

Strategy Guide for Managing Online Reputations



About the authors



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Introduction

In modern healthcare, patient satisfaction with healthcare providers is an important metric in evaluating health-related services. While organizations may have control over the patient feedback data created for transparency initiatives within their own organization, consumers are still turning to third-party sites to find reviews and ratings for healthcare providers. Because of this, it is vital that providers and healthcare organizations stay abreast of what patients are saying about them online so they can take action and make improvements where needed.

To that end, Reputation Insight collects data from websites where consumers rate and review providers, making all of the different information available in one place. At Connect Healthcare, we recognize that awareness of activity is simply not enough. That's why our Reputation Insight solution offers service recovery, so you can turn negative situations into positive ones. We also offer tools for analyzing that data and allows you to gain deeper insight into what patients are actually saying, allowing you to drill down and target improvement efforts as well as gain authentic marketing insight.

Total reputation ownership

Managing your online reputation can be a monumental task because there are so many different access points consumers can have with you along their healthcare journey. Before they even set foot in your office, patients can interact in four main ways with your organization online:

- ❑ The Find a Doc search engine on your website
- ❑ Third-party review sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, etc.
- ❑ Official, verified provider ratings from CAPHS data displayed on your website
- ❑ Online listings across the web (your address on Google, ZocDocs, etc.)

At Connect healthcare, we offer solutions to help ensure you are controlling your total online reputation, and reputation management is an important piece of this puzzle. You can learn more about the rest of our solutions [here](#), but in this guide, we will be focusing on Reputation Insight, our tool that provides not just monitoring but insights, service recovery, and analytics for focused improvement in near-real time.

A brief history of reviewing doctors online

The online review trend began in the late 1990s, as frequent internet use became more and more embedded in to the fabric of daily life for Americans. One of the first sites to give consumers a voice was Epinions.com, which launched in 1999. Sites like Epinions gave the average consumer a newfound voice that was able to reach thousands of people online—an incredibly expanded audience as compared to the limited word-of-mouth reviews available in the pre-internet era. It was not long before nearly everything became reviewable, from products and gadgets to hair salons, plumbers, and lawn care specialists.

The healthcare field, of course, was soon to follow. In 2004, RateMDs launched, and later, Vitals and Healthgrades joined the crowd. There are now more than 50 different sites where consumers can rate and review medical providers online. While the extent to which a patient can be said to accurately judge a provider's ability to care may be questionable (and indeed adiscussion for another day), it is undeniable the influence that online reviews have on consumer choice.

According to a recent *JAMA* study conducted in 2014, 59% of respondents reported physician ratings sites to be “somewhat important” or “very important” when choosing a physician. This means that more than half of people believe there is relevant knowledge to be gleaned from listening to strangers' voices on the internet. You should be joining in on these conversations as well. We'll give you the tools and strategy to do it.

Chapter 1

WHY LISTEN TO THIRD-PARTY SITES?

Social media sites like Facebook, Yelp, Twitter, HealthGrades, and Vitals have forever changed the way we as a society think about communication and how information is created, delivered and consumed in healthcare. Online reputation is everything these days. Some detractors may say that it is just noise on the internet, and that it is just unverified gossip. However, there is more to it than that. Here is why you should listen to what people are saying:

Even official, CAHPS-verified data isn't perfect

If you are just mailing surveys, there are demographics who won't fill them out. If you distribute surveys during appointments, there are certain types of people you'll miss. There are any number of ways that official CAHPS surveys aren't reflecting 100% of your patients' experiences, and all this means is that there is plenty to learn from other types of reviews.

The quest for actionable data isn't a battle.

No single data source is going to be enough. Yelp is interesting, but on its own there is just not enough data to go on. As for it being unverified patient data, that is true, but it is reasonable to assume non-patient reviews constitute a fairly small percentage of the actual data. Skewing bias toward certain demographics is true, but then again that's true for all survey methods.

Third-party reviews help determine areas of importance to patients and caregivers

Online reviews tend to be more open-ended and more specific than the factors evaluated in official surveys. They're also less formal, so patients feel more comfortable talking about the little things that matter to them instead of huge, broad categories.

Every review can be a catalyst for change

Awareness and balance are key when you begin leveraging more data. The reason social sites have been viewed as noise by most healthcare professionals is because they've thought of it in terms of individual provider data and as if they had to use any single source of data as their whole data set.

