

Fake Reviews and Operation Clean Turf Bring Forth Need of Reliable Consumer Reviews

Search engine optimization companies and clients who participated in fake online reviews agree to cease activities and pay \$350,000 in penalties.

NASHVILLE, TN, USA, September 27, 2013

/EINPresswire.com/ -- The recent publication of "Operation Clean Turf" is the result of a yearlong undercover investigation of Search Engine Optimization companies and their clients who actively participated in misleading online reputation management campaigns. (source)

Popular online review company Yelp.com is taking the brunt of the resulting negativity of fake reviews. When news broke out, Yelp.com saw a 6% drop in stock price while Angieslist.com saw a 4.4% increase. An article from Market Watch, stated that 20% of all yelp reviews are false. Although, in an email to BGR, a Yelp.com representative wrote, "...Yelp only publishes about 75% of reviews submitted; the remaining 25% — including those highlighted in the study — are relegated to our filter and not recommended." This is good news for the roughly 60% of local business searchers who think consumer ratings and reviews are important.

A [Nashville SEO company](#) owner Joe Zboch notes "SEOs recognize the power of reviews go beyond swaying the perception of a product or service. They influence where a business' website ranks on the SERPs as well." Moz.com article "The 2013 Local Search Ranking Factors" reads that review signals represent 10.3% of the overall ranking factors search engines take into account when ranking a local business' website on the search engine results pages.

Consumer reviews are undeniably important and should be a part of any local search campaign. As "Operation Clean Turf" has shown, getting online reviews can be rather difficult and businesses have resorted to more devious ways of getting them posted. As the punitive repercussions of this investigation pan out, consumers, business owners and SEO companies should look toward alternative methods of finding and supplying reliable information.



An app icon mock up for unlocked local spring hill

For the past 4 months a small group of like-minded business owners in Spring Hill, TN have been meeting to address similar concerns. Included in these conversations is a fundamental struggle that every local business owner struggles with: How to influence the public perception of your business while maintaining a responsible level of operational transparency. "Simply put, we want to leverage the trust we have with each other as business owners, and use it to market each other on an affordable, scalable level," said Joe Zboch about the ongoing [Unlocked Local](#) project. Spring Hill is located in middle Tennessee and is one of the Nation's fastest growing cities. The roughly 32,000 residents of Spring Hill support 1566 active business in the city.

Unlocked Local aims to be the go to app for locally sourced products and services. "Its very important for all of us to not only buy from people we trust and like but who are also based locally," said Tony Militello who is the VP of Sales at reNova a janitorial and cleaning service in Spring Hill, TN.

Learn more about Unlocked Local and urge your local business owners to join the cause for transparent homegrown business at <http://www.unlockedlocal.com>

Press Release courtesy of Online PR Media: <http://bit.ly/18wRdZ4>

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