

Internet defamation lawyers in Massachusetts, what do they do?

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Initially, we will explore what Internet defamation is before discussing what Internet defamation lawyers in Massachusetts actually do. And we will have to back up even one more step and address what defamation is because that itself is not understood by all. Defamation is a collective term for both slander, which is the publishing of a falsehood to a third party that is damaging to someone without a privilege; and libel, which is the same, except it is done in writing. As stated, defamation can mean either one. Now, let us move to Internet defamation.

It appears that there is no agreed upon definition and it seems that the term has various meanings based on its use. Although there appears to be a more specific definition emerging, it can be said that Internet defamation is as simple as someone defaming you on the Internet. With that in mind, it is quite unlikely that someone slanders someone using the Internet (as that is using the spoken word). I imagine that one could use the term Internet defamation if someone slandered someone by video conferencing, or the like, using the Internet. But that is not happening. Other than that possible, possibly technically correct case, communication using the Internet in general is typically done electronically. Thus it is considered to be in writing. So, it may be argued that simply calling it libel or libel by Internet, would be more accurate.

Libeling someone using email, although arguably done using the Internet, is typically not what people refer to as Internet defamation. In that case, people would likely call it defamation, or more accurately, libel.

The term Internet defamation is usually used when someone posts a defamatory review on one of the plethora of websites that allow for people, presumably prior customers of the business, to post reviews. With the use of search engines to “google” someone, a libelous statement can appear as the only item for some people, or at least near the top of the searches. Obviously, this can be damaging and raises much concern on the part of the victim. This has caused many companies and “experts” that work to mitigate the damage by using various techniques to have the libelous statement be buried or obscured by other, positive statements appearing higher in the search list or in addition to the libelous statement.

Another use of the term Internet defamation is for a libel that appears somewhere on the Internet where the publisher is unknown. It is interesting to note, there have always been people slandering or libeling others and attempting to hide their identity, and there was not a special definition used to describe it. Nothing like “slander/libel by unknown person” has arisen. But increasingly the author comes across the use of Internet defamation for a case where the defamer is unknown. This unknown part of the scenario may someday become part of the official definition for Internet defamation, or it could be stated “often associated with an unknown publisher” in dictionaries in the future.

So what do Internet defamation lawyers do? Well, they become adept at solving or addressing the unique issues that arise from the two different scenarios described above (false reviews and unknown publishers) and sometimes both at the same time. They employ some legal and non-legal techniques to identify the publisher. They also sometimes work with other professionals to bury or obscure any negative search engine results. They also may employ techniques to persuade website operators to remove defamatory postings. They also may attempt to push the boundaries of the equitable side of the law to provide relief for their clients. Finally, they do what lawyers have done for decades, obtain judgments against defamers.

In the event that you are facing "Internet defamation" in Massachusetts, feel free to give us a call.

Contact: George E. Bourguignon, Jr., Attorney at Law

Phone: (508) 769-1359 or (413) 746-8008

Email: gbourguignon@bourguignonlaw.com

Website: <http://www.bourguignonlaw.com>