



COMMERCIAL SERVICES

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## **Diners Blogging about Bugs** *Orkin Study of Online Reviews Reveals “Zero Tolerance” for Pests*

**ATLANTA, July 2009** – Dishing on the latest dining out experience only takes a matter of seconds now as restaurant patrons blog, text and tweet to update the world about their latest meal. A study released today by Atlanta-based pest control company [Orkin, Inc.](#) shows that diners are blogging about pests in restaurants and they have “zero tolerance” for any uninvited guests at their table.

Orkin partnered with international hospitality and linguistic experts John Crotts, Ph.D., and Peyton Mason, Ph.D., to determine the frequency of pest mentions on travel and restaurant review blogs, and the resulting impact of these encounters on guests’ loyalty.

Of those restaurant patrons encountering pests, 87 percent would not dine at the establishment again, nor recommend the restaurant to others. This was 62 percent greater than if no pest was mentioned in the review.

“When a pest is present, the potential for a positive recommendation is severely diminished,” said John Crotts, Ph.D., primary investigator for the study and professor of hospitality and tourism management at the College of Charleston. “We found when a pest was encountered, the willingness of a restaurant patron to dine again and recommend to others diminished by more than 50 percent, regardless of the quality of food, service and surroundings.”

Using the [Google blog index](#), 3,200,497 blog postings about U.S. hotels and restaurants were reviewed for mentions of pest encounters in 2008. Then, Crotts randomly selected and analyzed 500 blog narratives using language analysis – allowing the researchers to evaluate the impact of pest encounters on guests’ loyalty to those hotels, motels and restaurants.

“Whether five star or fast food, no restaurant is immune to pests – or negative blog reviews mentioning pests,” said Ron Harrison, Ph.D., director of technical services for [Orkin, Inc.](#) “It only takes one pest to earn your establishment a negative review – meaning a proactive pest management program is a must for any establishment serious about protecting their reputation.”

The study found that pest encounters lead to blog narratives that focus on the pest rather than other aspects of the restaurant such as price and service. Words such as “awful,” “dirty” and “disgusted” often appeared alongside pest mentions. In comparison, guests who did not encounter a pest at the same restaurant were more likely to mention the meal and specific foods, as well as significantly more likely to use words such as “great,” “terrific,” and “good.”

“Disgust is not too strong a word to characterize consumer reactions to a pest in a restaurant,” said Crotts. “The best way to describe guest reaction to pests is zero-tolerance.”

Visit [FiveStarList.com](#) to read the full research report and download helpful resources created in partnership with NSF International, an independent organization that certifies products and writes standards for food, water and consumer goods.

- **Before Your Next Health Inspection** provides restaurant managers and employees with a task list to help them prepare for health inspections, or simply train employees in best food-safety practices. This resource is available in English and Spanish.
- **Sanitation and Storage Quiz** is a tool to determine how facilities rank in best practices for sanitation and storage. This short, 15-question quiz can help managers improve sanitation measures.

### **About Orkin, Inc.**

Founded in 1901, Atlanta-based [Orkin, Inc.](http://www.orkin.com) is an industry leader in essential pest control services and protection against termite damage, rodents and insects in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Middle East, the Caribbean and Asia. With more than 400 locations, Orkin's almost 8,000 employees serve approximately 1.7 million customers. The company serves homeowners and numerous industries including food and beverage processing, foodservice, hospitality, healthcare, retail, warehousing, property/facilities management, schools and institutions. Learn more about Orkin on our website at [www.orkin.com](http://www.orkin.com). Orkin is a wholly owned subsidiary of Rollins, Inc. (NYSE: ROL). To learn more about Orkin Commercial Services, visit [www.orkincommercial.com](http://www.orkincommercial.com).

### **About the Researchers**

**John Crotts, Ph.D.**, is a professor in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management at the College of Charleston. His research encompasses the areas of economic psychology, tourism marketing and sales strategy, and management of cooperative alliances. In 2004 and 2007, Crotts was ranked in the top 20 list of scholars worldwide for his published research productivity by the Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education and Journal of Tourism Management respectively. He serves on numerous editorial boards for hospitality and tourism research journals.

**Peyton Mason, Ph.D.**, is the founder of Linguistic Insights, Inc. His quantitative approach to the analysis of consumers' language comes from more than 20 years of market and new product research experience. He previously managed new product development and consumer research for Bank of America, Lipton (Unilever), Anheuser-Busch and Kellogg's.

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