

Opinion piece

The relationship between Online Reputation Management software and market research

by [Vittoria Jooste](#)

Consumer generated media (CGM) such as blogs and social networks are increasingly featuring in search engine result pages (SERP). A choice of online reputation management (ORM) tools exists to monitor the search space for specific mentions and feed the results via email or RSS. By not being a simple spectator, but rather engaging proactively using the very online tools that customers use to monitor, analyse and ultimately influence the conversations around a brand, a company can even turn the more vocal of its online consumers into powerful brand ambassadors.

Social networks and blogs hosting brand discussions can act as research communities from the point of view of the brand's owner. The opinions of online audiences can be monitored, tracked and measured. Information can be aggregated in a database according to e.g. positivity/negativity, influence and action required. This way, typical ORM activities can deliver qualitative research information, such as consumer sentiment, growth opportunities or improvements required – as with Dell Idea Storm, a site through which new features suggested by consumers are considered by Dell's development team. ORM can also deliver quantitative research information, such as reputation scores or rankings like those generated from the opinions of the more reliable book reviewers on Amazon.com.

Ongoing, effective ORM is a valuable source of information for market research purposes which may assist in planning new marketing campaigns or an optimised SEO strategy. The task is made increasingly simple by the availability of specialised software tools.

About the Author

Vittoria Jooste is an accredited emarketer and the owner of [MV Squared Virtual Office Services](#). Vittoria can be reached at info@mvsquared.co.za.