The more sources of input you can intelligently process, analyze, and execute on, the better healthcare organizations can get at delivering actual care. Then, patient outcomes improve. Reimbursement improves. Culture and engagement improve. Growth happens, not because of a brilliant marketing ploy, but because the organizations grow internally and patients take notice.

Website	Rating	Month	Trend
Google Maps	★★★★★		↓
healthgrades	★★★★★		↓
RateMDs	★★★★★		↓
Surveydata	★★★★★		↓
CompasMD	★★★★★		↑
vitals	★★★★★		↑ ↓
WebMD	★★★★★		
yelp	★★★★★		↓

Reputation Insight pulls data from all the top review sites

We need to dig deeper into data—not just our own, but the entire world of data that surrounds us. Just because a single source does not meet our desire for perfect data sets doesn't mean we toss them out and try to ignore them. Because, in the end, if you do that, you cut yourself off from the very thing your patients and their families are using to analyze you.

If you are looking at a single doctor and a single data source, such as Yelp, there's not a lot of actionable or valid insight you can draw. However, if our country's obsession with Big Data has taught us anything, it's that the gold isn't in the single data point, but in the aggregate across many providers and many sources. Fortunately, there are many, many different sources available to fetch data on your providers online.

Chapter 2

MAKE SENSE OF VAST DATA WITH A CENTRAL PLATFORM

Having a reputation aggregator platform like Reputation Insight is crucial to effectively monitoring, engaging, and learning from third-party review sites. Some larger hospitals have upwards of a thousand doctors, and it would take incredible effort to manually search for and evaluate each provider's profile on every third-party site out there.

Monitor at a glance

Our dashboard serves as a starting point from which a system administrator can get a sense of the big picture. Our unified display presents operational data in a way that is easy to read and interpret. Our color-coded charts and graphs as well as our sentiment analysis enable you to quickly see new trends and updates and dive deep into the problem instantaneously.



Dashboard for Reputation Insight

Sentiment analysis

Sentiment analysis allows users to see visually how well their providers are performing at a glance. It refers to whether a comment's content is either “strongly positive,” “positive,” “neutral,” “negative,” or “strongly negative.” Our system takes into account not just common keywords, but how those words relate to the overall meaning of the sentence, thereby greatly reducing the chance a comment is misclassified according to sentiment.

Ease of use

For each comment, you can see the source (i.e., Healthgrades) along with the ratings and text review, if any. You can also quickly click “View Article” to jump directly to the source website. To notify others, you can click “Forward” to send them the comment directly. The interface is nimble and doesn't silo information.



Reputation Insight's Comment View

Chapter 3

HARNESS THE POWER OF ANALYTICS

Let us use as an example a hospital that is having a problem with physician communication, and that you've been tasked with getting to the bottom of it. By its very nature, this is a very vague, amorphous problem to have. In addition, it can be extraordinarily difficult to address and solve—that is, unless you have the right data.

With a broad set of patient comment data from multiple sources, you can leverage this data almost like a patient panel giving you their perspective on how your physicians communicate with them. You can aggregate the comments into different topical buckets, including physician communications, so you can see them in context. You can then drill down to what the negative comments are and the way keywords are used in negative ways.

Keyword: Arrogant

Say for instance you start seeing words like “arrogant,” “condescending,” and “not nice,” begin to pop up in Reputation Insight. Now, you can see that the physician communications problem is more specific—it’s an interpersonal relations problem—and that is easier to grasp and address. You can then break down these comments by providers, practices, and specialties so you know who identify exactly who needs help and coaching with how to talk to patients in a way that makes them feel valued and respected.

Rank	Term	Count
1.	Arrogant	15
2.	Rude	9
3.	insensitive bedside manners	7
4.	Parking	6
5.	questions	5
6.	septic shock	4
7.	cancer	4
8.	diagnosis	4
9.	office	4
10.	insensitive bedside manners	3

Keyword: Distracted

As another example, you may see comments like “anxious,” “distracted,” or “stressed.” While this may be categorized by some as a physician communication issue, you may quickly realize this is an operations issue showing up as a communications issue. After some research, you realize that the entire practice just got on-boarded, or this office just lost its entire front office staff. In these situations, you can have brilliant clinicians struggling with operations issues of how to find and train good staff in alignment with your system’s workflows.

