

Restaurants Are Using AI to Destroy Their Competitors' Ratings

Restaurant owners are using AI to write bad reviews for competitors' restaurants and the help of AI allows them to do it very quickly.

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AI, Artificial intelligence, is revolutionizing every industry, but for restaurants that rely on positive reviews to grow and survive, there's a dark side to the trend. [Thriving Restaurants](#), a consultation service that helps restaurant leaders enhance their operations and boost profit, warns that fake reviews, videos, and pictures can be made and posted by AI in seconds. Before the end of the next dinner rush, a successful restaurant's competitor could use AI to automate and spread damaging information about their business across every corner of the web.

The New Age of AI

Recent reporting from NearMedia.co illustrates the speed and ease one person's impact can have on a restaurant with AI. "TripAdvisor's top-rated restaurant in Montreal doesn't actually exist. Its creation was a prank by a Canadian comedian..."¹ Someone who has never stepped foot in the restaurant can alter that restaurant's digital footprint.

Recent developments in AI's accessibility mean that bad reviews can be generated faster than ever. Sites like Yelp claim to sift through fake reviews, but even the best software cannot remove 100% of them – especially not in a timely manner. To slow detection services down even more, some developers are creating websites that help mask the use of AI. If a competitor wants to post, they'll find a way to do so.

And as restaurateurs already know, every review matters. An article on medium.com stated, "a single negative review can cost 22% of customers. The number rises to 59% after three negative reviews, while four or more negative reviews about your brand might take away 70% of potential

customers." 2

Damage Control

Operators work too hard to allow their restaurants to succumb to such tactics. Here are a few tips that Thriving Restaurants offers restaurant owners to help galvanize their businesses and prepare for the worst:

- 1) Get in the dining room! If restaurant operators don't have a relationship with their customers, they need to start nurturing one. People will hesitate to believe rumors about someone they like.
- 2) Dilute any negativity. Hundreds of five-star reviews will go a long way toward handling fake reviews, so encourage your regulars to drop a review of the restaurant.
- 3) Monitor important review websites daily. Don't let anything go undetected.
- 4) Respond to every review, even suspected fake ones. The people who automate slander won't be willing to rebut replies but stay on the high road - don't play down to their level, and shine a spotlight on the restaurant's professionalism.
- 5) Be prepared to fight. Get an attorney and get prepared to act when it can be proven someone is falsely reviewing the restaurant. Hopefully, there will only be a need to set this precedent once.
- 6) Put integrity on display. Utilize videos on the company's website and socials to show customers this is an honest, hard-working family restaurant they can trust.

The current economic climate has created the greatest challenges most restaurateurs have ever endured. It's disappointing that AI, a tool designed to help improve lives, has already been used in its inception by those looking to gain an unfair advantage. Hopefully, sites like Yelp, designed to promote outstanding, hard-working business operators, will find a way to absolve the companies they have liberally promoted from the dastardly attacks of lesser operations.

Thriving Restaurants aims to help hard-working operators maximize their success and grow confidently. To learn more about the organization or get individualized support, restaurant owners and operators can head to thrivingrestaurants.com

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