

A background image showing a hand holding a magnifying glass over a document. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The text is white and bold, standing out against the red background.

Case Study: Disinformation Campaign Defused Without Lawsuit

Quietly Suppressing
False Claims via DMCA

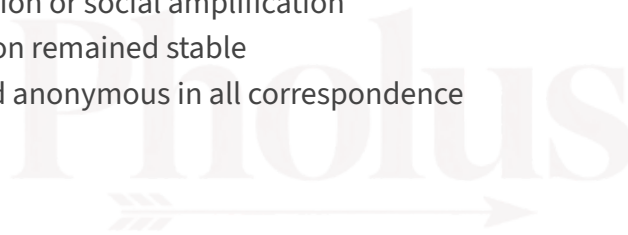
Case Study: Suppressing a Disinformation Blog Threat Without Escalating to Litigation

Executive Summary

A blog published false, damaging articles about the client. Pholus suppressed the content using DMCA, search engine policy, and direct contact—resolving the issue quietly and without triggering a legal conflict.

Key Results & Indicators

- Blog delisted within 10 days
- No litigation required
- Zero press traction or social amplification
- Brand perception remained stable
- Client remained anonymous in all correspondence



Introduction

In sensitive operating environments, public perception can unravel faster than internal resilience. A single blog post filled with falsehoods, if allowed to index and spread, can damage an organization's credibility, destabilize stakeholders, and deter future partnerships.

Pholus was brought in when a client discovered that an anonymous online actor had created a website devoted to publishing fabricated stories about the firm. The content was clearly malicious—implying fraud, misconduct, and fabricated quotes from company leadership. Worse, the posts were starting to show up on the first page of Google for the organization's name.

Rather than fuel the fire through legal threats or media engagement, Pholus coordinated a low-profile, precision-based takedown using copyright suppression tools and structured response communications.

The Threat

The client—a mid-sized, regionally known firm operating in a trust-sensitive space—noticed an uptick in search activity that didn't match campaign timing. What they found:

- A new blog, styled to resemble a news site, posting articles under fictitious names
- Repeated publication of defamatory content under different headlines and URLs
- Social sharing of the posts by a small network of hostile actors
- Indexing of these posts on Google search for the firm's executive names and brand terms

The content was not legally actionable under defamation laws in the region—but it *was* riddled with invented screenshots, plagiarized brand materials, and stolen copy from official pages.

Pholus was brought in by the client's legal and communications team to contain the damage quietly, fast, and without drawing media attention.

Pholus' Role and Strategy

Our goal was to make the posts disappear from public view—not to turn this into a court case, not to escalate with press, and not to provoke the author(s) into expanding their campaign.

1. Assessment and Source Analysis

We began by conducting a full digital footprint review:

- How many domains were involved
- What CMS or hosting providers they were using
- Whether the authorship was centralized or distributed
- Where assets had been copied from the client's site

We identified blatant copyright violations on nearly every post—brand imagery, company statements, and even employee bios lifted verbatim.

This opened a tactical path that was faster than traditional legal routes: search engine suppression via copyright enforcement.

2. Legal Coordination via DMCA

Pholus coordinated directly with the client's in-house legal counsel to draft Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) notices. These were directed to:

- Google Search (to de-index the URLs from results)
- Web hosts and content delivery networks (to disable infringing pages)
- Domain registrars, in select cases, to flag bad-faith use of identity

The notices were narrowly tailored, clearly cited the violations, and avoided aggressive language—reducing the risk of retaliation or drawn-out review processes.

Within 10 business days, the worst-performing URLs were de-indexed by Google.

3. Narrative Containment

While the legal takedown was underway, we advised the client to avoid reactive press releases or confrontational messaging that could backfire.

Instead, we:

- Issued internal talking points for leadership and comms teams in case of media inquiry
- Monitored traffic and keyword ranking to ensure the DMCA suppression was holding

- Recommended search hygiene adjustments—such as content tagging, microcopy edits, and a targeted SEO campaign to push down low-value content

The strategy paid off. No journalists picked up the posts. The anonymous author, seeing no rise in attention or engagement, slowed publication.

4. Follow-On Monitoring and Risk Review

Pholus remained engaged for three months post-suppression to ensure:

- No mirror domains appeared
- No syndicated versions were picked up by content farms
- The DMCA notices remained enforced (some require follow-up)

The client's search visibility normalized, stakeholder confidence remained intact, and no formal litigation was required.

The Outcome

- Malicious content de-indexed via legal suppression, not public fights
- No viral traction, media pickup, or donor concern
- Stakeholder and executive names cleared from false Google associations
- Threat neutralized without inflaming the situation or increasing visibility
- Legal, communications, and technical response coordinated quietly and effectively

Final Thoughts

If someone's spreading falsehoods about your company online, you don't need a crisis to escalate. You need a coordinated response that eliminates the threat without giving it air.

Pholus specializes in disinformation response and quiet containment strategies that protect your credibility without dragging you into unnecessary fights.

When silence is safer than the spotlight, we'll help you win in the background.

About Pholus

Pholus is a discreet advisory firm that supports founders, boards, and stakeholders in fragile or complex environments. We specialize in quiet interventions, exit planning, and operational clarity when reputations, relationships, or resources are at risk.

Need to navigate something delicate or high-stakes? We work behind the scenes to help you stabilize, reset, or exit — without triggering avoidable fallout.

Visit us: <https://www.pholus.co/> **Email:** contact@pholus.co **Signal:** pholus.01

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