Keyword: Misdiagnosis

A first glance at this doctor’s review and it appears that she is remarkably bad at diagnosing. While this may be a possibility, there is usually more behind it. If you look closer, she is also being rated consistently as not spending enough time with the patients. This, coupled with the fact that she’s dealing with patients that have long-term sports medicine injuries, has led to generally negative reviews. Digging deeper, it is possible she may also not be communicating to her patients what to realistically expect in both the short and long term. Confused, the patients turn to the internet to vent their frustrations at not having a quick fix. Looking at this provides two key insights: the first, knowing what to talk to the provider about in regards to managing patient expectations. The second, that her overall negative review isn’t necessarily pointing to malpractice or her skill as a physician.

Showing reviews: between (3/1/2016 - 2/28/2017) and for Brown, Bobby, MD

Filter: 2 showing Previous 1 Next

Provider Name	Sentiment	Posted Date	Comment	Score	Rating Source
Brown, Bobby, MD		2016-09-03	Dr. Brown & his staff are excellent in every way. Full Review		Surveydata
Brown, Bobby, MD		2016-09-04	I am absolutely thrilled with the coverage service and the provider Dr. Brown. He is more responsive and more concerned than... Full Review		Surveydata
Brown, Bobby, MD		2016-09-08	Very good and thorough care. Full Review		Surveydata
Brown, Bobby, MD		2016-09-22	excellent experience and excellent care. Full Review		Surveydata
Brown, Bobby, MD		2016-01-25	My husband and I are fortunate enough to receive the most excellent medical care provided by our coverage MD, Dr. Edward Brown... Full Review		Surveydata
Brown, Bobby, MD		2016-04-04	Excellent. Full Review		Surveydata
Brown, Bobby, MD		2016-04-06	Dr. Brown is a wonderful dr. I will recommend to all my friends. Full Review		Surveydata
Brown, Bobby, MD		2016-04-06	Dr. Brown is the best primary care physician I have ever had. I feel fortunate to have him as my Dr. Full Review		Surveydata

Review List from Reputation Insights

Keyword: Questions

Here we may actually have a real physician communications problem. Two reviews two weeks apart that are nearly identical—this provider isn't keen on answering questions and providing support. The patients don't feel listened to and they're not receiving information on their respective health conditions. While it could be a function of being pressed for time, it could also be that this provider is frustrated with his job, or is perhaps having trouble at home. No matter the cause, a sit-down conversation with him could help get to the bottom of his behavior with patients. And, no matter what the cause, he needs to be made aware that his patients aren't receiving the best care he could give.

Provider Name	Rating	Posted Date	Comment	Score	Rating Source
Brown, Bobby, MD	1	2016-09-06	I had many Questions for Dr. Brown. He is more responsive and more concerned than...		SurveyGizmo

Monitor in near-real time to always know what's happening

Organizations should be watching what sites like Yelp are doing because there is a strong chance they are able to see and react to what consumers want faster than the industry can. By watching them you can notice and evaluate potential strategies to implement. When you take into account all of the different third-party rating sites that exist—Health-Grades, ZocDocs, and more—this is a lot of potential. And keeping tabs on them is incredibly important to your business.

While negative reviews on a third-party site are a sign that something has broken down in the patient experience process, they present a unique opportunity for your organization. Unlike negative HCAHPS scores, which can come months after an incident occurred, a bad review on Yelp can appear mere hours after it happened. This gives you an opportunity to intervene almost immediately and being making things right.

Chapter 4

MAXIMIZE SERVICE RECOVERY OPPORTUNITIES

What is service recovery?

Service recovery is how an organization “recovers” from a bad experience and makes amends to a dissatisfied patient. When done correctly, service recovery programs can transform angry patients into loyal ambassadors for your organization. Why? Because you are going the extra mile to show you care about their experience, and want to make everything right.

According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, there are three main types of experiences patients can have in a medical setting. The most satisfied are the ones who have never had a problem with your organization. The next most satisfied are those who have experienced some sort of problem, but have seen those problems addressed and made right by the organization. The least satisfied patients are those whose problems are never fixed, leaving them upset, frustrated, and even angry, eager to spread the negative experience on social media and to family and friends.

