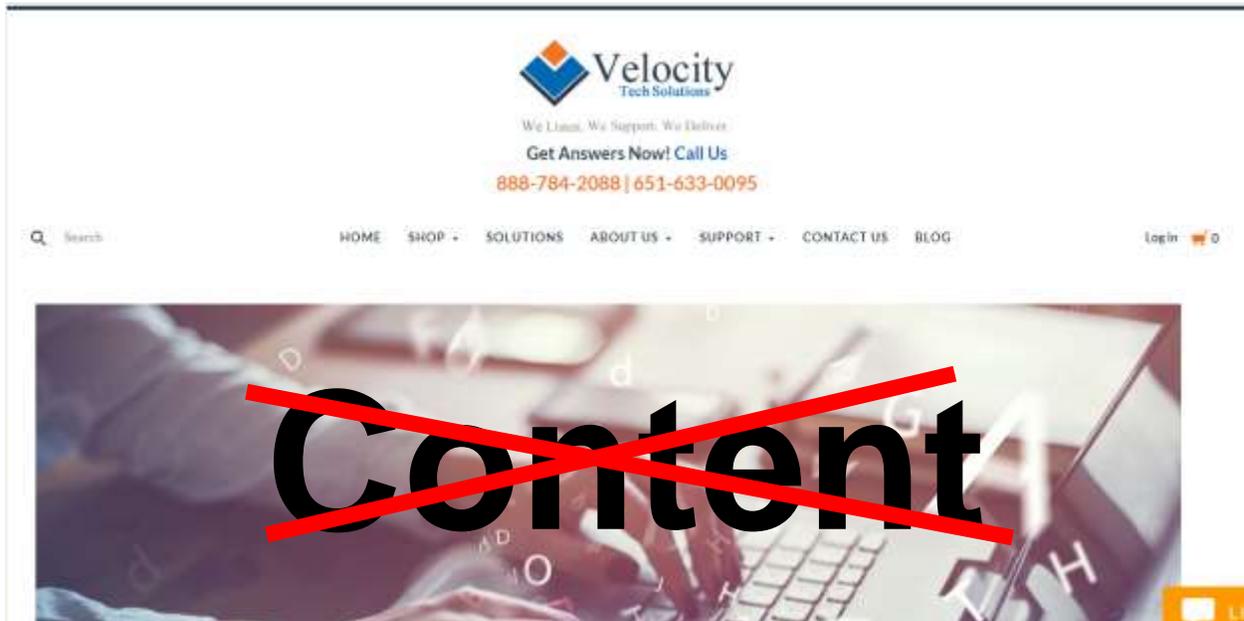




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5 Steps to Save your Online Reputation

Anyone can post anything on the internet. They can get away with it because not all websites are good at monitoring and weeding out negative or misinformation postings. Even Facebook has been in trouble for it. If you find something, how do you get the post removed from Google search? It can be tricky, but here are five ways to get you started.

1. Ask the author to remove the content

The content was put there for a reason. As a result, authors are not always receptive to taking it down. But sometimes they will if asked nicely or provided with the right motivation. Find out what they want or something that motivates them and leverage it. A

phone call usually works better than an email and is safer. You do not want them to publish your plea on the internet. It is worth your time and your reputation to try.

2. If the author is unwilling, approach the publisher

If the damaging information is not on someone's personal blog, try the publisher or webmaster. Personal blogs fall into a tough category with the webmaster, publisher, editor, and author all being the same person. The website owner is sometimes listed on a website. If not, try searching for the owner using a Whois tool like Whois.net or DomainTools.

3. Try offering replacement content

If the author or publisher will not take down the content, ask if they are willing to replace it. For older content, you could offer to create a more updated version. Or revise the current version to cover some extra points the author or publisher recommends. Once again, trying it is worth your time and reputation.

4. Request the page be hidden from Google

If you still cannot persuade them to take down or replace it, you can try to get it hidden from Google search. Ask the publisher to add a NOINDEX tag to the header of the HTML on the page. The negative information still exists on the page, but the NOINDEX tag tells search engines not to crawl the page any longer. Within a few weeks, the page is usually removed automatically from search results.

5. Submit a Google removal request

If 1-5 fails, you can also ask Google with a removal request. Google will remove content that infringes upon copyright laws, is malware or phishing software, commits trademark violations, and certain kinds of personal information, like social security numbers. The only downside to this approach is there will be a notice at the bottom of the search results page saying something has been removed.

If 1-5 fails, you can try suppressing or pushing down the content, so it's far less visible by promoting other content. It can work, especially if the content has a high author score. Plus, don't forget leveraging SEO and keywords to draw away search engines.