

TripAdvisor Releases Data Detailing Fake Review Volumes In First-Of-Its-Kind Transparency Report

- **29 page report reveals TripAdvisor stopped over 1m fake reviews from reaching the site in 2018**

- **2.1% of all review submissions that year were identified as fake - but most never made it onto the platform**

- **Industry figures welcome the data release, citing importance of reviews to business owners**

NEEDHAM, Mass., Sept. 17, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- TripAdvisor®, the travel platform trusted by millions of consumers worldwide for its traveler reviews, has today published its first-ever Review Transparency Report, revealing never-before-shared details about its review moderation processes, as well as statistical data on the volume of fake review attempts targeted at the platform in 2018.

The report, which analyzed a full year's worth of data on reviews submitted by the global travel community, revealed the overall volume of reviews submitted to TripAdvisor in 2018. It details the multi-layered approach TripAdvisor takes to ensure reviews posted on its pages comply with the site's guidelines. The report also provides a detailed breakdown of the proportion of reviews that were either blocked or removed.

"Ensuring that TripAdvisor is a trusted platform for our users and listed businesses is a top priority. We've continued to make advancements to our industry-leading fraud detection efforts in recent years, but it's a daily battle and we are far from complacent," said Becky Foley, senior director of trust & safety at TripAdvisor. "While we are winning the fight against fake reviews on TripAdvisor, we can only protect our corner of the Internet. As long as other review platforms aren't taking aggressive action, then fraudsters will continue to exploit and extort small businesses for cash. It is time other platforms like Google and Facebook stepped up to the plate to join us in tackling this problem head on."

Key report findings at a glance

- **66 million** reviews were submitted to TripAdvisor in 2018 by the global travel community. Every one was analyzed using **advanced fraud detection technology**, and **2.7 million** were subject to additional **human assessment** by content moderators.
- **4.7%** of all review submissions were **rejected** or **removed** by either TripAdvisor's advanced analysis technology or manually by the content moderation team. There are a number of reasons why TripAdvisor rejects or removes reviews, ranging from [guideline violations](#) to instances of review fraud.
- Only a **small fraction of all review submissions — 2.1% — were determined to be fraudulent** and the vast majority of those (73%) were blocked *before* they were ever posted.
- This equated to over 1 million fake reviews that were prevented from being displayed on TripAdvisor.
- Fewer than 1% of reviews were **flagged by users or businesses** for potentially violating TripAdvisor guidelines. TripAdvisor's content moderation team reviewed most of these community reports within six hours of them being submitted.
- **34,643 businesses** were subject to a **ranking penalty**, which is a reduction of a property's position within the popularity or traveler ranking. Ranking penalties are applied when a business is caught attempting to post fake reviews.

The report also described TripAdvisor's efforts to catch paid reviewers. Paid reviewers are individuals or companies that try to sell "user" reviews to businesses listed on the site. Since 2015, TripAdvisor has stopped the activity of more than 75 websites that were caught trying to sell reviews¹, including one individual who was [sentenced to nine months in prison](#) by the Criminal Court of Lecce in Italy last year.

"Consumer reviews have become essential to millions of tourism activities around the world. It is progress, provided that, as recently recommended by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, these reviews are reliable and unbiased," said Pascal Lamy, chairman of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics at the UNWTO (World Tourism Organization). "It is therefore encouraging to see that platforms such as TripAdvisor are committed to transparency on how they monitor, control and manage the reviews they receive in order to avoid abuses and frauds."

In addition to the release of moderation data for the first time, the 2019 Review Transparency Report highlighted a number of commitments TripAdvisor is making to protect the integrity of reviews on its platform, including:

- Continuing to improve systems to identify fraud and penalize the perpetrators
- Further investing in training for human moderation teams
- Pursuing partnerships with law enforcement authorities to support their efforts to tackle fake online reviews
- Building on transparency efforts by sharing more insights into TripAdvisor moderation processes and fraud investigations on the [TripAdvisor Insights blog](#)

The 2019 TripAdvisor Review Transparency report can be downloaded in full from this link:

<https://www.tripadvisor.com/TripAdvisorInsights/w5144>

ⁱ Figures cited refer to the period January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2018

About TripAdvisor

TripAdvisor (NASDAQ:TRIP), the world's largest travel platform*, helps 490 million travelers each month** make every trip their best trip. Travelers across the globe use the TripAdvisor site and app to browse more than 795 million reviews and opinions of 8.4 million accommodations, restaurants, experiences, airlines and cruises. Whether planning or on a trip, travelers turn to TripAdvisor to compare low prices on hotels, flights and cruises, book popular tours and attractions, as well as reserve tables at great restaurants. TripAdvisor, the ultimate travel companion, is available in 49 markets and 28 languages.

The subsidiaries and affiliates of TripAdvisor, Inc. own and operate a portfolio of websites and businesses, including the following travel media brands: www.airfarewatchdog.com, www.bokun.io, www.bookingbuddy.com, www.cruisecritic.com, www.familyvacationcritic.com, www.flipkey.com, www.thefork.com (including www.lafourchette.com, www.eltenedor.com, and www.restorando.com), www.holidaylettings.co.uk, www.holidaywatchdog.com, www.housetrip.com, www.jetsetter.com, www.niumba.com, www.onetime.com, www.oyster.com, www.seatguru.com, www.smartertravel.com, www.tingo.com, www.vacationhomerentals.com and www.viator.com.

*Source: Jumpshot for TripAdvisor Sites, worldwide, April 2019

**Source: TripAdvisor internal log files, average monthly unique visitors in Q3 2018

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