

## Introduction

While Search continues to be an efficient way to drive traffic to your site, it is also a venue where a marketer's brand can be exposed to negative listings. Instead of companies just worrying about their sites being found, they now need to worry about their online reputation.

The Harvard Business Review published a case study in June titled "[We Googled You.](#)" The study discusses whether a company should disqualify a candidate based on Internet results about that person. While Googling a candidate, babysitter, or blind date has been standard practice for many, some are shocked to find what their "online perception" is. This perception is no longer limited to personal searches, but also effects business as well.

Web 2.0 has given birth to the phrase "the consumer is in control" – having the opportunity to research, consume and react in a manner they are most comfortable with. Consumers are also afforded the opportunity to turn a one-way dialogue about a brand into a conversation. Everyone that has had an experience with a brand can now voice their opinion – good or bad – to the whole world.

Promoting a brand in this fragmented media environment is difficult enough, but defending that brand is an entirely different challenge online.

We have moved past the comedic "[Miserable Failure](#)" results and now are seeing established brands have trouble controlling their branded results. Searches for "McDonald's," "Exxon," and "Delta" all yield results with at least two or more negative sites. While companies such as [JetBlue](#) were forced to deal with issues publicly, how does a company handle a conversation or perception about their brand that occurs online?

Marketers need to actively manage how their brand is presented, and traditional methods are no longer the only way. Brands have to leverage technology and other online marketing tactics to manage their brand reputation, minimizing the number of negative search results and increasing the number of positive or neutral search results for strategic keyword searches.

## Current Search Engine Results Page

<p><a href="#">McDonald's</a> - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia The business began in 1940, with a restaurant opened by siblings Dick and Mac <b>McDonald</b> in San Bernardino, California. Their introduction of the "Speedee ... <a href="#">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonald's</a> - 106k - <a href="#">Cached</a> - <a href="#">Similar pages</a></p> <p><a href="#">McSPOTLIGHT</a> Large site spotlighting <b>McDonald's</b> exploitation of animals, people and the environment. Including information, news, public discussion rooms. <a href="#">www.mcspotlight.org/</a> - 11k - <a href="#">Cached</a> - <a href="#">Similar pages</a></p>	<p><a href="#">I was fired for blogging   Perspectives   CNET News.com</a> I was fired for blogging   Fired from her job at <b>Delta Air Lines</b>, former flight attendant Ellen Simonetti warns against the spread of employer blog backlash ... <a href="#">news.com.com/I+was+fired+for+blogging/2010-1030_3-5490836.html</a> - 45k - Jun 30, 2007 - <a href="#">Cached</a> - <a href="#">Similar pages</a></p> <p><a href="#">Delta Airlines</a>. Find Out How To Save with <a href="#">Delta Air Lines</a> <b>Delta Air Lines</b> - Find Hidden Tips HERE. Looking for a Cheap Air Ticket? First read our article about <b>Delta</b> Airline and how to get best value with ... <a href="#">www.adventuretraveltips.com/tips/Delta-Airlines.html</a> - 11k - <a href="#">Cached</a> - <a href="#">Similar pages</a></p> <p><a href="#">Delta Really Sucks - Home</a> I think the service at <b>Delta Air Lines</b> really sucks! Visit now to find out why this is not your average gripe site. <a href="#">www.deltareallysucks.com/</a></p>
<p><a href="#">Expose Exxon   Home</a> Some <b>Exxon</b> Mobil Corp. shareholders scolded executives and board members for allowing public concerns about climate change to fester without taking bold ... <a href="#">www.exxposeexxon.org/</a> - 52k - <a href="#">Cached</a> - <a href="#">Similar pages</a></p> <p><a href="#">Locator</a> Search our directory for the closest <b>Exxon</b> or Mobil stations in your area. Or plan a route and show the stations along the way. ... <a href="#">exxonstations.com/</a> - 17k - <a href="#">Cached</a> - <a href="#">Similar pages</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exxon Secrets</a> Investigating how ExxonMobil funds the climate change sceptics. <a href="#">www.exxonsecrets.org/</a> - 2k - <a href="#">Cached</a> - <a href="#">Similar pages</a></p>	

## Changing Search Landscape = Changing Reputation Management

Reputation Management is not something new for companies. However, with the proliferation of blogs, RSS, personalization, and sites such as Flickr and YouTube, there are more “media” outlets that a company has to be concerned with. Google’s [Universal Search](#) creates more challenges to Reputation Management, as results are no longer the traditional Paid and Organic listings, but now display varied sources such as images, videos and news results. While this provides consumers with more choices, it presents significant challenges to marketers.

