indicate that when the Placecast MatchAPI platform cleans a data set, there is an average fault rate of over 8%, growing to as much as 40% in data sets with high proportions of user-generated content . . .

With the strong initial interest, Placecast is now rolling out a developer portal in order to continue to provide free services for correcting duplication and matching across different location data sets, two of the biggest challenges in building location-based services that scale. The portal is live at <http://www.placecast.net/developer/>

Alistair Goodman also corrected some faulty assumptions I held about the product. Placecast isn't working with a master database and comparing individual data sets to that master list. Nor are they generating one — yet.

It would be hypothetically possible through the involvement of all these parties for Placecast to develop a common, clean LBS database. This is my speculation, however, and not anything Goodman said the company would be doing. At the present time it's not sharing data among partners. But “collaboration” is one of the features or “values” in the Match API developer portal.

This master LBS database is, in a way, “low-hanging fruit” as a phase II for this product. There's also the potential for a local ad network or “exchange,” which could eventually emerge from this as well.

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