



**LE RÉSEAU DE CRÉATION
ET D'ACCOMPAGNEMENT PÉDAGOGIQUES**

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BREVET DE TECHNICIEN SUPÉRIEUR

SERVICES INFORMATIQUES

AUX ORGANISATIONS

SESSION 2015

SUJET

ÉPREUVE E1- CULTURE ET COMMUNICATION
Sous-épreuve U12
EXPRESSION ET COMMUNICATION
EN LANGUE ANGLAISE

Durée : 2 heures

coefficient : 1

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Google 'right to be forgotten' ruling enriches PR companies scrubbing the web

The Google “right to be forgotten” ruling is creating a boom time for reputation management PR companies, which are charging clients for having personal information erased from the Internet.

5 Freedom of speech campaigners today called for Google to “be robust” in resisting claims, saying that a new culture of censorship had taken hold in Britain.

Public interest in deleting embarrassing or damaging personal content has also surged in the wake of the revelations of hacked photographs of naked celebrities, including Jennifer Lawrence and Rihanna.

10 In an email touting for business and sent under the subject line “Problems with Google”, the Leeds-based company Igniyte, boasts of being “one of the world’s leading experts at removing negative search results from Google”.

15 It states: “If your business or even you personally are having problems with Google, for example negative reviews, aggrieved former employees or customers posting defamatory content or anything that means that when people search for you they see negative comment, then we can help.”

The company’s managing director Simon Wadsworth told *The Independent* that the international row over the controversial EU court ruling in May had led to a boom in business. The finding has led to more than 30 million requests for links to be deleted. In the initial period after the ruling, Google had approved more than 50 per cent of requests.

20 “The ruling has raised awareness of the whole industry and our business has increased quite significantly since this issue,” said Mr Wadsworth. “I get calls all the time saying ‘delete everything about me from the Internet’.”

25 He said Igniyte was asked to remove material including references to previous criminal convictions, adverse rulings by professional organisations, naked photographs, and defamatory comments. “We get people who have cleaned their act up – should they be punished after 10 years?”

But Jo Glanville, director of freedom of speech campaigners English PEN, called on Google to take a firm line in resisting requests for content deletion.

30 She said: “I would hope that Google would resist any demand from a PR agency to remove material and be robust about telling those firms to just go away unless they were going through the channels of the new law.”

35 She claimed that Britain was undergoing a worrying cultural change in which “censorship is seen as an act for the public good”. She said: “Even when PR firms are unable to take advantage of legislation, they are taking advantage of the climate and the celebrity pictures on iCloud issue, which makes people nervous and more sympathetic to censorship.”

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40 Mr Wadsworth said he represented financial companies which had bad reputations but had recently been acquired by new owners. Ignyte successfully removed topless photographs from Google searches for a woman who was seeking work as a serious television presenter.

But he said that many clients had an unrealistic expectation of the “right to be forgotten” ruling, and that Google rejected many applications on the basis that material had been published “in the public interest”. Mr Wadsworth claimed that the definition of public interest was “a grey area”.

45 Negative material was posted online by “ex-employees, ex-partners, ex-directors”, he said. “It can be pretty vitriolic – they go to the point of setting up websites.” Companies were increasingly vulnerable to unsatisfied customers threatening to write damaging reviews unless they receive financial compensation.

“It’s blackmail at the end of the day,” he claimed.

50 Mr Wadsworth admitted that it was often not possible to delete material. “Nine times out of 10 we are not pulling that content and if people want to dig they will find it.” But in such cases, negative material might be removed from the first page of a Google search by the company or individual self-generating positive material about itself.

Ian Burrell, *The Independent*, September 8, 2014

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