

Can a lone blogger bring down a business?

adapted from an article by **Kevin Rawlinson** BBC News

- 1 It would be a nightmare for any small business: one unhappy customer takes offence and their blog keeps popping up every time a potential purchaser searches for the store's name. In the past, newspaper editors acted as a check on printed criticism. Now it's down to unclear search engine rank calculations. In the online age, do bloggers have too much power?
- 2 One Northern Irish shoe shop certainly feels that this is the case. The ordeal for the shop – Robinson's Shoes – started when Jesper Ingevaldsson wrote up his account of what he called the "worst online shopping experience" he had ever had two years ago. In his post on a forum, Mr Ingevaldsson complained that the shoes he had bought had started to break apart. He said the store was slow to deal with his complaint and even charged him the cost of returning them. Both parties agree that the issue was eventually resolved. The negative review, entitled '*Warning for Robinson's Shoes*', 19, remains second in Google's results for searches of the shop's name.
- 3 "It is harmful to our business, about 85% of which is done online," claims Martin McKeown, the shop's digital marketing executive. He admits that he has little proof of actual lost sales. But, he adds, the store's data indicate that "people have clicked on our site, opened a new tab, read something else, then closed our site down," which he says suggests the review is 20.
- 4 One online search expert acknowledges this is not an uncommon issue. "One bad review shouldn't have to define your business," says Danny Sullivan, founder of the news site Search Engine Land. The same, he points out, is true of social media, where a single customer with a large following can harm a business's reputation. "But people expect there to be negative things about businesses online. They would almost be more suspicious if there was not," he adds.

5 Going to court is not an option: British judges do not have the power to order bloggers to amend their writing simply because their criticism is too effective. What can be done is to resort to the recently established “right to be forgotten” – the ability to force Google and other search



engines to delete a link from their results in Europe. But this can only be obtained if the blog names a specific individual who complains – not a company – and then only under certain conditions. In fact, it might be more effective to bypass the courts and appeal instead to the blogger’s good nature. But even this tactic can throw up complications.

6 Martin McKeown did eventually convince Mr Ingevaldsson of the store’s case. “I felt bad for them and didn’t think that they needed to suffer for that bad treatment of one customer,” he explains. “But you can’t take away old threads of yourself on that forum, and I’ve tried to contact the forum crew a couple of times to have them delete the blog without any luck.”

7 There is little doubt that the immediate and global availability of a single negative review, perhaps written in haste, can seriously harm a business in the age of search engines. Martin McKeown suggests such situations could be avoided if search engines were obliged to demote such links after six months. But the problem with that, says Search Engine Land’s Mr Sullivan, is that Google does not necessarily differentiate between each type of result. What would happen, he asks, if the search engine failed to distinguish between a single negative review and a major journalistic news story? “Would you apply a remedy that could potentially do harm?” asks Mr Sullivan.

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Tekst 8

- 1p 16 'One Northern Irish shoe shop certainly feels that this is the case.'
(beginning paragraph 2)
What does 'this' refer to?
A 'a nightmare for any small business' (paragraph 1)
B 'a check on printed criticism' (paragraph 1)
C 'unclear search engine rank calculations' (paragraph 1)
D 'bloggers have too much power' (paragraph 1)
E 'The ordeal for the shop' (paragraph 2)
F 'the "worst online shopping experience"' (paragraph 2)
- 1p 17 Noem **drie** dingen die samen de aanleiding vormden voor Jesper Ingevaldssons ontevredenheid over Robinson's Shoes.
Geef antwoord in het Nederlands.
- 1p 18 'Both parties agree that the issue was eventually resolved.' (alinea 2)
→ In welke latere alinea wordt hier nog eens naar verwezen?
Noteer het nummer van deze alinea.
- 1p 19 Kies bij 19 in alinea 2 het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.
A consequently
B however
C likewise
D moreover
E therefore
- 1p 20 Kies bij 20 in alinea 3 het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.
A attracting the wrong crowd
B ignored by interested parties
C putting potential customers off
D written by a professional critic
- 1p 21 How does paragraph 4 relate to paragraph 3?
A it completely undermines the claim made in paragraph 3
B it denies the claim made in paragraph 3
C it further discusses the claim made in paragraph 3
D it repeats the claim made in paragraph 3

- 1p 22 What becomes clear from paragraphs 5 or 6?
- A Internet companies get many requests from people who want to erase their digital past.
 - B It is very difficult to get your own contributions removed from the internet.
 - C Software developers refuse to accept responsibility for abusive blogs on the internet.
 - D The best way to solve internet conflicts in Europe is to start legal procedures.
- 1p 23 ““Would you apply a remedy that could potentially do harm?”” (final sentence)
- Why would the remedy be potentially harmful?
- A Important information would also be lost.
 - B Media companies would become too powerful.
 - C The dependence on technology would grow.

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.