

# Online reputations

A few months back I wrote about companies that check on what is being said about them online. I had written a post about Comcast and their lack of customer service and I myself got a comment from Comcast. I theorized that this was a new outreach program for them, and today's New York Times has a story confirming this. They compare it to a sort of outbound customer service department, trying to fix things before they get out of hand. I will give kudos to Comcast simply for acknowledging how important blogs, social media and other online forums have become and how they can affect reputations.

Reputations are perceptions and thus changeable. We've all heard of sterling reputations, and we should all aim for that. Bad reputations can be damaging in a very real, economic way. This blog will always deal with companies and never with individual reputations. However, this new online world order can damage individual reputations as well. I saw a story on TV not long ago (I can't remember which TV news show or I would link to it) where an individual had the same name as a famous rock star. Clearly, his online reputation would be somewhat buried because 99% of mentions referred to the rock star. He went to create an online reputation agency that charges lots of money to clean up companies' (and individuals) images. In any case, this is an ongoing issue and one that more companies will be expending effort to deal with.