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APP LETS USERS TRAWL HUNDREDS OF LOCAL BUSINESSES AT ONCE



RETAIL

Ufficient allows users to interact with multiple local companies simultaneously, using text, images and vocal communication.

Today when we need something we look on our desktop, not on our doorstep. Increasingly everyone's regular handyman is Google, and their local shopkeeper is Amazon. A new app called **Ufficient** is aiming to change that, by bringing together the ease of online comparison with the convenience of local shopping. Billing themselves as a 'request engine', Ufficient has built a database of 10 million local businesses and created software that allows users to find what they need, compare multiple options and book almost instantaneously.

The app enables its users to communicate with multiple businesses at once, using images, text or vocal communication. So if the washing machine starts leaking, you can take a photo and give the description to all the repair companies in their area, instead of phoning them individually. The app also integrates the recommendations of a user's social network, using 'Smart Search' technology, rather than relying on reviews from strangers.

When a user makes a request, the relevant businesses compete to offer the product or service for the best price, effectively allowing a customer to haggle in cyberspace. For companies who sign up for the app there is the advantage of lead generation from users and the chance of increasing custom. But there is also a danger of reducing profits through heavy competition with other local businesses.

The app is still in its testing phase, with a Beta version currently on offer, but founder Stefan Kojouharov aims to bring it to market as soon as possible. Ufficient aspires to make deciding

between local shops as straightforward as comparing books on Amazon, but is the desire for localized business strong enough to drag consumers away from established comparison sites?

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Email: Ufficient@gmail.com

Website: www.ufficient.com