In the past, marketers only had to concern themselves with negative websites. They now have to worry about their product failures being documented in images and videos. Marketers can no longer just worry about optimizing their web-based assets, but all of their brand assets – some of which may not even exist in a digital format.

For example, if you had performed a search for “Coke” a few months ago, you would've seen only Paid and Organic results. Those results now include YouTube clips of the [Coke and Mentos experiment](#), and a local listing to the new World of Coca-Cola store in Atlanta, GA. By optimizing all of their assets, Coca-Cola is in a better position to have more positive and neutral listings vs. negative ones.

## Razorfish's Approach and Tactics

Many companies are attempting to tackle Reputation Management through legal channels such as trademark protection and cease and desist orders. Internet laws have always been behind, which means that these channels could take months. In many instances, these negative sites are not slanderous – leaving clients little recourse. There is the additional risk of “Blogger Backlash,” in which your critics enlist the help of others for infringing on Free Speech. Lastly, with news sites and blogs breaking stories every day, marketers are finding it difficult to stay ahead.

Our approach is to handle Reputation Management through technology that allows you to manage the mass data and provide recommendations that will have a true impact. Technology also allows for tracking and managing conversations before they become larger issues – helping marketers to stay ahead. Once the information is processed, a custom strategy that pulls in Search and other forms of digital marketing can be employed.

The main goal in a Reputation Management campaign is to drive as many negative results as possible off the top three pages. This can be done either by leveraging your own assets or leveraging neutral sites that have the ability to rank for your brand terms but would not have a negative message.

The first step is to get an understanding of how bad the situation is. In order to understand this, we evaluate the words that are triggering negative results and view the number of searches associated with those words. If the search volume is not too high then there may not be a real issue. We use our spider, SILc, to crawl the web, uncovering conversations and sites that are tied to brand-specific terms.

## Recommendations

There are several steps Razorfish clients can undertake to manage their reputation online, such as:

- Reach out to negative sites. It is possible that they are simply misinformed or would be willing to change their perspective if you addressed them personally.
- Create a Wikipedia listing for your company. Since Wikipedia ranks high for almost any search, it behooves companies to create and/or edit their listing. This is an easy way to gain an Organic listing without creating a new website. (For more information on [Wikipedia in Search Engine Marketing](#))
- Optimize everything. Universal Search is here and clients should make sure that all of their assets are optimized. This includes TV commercials, Video, images, RSS and other assets.
- Develop response or additional sites. Everything from philanthropy arms of your company to other branded sites can take additional listings for brand searches.
- Be aggressive with PR. Any good SEO strategy should be utilizing PR optimization, but many do not. Ensure that your PR team knows how to write for Search Engines as well as submit to appropriate wire services.
- Optimize for Local. If you have office locations that are either retail or corporate offices, make sure they are all registered with IYP services.
- Leverage Web 2.0. If your brand lends itself to Flickr, MySpace, facebook, etc., create profiles and accounts.
- Optimize corporate profiles. Create pages for prominent people in the company, with information about their history with the company – tying in their involvement with a specific brand.

## Conclusion

A company's reputation was once easier to manage. Companies could use traditional tactics or simply "steamroll" any dissenting voices. The Internet has now provided a megaphone to millions of individuals. This means that companies now need to go to greater lengths to protect their brand's reputation, and embrace tactics that they may not be used to using. Companies who seek to maintain strong and specific brand identities should be aware of these issues and be prepared to include Reputation Management as part of their marketing plan.

## More Information

For questions or more information please contact your Razorfish account team or:

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## About Razorfish™

Razorfish is one of the largest interactive marketing and technology companies in the world, and also one of the largest buyers of digital advertising space. With a demonstrated commitment to innovation, Razorfish counsels its clients on how to leverage digital channels such as the Web, mobile devices, in-store technologies and other emerging media to engage people, build brand loyalty and provide excellent customer service. The company is increasingly advising marketers on Social Influence Marketing™, its approach for employing social media and social influencers to achieve the marketing and business needs of an organization. Its award-winning client teams provide solutions through their strategic counsel, digital advertising and content creation, media buying, analytics, technology and user experience. Razorfish has offices in markets across the United States, and in Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom. Clients--many of them served in multiple markets--include Carnival Cruise Lines, Coors Brewing Company, Levi's, McDonald's and Starwood Hotels. Visit <http://www.razorfish.com> for more information.

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