

Your Online Reputation: Is It Really You?

It is said that imitation is the greatest form of flattery but when you discover a fake Twitter account in your name and using your picture, it's just has the "ick" factor.

Last week as I was reviewing my social media streams, I noticed a tweet. The name and picture was mine, but clearly something just was not right. After a closer look, I discovered it was a completely different @ handle but they were using my picture and my name.

The great thing is when you're monitoring your systems, it usually doesn't take long so you can get a handle on the situation before it spirals out of control.

So what do you do if someone impersonates you on Twitter? Visit Twitter's Help Center at <http://support.twitter.com>.

As you grow your online presence, these snags may cross your path. As a business owner what you can do is to have appropriate systems in place to monitor your online reputation.

Here are two systems that will get you started:

1. Google Alerts. You can use these alerts for a host of reasons, including following a story or track your name in new content. You can also set up how often you would like to receive these alerts. You'll want to receive the alerts at least once a day. To set up a Google alert, visit <http://www.google.com/alerts>.
2. SocialMention.com. This search engine is a handy system that looks at a wide-range of sites to find out where you are mentioned. It's a great tool to determine if you need to do damage control or you might just discover, like I did, some good gossip about you. Someone made a really nice comment about me and someone followed up with another positive comment. That was really cool to find so that I could reciprocate and respond.

With social media, you can quickly, efficiently and affordably get the word out about your business. However, it's wise to make sure you have the systems monitoring your reputation that you have worked so hard to build.