


Chapter 85

E-Reputation in Web Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

E-reputation is what you say, what you do and of course how others perceive all of your actions. As an entrepreneur, knowing what your customers think about you is crucial. But managing it is way more than just hiring someone to be active on some social platforms. It implies the definition of a real strategy as well as hiring specific resources to successfully manage its reputation online. By presenting what e-reputation is, what are its main components, how to measure it and what tools exist, this chapter wants to give to web-entrepreneurs the key elements in order to manage their e-reputation efficiently.

INTRODUCTION

Examining reputation is becoming increasingly important today, mainly due to factors such as word-of-mouth and online communication (Shamma, 2012). To date, few academic researches have analyzed the influence of the Internet on reputation or its role in positioning reputation and e-reputation (Castellano and Dutot, 2013). For instance, according to Fillias and Villeneuve (2010), e-reputation has not been considered as a revelation but more as a continuing process of technology adoption and usage by companies or individuals.

Along the same lines, some authors consider e-reputation as the extension of reputation on-line (Chun and Davies, 2001). Therefore, we can extend previous works (Hatch and Schultz, 1997) and consider e-reputation to be the perception that stakeholders hold towards the activities of an organization when evolving online. For Frochot and Molinaro (2008), e-reputation is the reflection of the image that Internet users have of a company or an individual based on information available online and on what others say

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about the company or the individual. However, recent studies have shown that e-reputation is more than just reputation online (Dutot and Castellano, 2015).

Professionals have paved the way by measuring e-reputation using tools such as Social Mention, Mention or Synthesio. Although these studies present interesting insights for e-reputation, they mainly focus on content analysis, and their measurement grid may lack scientific rigor. The academic arena has started to investigate this field of research. For instance, Chun (2004) proposed an e-reputation mix composed of 3 blocs: e-character (personality of the company), e-identity (website's structure and ergonomics) and e-experience (defines the user experience online). This definition offers some interesting concepts but fails to capture social media's current influence on action. Addressing this gap, Dutot and Castellano (2015) developed the first academic measurement scale for e-reputation.

This chapter will explain why e-reputation is a crucial factor of success for web entrepreneurship. More precisely, it will position reputation and e-reputation, present the main components of e-reputation, present tools and finally give insights on how to manage the e-reputation.

WHY TALKING ABOUT E-REPUTATION?

Because like it or not, we are all concerned. Any company is present on the web, no matter if it decided to be present or because someone is talking about it. From a more traditional perspective, media such as television, radio or the press, have very long allowed them to present their creations to consumers and generate a positive word of mouth. However skids are recurrent and the impact on the organization is real.

Times have changed and the speed with which information travels today is almost impossible for a company to manage (especially as often it lacks the resources to manage it efficiently). In 60 seconds, the reality of the web is that simple (Excelacom, 2016):

- Nearly 2.5 million searches just been performed on Google: and your company is part of the research.
- 2.78 million Videos were viewed: what are your employees doing?
- 527 000 photos were shared on Snapchat, and 38 000 new posts on Instagram: do you control your corporate image?
- 700 000 individuals just log on Facebook.
- Almost 350 000 new tweets were added on Twitter.

In a very simplistic way, e-reputation can be summarized “in what you do, what you say and what others say about you.” As a company, you should control “What you do and say”. On the opposite side, you have little control on “What others say about you”. In most cases you do not know what is told about you online, so it's even harder to control it?

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