



Price by ZIP Challenge

A search bar interface with a black border. On the left, there is a grey square containing a white location pin icon. To its right is a white rounded rectangle with the text 'ZIP or Postal Code' in grey. Further right is an orange rounded rectangle with a white magnifying glass icon and the word 'SEARCH' in white capital letters.

- Find a website that asks for a ZIP or postal code before showing the price of a good or service. Submit its URL to this challenge.
- On October 27, 2015, we will post a list of URLs submitted to us that may determine pricing by ZIP or postal code.
- We will honor the individual or group that submits the most qualifying URLs as Data Detective(s) of the Month.

Challenge

At *Technology Science*, we recently published 3 papers documenting websites that offer the same services at different prices:

- [Price Discrimination in The Princeton Review's Online SAT Tutoring Service](#)
- [Unintended Consequences of Geographic Targeting](#)
- [Who's paying more to tour these United States? International Travel and Price Discrimination](#)

Our **Price by ZIP Challenge** asks the public to help us identify other websites that may offer the same services at different prices based on a person's geographical location. Because resources and operational costs may differ among locations, there are many good reasons for a price to vary by geographical location. Just because prices differ, does not mean it is illegal, discriminatory, or cause for concern. However, it is in the public's research interest to better understand which websites vary prices by location, to document how these prices may differ, and to investigate reasons and correlations.

There are many ways a website might determine a consumer's geolocation. For example, in the United States, ZIP codes are postal codes, and when a website asks explicitly for a postal code, the website may vary its prices or services offered based

on ZIP code beyond shipping charges. Other geolocation indicators may not be explicit to the user, such as the IP address of a computer or a cell phone's GPS location. For simplicity, this challenge focuses on postal codes because a user knows when a website asks for a postal code. Websites that request city or other geographical designation before providing a price are also eligible. Entries for postal codes or other regional designations may be from anywhere in the world.

In this challenge, we ask the public to help us identify websites that specifically request postal code (city, or other geographical designation) *before* revealing the price of a service or product. We suspect many websites may ask for a postal code to compute shipping charges or make referrals. Some may use the ZIP code to determine price. Any website that requests a ZIP code or other location information prior to giving a price qualifies. If you know of a qualifying website, enter the URL below. On **October 27, 2015**, we will publicize the list of qualifying URLs provided along with research suggestions.

Single submissions of 25 or more URLs can be made by emailing a single text file having one URL per line (or in equivalent CSV format) to zipchallenge@techscience.org

The identified person or group providing the largest number of distinct qualifying URLs will be awarded Data Detective(s) of the Month and may then submit a bio and photo to appear on Technology Science. Enter the same email address on each entry to count all your submissions together. Any email addresses provided in the email box will not be made public.