

TechCrunch + BRANDBASTION

How TechCrunch enabled real conversations

Find out how one of the biggest online media companies collaborated with BrandBastion to enable real conversations. BrandBastion ensured that spam, hate speech and other harmful content was removed in real-time 24/7. Additionally, TechCrunch received email alerts of urgent situations and gained valuable insight into engagement received on their website.

“ For a site as large as TechCrunch, it’s important to have someone looking through comments and listening to what the community is saying. BrandBastion has made a seamless integration into our team, and I highly recommend their services to anyone that might be interested. ”

Travis Bernard

Director of Audience Development



2014: The year the world's biggest publishers abandoned onsite comments

The common view held by major publishers up till today is that it is not feasible to effectively moderate comments and that having comments and discussion threads below an article is an outdated approach.



Disabled comments
in 2014

“Despite our best efforts to contain them, trolls are a persistent group and keep managing to slip through the gates.”



Only allowed comments
from approved
commenters from 2014

“...horribly violent rape gifs... were consistently appearing in our comments.”



Disabled comments
in 2014

“...the idea of comments on a website must give way to new realities of behavior in the marketplace.”



Disabled comments
in 2014

“We believe that social media is the new arena for commenting, replacing the old onsite approach that dates back many years.”



“ I completely understand why most journalists don't want to engage with the comments on their stories — many comment sections are filled with insult ... the larger problem, is that **newsrooms don't have a sense of why they even have a comments section and how it might connect to their journalistic mission.**

Rather than build higher walls to keep responses away — or outsourcing all discussion to social media — journalists should **develop better tools, filters and reasons to engage.** ”

Andrew Losowsky

Journalist

TechCrunch decided to buck the trend of disabling comments

TechCrunch has been committed to open discourse since its inception, but hate speech, spam, and trolls forced TechCrunch to experiment with various commenting platforms to help combat the problems. Facebook Comments in particular had major spam problems. Every single article was getting hit with at least one piece of spam, and it was making the comments section look less like a place for quality discussion.



Implemented BrandBastion in 2016

“Quality of comments is important to readers. If they go to the comments section and it's a dumpster fire of spam and hate, it might not be a place where they feel compelled to contribute. If a user goes to a comments section and sees quality discussion, he or she is much more likely to participate in the community.”

Travis Bernard

Director of Audience Development

Creating space for conversations to take place

Over a period of 22 months, BrandBastion enabled the following for TechCrunch...



209,291

Comments processed

What harmful comments were removed?

- ✓ Spam, malware and scams
- ✓ Violent, offensive or inappropriate content such as hate speech



27,337

Harmful comments removed

What kind of issues were addressed?

- ✓ Technical issues with the article (mobile formatting, dead hyperlinks, etc)
- ✓ Large volumes of negative reactions to article
- ✓ Typos for company names or employees

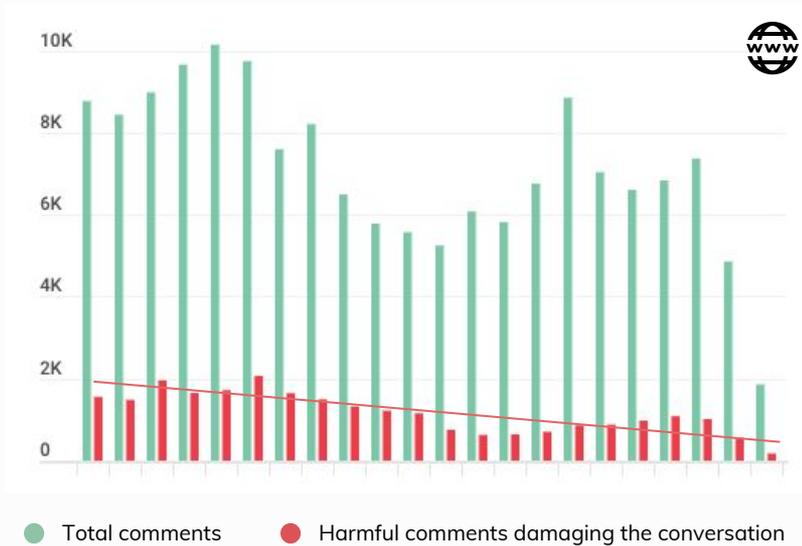


99

Issues solved

Keeping comment sections free from harmful content

By ensuring that harmful content was removed in real-time 24/7, the comment sections remained free from spam, scam, hate speech or other harmful content, allowing readers to have real conversations about the topics at hand.



SPAM, SCAM AND MALWARE - >24,000 comments removed



I have made \$18693 last month by working online from home.itz very easy and simple job to do in part time.everybody can do this from home in part time by use the link below....click this [link](#)



VIOLENT, OFFENSIVE OR INAPPROPRIATE - >500 comments removed



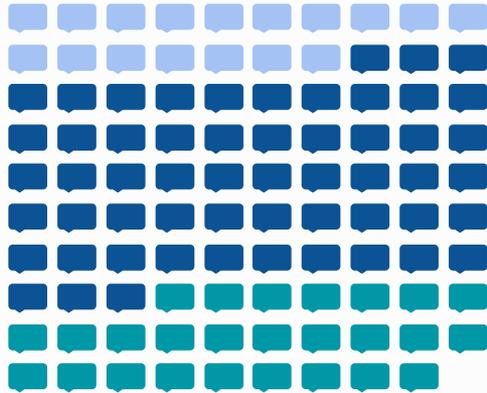
I hope Donald puts every queer in a gas chamber. Just to get you guys a little bit hotter.



Period of 22 months

Email alerts of issues 24/7

Email alerts of situations requiring the TechCrunch team's attention were sent in real-time 24/7, ensuring that the team was always aware of what was being flagged by the commenters.



 **99**
Issues solved

-  Typo in article
-  Technical issue with article
-  Other

According to the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer Global Report, 66% of people believe the media is more concerned with attracting a big audience than reporting.

Technical issues, broken links, and typos in articles can all erode reader trust.

These types of incidents cannot always be avoided, but with the right safeguards in place they can be corrected in a timely manner prior to them escalating.

The difference with BrandBastion

How BrandBastion handles moderation

- Trained AI and human content specialists detect all harmful content and potential issues. Harmful comments are automatically detected and removed, leaving the comments section hate- and spam-free.
- Situations requiring the clients attention (such as issues with posts or articles or a sudden increase in negative sentiment) are sent as email or text message alerts to ensure that the client know what is going on in the comments section 24/7.
- A fully-transparent service model is used, where monthly reports include information on what content has been removed during the course of the month.

How moderation is traditionally done

- **Pre-moderation.** A large team of moderators reviews and approves every commenter or comment before it gets published. This is a time-consuming and costly process that is not feasible as a company scales up
- **Crowdsourcing.** This approach involves leaving moderation to the community, usually through social commenting plugins. This solution is often a band-aid one that fails to solve the problem completely. Also, engaged users are the ones who should be protected from hate speech yet with this approach, the reward for the most engaged is that they have to police the worst of comments.



Every commenter is not a troll. If journalism is going to survive, it needs to connect more closely with those who care about it the most.

Andrew Losowsky
Journalist

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BrandBastion is an official
Instagram Partner

