

TWO MINUTE LEGAL REVIEWSM

How can you track what others are saying online about you or your company?

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Why is this important?

When a potential customer is considering you or your company, they will likely look online to see other people's opinions. Whether the information is good or bad, it is best to know what people consider to be strengths and weaknesses, leaving room for improvement or kudos for a job well done.

How can I do this?

Google offers a **free service** called "**Google Alerts**," which allows you to setup keywords to track. If, at any time in the future, one of those keywords appears in the Google index, you receive an email providing a description and a link to the website. Currently, there is no limit to what you can track.

What can I do with this Service?

When a satisfied customer puts a good review of your service or product online, you can use this information as a reference for future customers. If there is a bad customer review, you can contact the person and resolve the issue they had. As part of the resolution agreement they could write an update to the review.

There is always a risk that ex-employees, business partners, or customers will post something online that is slanderous, or post material that is subject to a Copyright or Trademark. In this case, a cease and desist letter could be sent to the hosting company requiring the material be removed.

If your company has Trademark(s) or Copyright(s) you would like to protect, you can track the use of the name(s) or material to determine what people are saying about a new product or service. This also enables you to monitor if other companies are using your name to improve their search ranking.

As an added insight, you could monitor what competitors are saying about their own goods or services. You can track the claims competitors are making, thus giving you a leg-up when an ambiguous advertisement is cited by a customer trying to get a lower price from your company.

If you would like more information, visit this link: <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

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