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The New Reputation Custodians: Repositioning Individuals as the Guardians of their Online Reputation
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Abstract:

Developments in information technology coupled with failures on the part of governments and businesses to limits use of surveillance technologies have led to laments over the death of privacy. These concerns reflect fears that individuals have lost control over their personal information and have few opportunities for recourse when their privacy is violated. This paper focuses on one such concern: the loss of control over online reputation. Focusing on the United States, I review the inadequacy of legal structures to deal with reputational damage suffered online and explore the feasibility of current market solutions for online image management. I argue the existing market solution fails to challenge power imbalances in the current online ecosystem and suffers many of the same drawbacks as the legal system. I propose a system of self-regulation that repositions the individual as the custodian of their digital image and dislodges the current structures of dominance online.