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Buying a better reputation

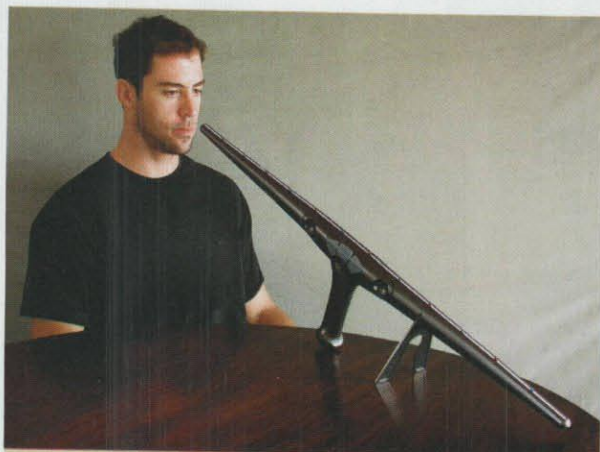
A bad reputation can spread like wildfire—especially online. However, a couple of new companies say they can help clear your name.

ReputationDefender.com “scours” the Internet, from social networks (such as MySpace) to professional review sites, for any bit of information on its clients. The agency produces a monthly report of its findings and gives clients the option of “destroying” the information. The service costs between \$10 and \$16 per month, depending on the plan. However, if clients opt to have an unsavory search result removed from the Internet, they have to pay an additional \$30 per item.

ReputationDefender CEO Michael Fertik said that usually once an item is removed, a Web site’s cache is updated with the deletion of that information; but he concedes that it might not be gone for good. He added that it’s important to conduct monthly checks because new information surfaces all the time.

Fertik says it is easy to delete defamatory or incorrect information from open-Internet sites. However, if negative information is reported in a news story for instance, he says his agency does not have the authority to remove it.

A similar site, DefendMyName.com promises to “suppress” negative search engine listings. The firm mostly caters to businesses



Envisioning healthy eyesight

It might look like a tabletop spaceship, but a new FDA-approved device called the Eyepoint is designed to strengthen vision.

The \$200 gadget uses a combination of sound, color and light to help users train their eyes to better focus and work together as a team. The daily exercises performed on the device take 10 minutes each and gradually increase in speed and difficulty.

Two 14-in. arms that contain 12 alternating red and blue lights swing out from a center console to form one long beam, which sits atop a stand. The beam swivels in different directions to accommodate the various exercises. A pair of red-and-blue glasses, which look like they belong in a 3D movie, also are included to test each eye individually.

Jacob Liberman, the ophthalmologist who developed the device, says that the Eyepoint can help users’ eyes feel less tired while working at a computer all day and might allow them to rely less on glasses and contacts. Liberman added that it can also improve kids’ performance and attention span in the classroom. When asked if the device could help correct a lazy eye, Liberman said that although it does strengthen the eyes, it has not yet been proven by FDA to treat that condition, in addition to astigmatism, nearsightedness and farsightedness.

—M. Noonan

but serves individual consumers too. (Businesses commonly use such agencies, but now the services are becoming more popular among individual consumers.) DefendMyName doesn’t actually remove negative Internet findings. Instead, it makes search results more favorable by planting key words and removing negative listing re-

sults from the first page of a search. DefendMyName representatives say their prices depend on the severity of a client’s problem.

Giving TiVo a run for no money

For avid TV watchers who have not jumped on the TiVo train, Comcast and Time Warner plan to launch a similar

service in 2008—free of charge.

Time Warner’s Look Back program will allow viewers to record their favorite shows. There are a few catches, though: you can’t fast-forward through commercials, you must watch a program before midnight of the day you recorded it and you can’t save any recordings after the midnight expiration period.

Comcast also plans to offer a free TV-recording service, but Jenni Moyer of Comcast says that the company still doesn’t know whether viewers will be able to skip commercials.

A different kind of Mosh pit

If YouTube, MySpace and Flickr combined their services, the product would probably resemble Nokia’s new mobile sharing site, Mosh. Users can upload and share content (e.g., videos, ringtones and games) from their cellphones through the site.

The service is free to both Nokia and non-Nokia customers, but the company might eventually charge for subscriptions. Also, users should make note of how much their cellphone service providers charge for Internet service, whether its per connection or for unlimited access. ●

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