

SCORING SYSTEM TUTORIAL

The TerraCaching scoring systems are what make TerraCaching.com different from other geocaching sites. They provide a fun and interesting way to have friendly competition with other TerraCachers beyond simply counting the number of finds you have. The formulas can be quite complex, but each member plays the game to varying degrees. The beauty of TerraCaching is that each member can choose which aspects of the game they want to play. If you are interested in learning more details about the scoring system, continue reading! There are also numerous other resources on the Community page that provide additional information.

There are currently five scoring systems in play here. The Traditional TerraCaching Point System (TTPS), the Locationless TerraCaching Point System (LTPS), the Cyber TerraCaching Point System (CTPS), the Measure of Cache Excellence (MCE), and the User Contribution Rating (UCR). Each is described in more detail below. There's also no reason to believe that there won't be additional scoring systems added in the future as we discover cool new ways to play with all the statistics that caching naturally creates.

It's important to note that in areas that are just getting started in TerraCaching, the MCE, UCR, and TPS should, for the most part, be ignored. Until there are about 100 caches within the local community these rating will reflect an influence over a potentially much larger area. Communities just getting started in TerraCaching should focus on getting other local cachers participating and all posting new caches. Gradually, you'll notice the scoring systems start to make more and more sense as they measure the caches in your area.

TERRACACHING POINT SYSTEM (TTPS)(LTPS)(CTPS)

TPS points are an attempt to mathematically equate how much effort is really required to hunt and find the cache. A separate scoring system is in place for the Locationless Caches and Cyber Caches available at TerraCaching.com. Your LTPS and CTPS points do NOT count toward your TTPS totals or the TTPS leaderboards. Instead, these points have their own leaderboard systems. All the TPS points for caches are on a scale of 0-200. You can achieve bonus TPS above this if you also have high MCE caches. Although there is a focus on formula, ultimately the mission of the site is For the Love of the Hunt.

You also have your personal member TPS score, which is simply the sum of the TPS scores of all the caches you've found or that you own. So your TPS score is a way to both quantify and qualify your caching activity.

TTPS

At the heart of the TTPS is a very simple assumption. The more difficult a cache hunt is to complete, the fewer finders it will get. If you take two caches in the same general area (city or town), which have been available for the exact same amount of time, one can assume that the more difficult of the two will have fewer finders.

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Physical challenge, mental challenge, camouflage challenge, driving distance, seasonal weather, dangerous wildlife/plant life, accuracy of available maps, and special equipment/training requirements all contribute to the difficulty of a cache. Challenging puzzles will earn high TTPS points too, especially if the owner can refrain from the temptation to give hints to those who can't solve it on their own. The TTPS was designed to measure all of these aspects and more, not just the physical challenge.

The TTPS is designed not to be constant and will change depending on the number of finders and the activity of caches of surrounding the specific cache you just found. Don't be alarmed if the TTPS drops from 200 down to 50 after several finders, over the long run this cache will eventually build back up towards 200 as more time passes by.

LTPS & CTPS

LTPS and CTPS rely primarily on the ratio of the amount of time a cache has been active and the number of unique finders. Since the physical difficulty is not uniform on these caches, those factors do not carry weight. However, the mental challenge does play a part. Since these caches are not based on location, they take into account information from the top 100 and lowest 100 Locationless and Cyber caches to obtain their totals.

MEASURE OF CACHE EXCELLENCE (MCE)

As members register their opinions of their found caches, the system starts to make some serious comparisons and calculations. The system uses logic to keep the votes of all finders completely anonymous and secret. It's not just a simple "how many people liked this cache" count. Not only does the system compare how each person voted on a certain cache, but also how they each voted on every other cache, and what their UCR is (see below). The MCE then uses all that data to compute what the community as a whole really feels about this particular cache in comparison to all the others.

The scale for MCE is 0-10. Most caches will have an "Average" MCE (around 4-6), which is perfectly ok and nothing to be worried about. But a very few will gradually separate from the crowd and rise up to 7, 8, or even 9, points. Of course, occasionally there will be a few caches whose MCE drops down to 3 or even 2 points. This is bound to happen to everyone occasionally; don't take it too hard when it happens to you. If you keep getting very low MCEs, you should probably rethink the caches you're placing and look at the types of caches that are getting higher MCE ratings in your area to see what they're doing different. The common goal of all of the Community is to strive to place quality caches.

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USER CONTRIBUTION RATIO (UCR)

The UCR can be thought of as your personal MCE. It's computed based on the MCE of the caches you've placed (split between TC's, LC's, and CC's), and the UCRs of the people you sponsor.

The effect that the MCE of each of your caches has on your UCR is not linear. In other words, the difference between an 8 and a 9 is much greater than the difference between a 5 and a 6. Think in terms of the Richter Scale. Low MCE on a cache will have a negative effect on your UCR. If you believe there are enough finders of your caches, don't let negative UCR go too long before you face the facts from the Community and change or archive them. Additionally, 10% of each of your sponsored members UCRs will be added to your UCR. This also means that, indirectly, 1% of the UCR of each person sponsored by someone you're sponsoring gets added to your UCR, and 0.1% of each person they sponsor, and so on. It's like the ultimate Pyramid Scheme.