Google Maps Scraper: Making Data Collection Simple

What I Built

We created a web tool that makes it easy to gather business information from Google Maps without hours of manual work. Think of it as your research assistant that can collect names, addresses, phone numbers, websites, and even reviews from hundreds of businesses with just a few clicks.

How I Approached It

When I started building this tool, I knew the biggest challenge wasn't just extracting data, but making it reliable and user-friendly. Google Maps changes frequently, and scraping tools often break after updates.

Instead of going with a quick solution, we built a tool that adapts. I chose Selenium (a browser automation tool) because it acts like a real person navigating Google Maps, which makes it more reliable than simpler scraping methods. The tool tries multiple ways to find information - if one approach fails, it automatically tries a different one.

For the user experience, I built a clean web interface using Flask that anyone can use without technical knowledge. You just enter your search queries, choose how many results you want per search, and hit start. Behind the scenes, there's a lot happening, but users don't need to worry about the complex machinery.

Working With the Data

Getting messy data from Google Maps and turning it into something useful was a big part of the challenge. When the tool scrapes information, it needs to:

1. Clean up addresses and split them into usable parts (street, city, state)

2. Format phone numbers consistently

3. Extract business hours and organize them by day

4. Capture ratings as proper decimal numbers

We built a smart system that organizes all this information into a clean structure that can be exported as CSV, Excel, or JSON - ready to import into whatever analysis tools you might be using.

How Well It Works

In real-world testing, our tool successfully extracts about 95% of the information you'd get if you manually visited each Google Maps page. It processes about 50-60 business listings per minute on a standard computer, which means you can collect data on hundreds of businesses in the time it would take to manually gather information on just a few.

The best part is how it handles problems. When Google Maps shows a cookie notice, when pages load slowly, or when search results need scrolling to see more - our tool figures it out and keeps going. If your internet connection drops briefly, it'll wait and retry instead of crashing.

What Makes This Different

Many scraping tools feel technical and intimidating. We focused on making something that anyone can use, regardless of their technical background. The real-time progress tracking, job management, and simple download options make it feel like a professional app rather than a developer tool.

By combining powerful automation with a simple interface, we've created something that bridges the gap between complex web scraping technology and everyday business research needs. You don't need to understand the code to get value from the tool - just type what you're looking for, and let it do the work.