

The reputation game

By [Rosie Sayers](#)

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It used to be called the '[Streisand Effect](#)' - if you actively push for something to disappear from the public eye, it just ends up getting even more publicity. Today, as Andrew Marr and others have found out to their cost, it could also be called the 'super-injunction effect'.



LONDON, UK: Twitter and blogs have something of a Wild West feel about them. What gets hidden by a super-injunction one day is everywhere the next, either in the form of wild, unsubstantiated rumour - or as something dangerously close to the truth.

Every day thousands of celebs are subject to all manner of online discussion and speculation. This also has lessons for brands: whether you like it or not - and even if you spend large amounts of money trying to portray the opposite impression - it only takes a few whispers for you to lose all credibility.

So what are celebrities (and their publicists) doing? Of course they don't want to intervene and deny things personally to speculating tweeters - that's just further fuel for the fire. Ultimately, however, online PR and reputation management are vital.

Search matters

Search is a vital way for fans to engage with their favourite celebs - but as real-time search results gain more prominence, no one wants the first listing to be speculation on whether someone has a super-injunction in place. This is why a lot of celebs are constantly watching Google and Bing for what others are saying about them.

It's also why many are building a personal presence on social media. With the right engagement strategy, the volume of positive coverage will outweigh the negative.

The same lessons of online PR and reputation management are vital for brands to survive in this space. They need to constantly listen and watch for what others are saying about them, because reputations have been and will be lost through a

lack of swift intervention.

And search matters as well. What if, despite all the PR and advertising money spent on creating a brand image, the top result on Google was a disparaging news article or blog? The lines between SEO and social search are blurring and brands need to be on top of both.

Businesses rarely employ super-injunctions, but even when they do it can cause more harm than good ([just ask Trafigura](#)). The key lesson is that even (or especially!) in a time of crisis, brands need to engage with and manage the online debate, not just slap down a lawsuit and hope it will go away.

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