

# MARKETING COLLOQUIA

Spring 2026 - Abstract

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*Where:* 3730 Walnut Street, Suite 700

*Room:* 741 JMHH

*When:* 12:00 PM to 1:20 PM

## HOW FAKE REVIEW ALERTS HELP THE PLATFORM

Some review platforms, such as Yelp and TripAdvisor, use fake-review alerts in their fight against review fraud. These are disclosures by the platform that a business has attempted to manipulate the reviews on a platform but were caught by the platform. This paper employs an empirics-first approach, first documenting the scope of review manipulation for businesses that receive alerts, then documenting the effect of these alerts on various outcomes including business and platform judgments, and subsequent review quality. We find that alerted businesses are penalized by consumers while platforms receive reputational benefits. Most interestingly, consumers who write reviews for an alerted business go on to write higher-quality reviews for subsequent businesses. This benefits the platform, the business which receives the review, and consumers who read it. This effect is robust to various measures of subjective and objective review quality, and replicates across field and lab data. Thus, the potential long-term benefits for the platform and its stakeholders from disclosing attempted review fraud suggest that more platforms should actively do so rather than employing strategies commonly used by many platforms today, such as silent removal of fraudulent reviews.