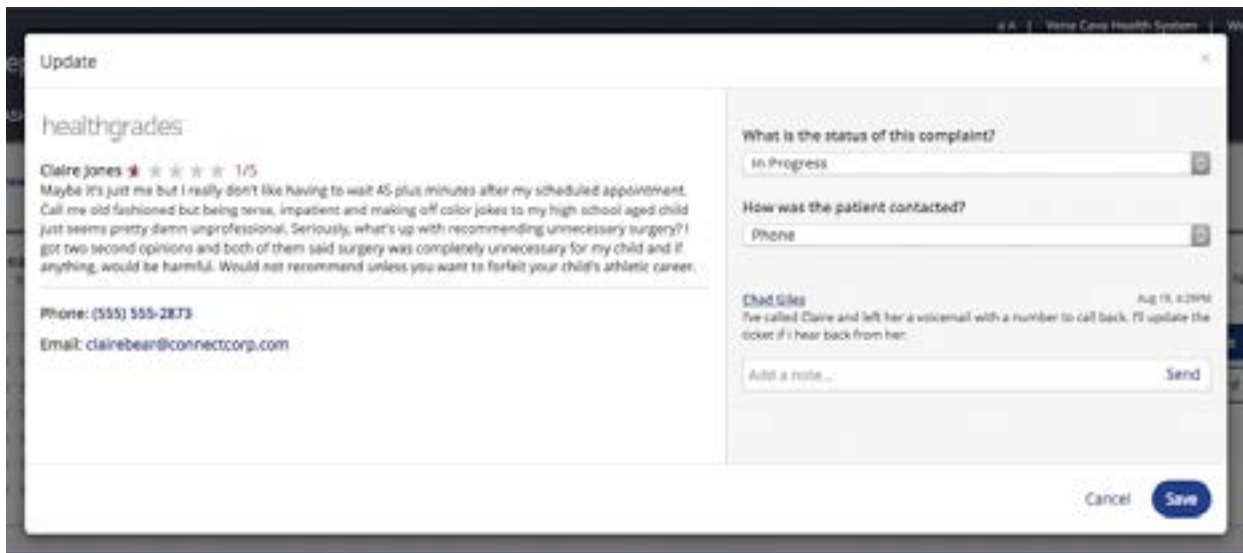
It is important to remember that healthcare, unlike dining out or getting a haircut, can see individuals who are sick, anxious, or afraid. There is a lot more at stake at a doctor’s office, and the results can be life changing.

The 6-step intervention plan

1. Apologize/acknowledge.
2. Listen, empathize, and ask open questions.
3. Fix the problem quickly and fairly.
4. Offer atonement.
5. Follow up.
6. Remember your promises.

Use Reputation Insight to manage your service recovery efforts

Our Reputation Insight solution does not just alert you to new negative reviews posted online. It helps you follow up with unhappy patients, keep track of when you contacted them, and resolve each complaint. Armed with this new information, your organization now has the ability to turn a negative patient review into a learning experience and an opportunity for growth.



Service Recovery Tool

Demonstrate value with the power of reports

Reputation Insight provides a priceless glimpse into the minds of your patients. But it's not just scores. After all, scores, on their own, can mean nothing. Instead, marketing and patient experience teams can glean incredible knowledge that can change how decisions are made and care is provided. This shows the real value of not only the platform, but of the marketing and patient experience teams themselves, allowing them to pull up a chair to the strategic table at the organization.



Conclusion

USE DATA TO MAKE REAL, POSITIVE CHANGE

Track the efficacy of initiatives

Not only can Reputation Insight help inform you of where you need to make improvements in your organization, it can also help you monitor and gauge the efficacy of when you decide to begin addressing issues.

The same keywords that popped up to alert you of a negative trend—we'll use “distracted” from our previous example—can be tracked and followed going forward after changes have been made in staffing. You can look for a decrease in words like “distracted” in the two-month period following implementation while simultaneously looking for positive improvements by following keywords like “focused,” “attentive,” and “listens.”

When you can measure and track the outcomes of a performance improvement initiative, it demonstrates value and justifies organizational change that some individuals may think needless.

Never stop improving

Using Reputation Insight in conjunction with a quality transparency solution like Provider Review is just part of the way that Connect Healthcare helps clients put the trust back in healthcare. Patients will then see that an organization is dedicated to not only learning about its strengths and weaknesses but is also committed to learning from them. This commitment doesn't just end when the data gets posted online—it's a lifestyle change, a holistic way of approaching healthcare for the entire organization and its staff. No matter how long you've been in business or a provider has been practicing, you can always keep learning and keep improving.

About Connect Healthcare:

Connect Healthcare is a SaaS (Software as a Service) company whose mission is to help healthcare organizations harness the power of data and improve provider/patient relationships through four key solutions: Find a Provider, Reputation Insight, Provider Review, and online listings management.

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