

**In a world filled with digital noise, we yearn for genuine recommendations that can help us make informed decisions. But online reviews can be so easily faked that we can no longer rely on them to guide our choices.**

**Some people seek validation through belonging to an exclusive group, or participating in an exclusive lifestyle. Social media encourages people to compare their lives with the curated content of others.**

**People have a tendency to follow trends and popular opinion, and to conform their behaviour to the collective norm.**

"We served ready meals.... like a 60-cent microwavable meal... If enough people around you saying, "This is delicious," will you go, "Yeah, it's delicious, I guess...?" I was really nervous about the way that they'd react. And when they left, they loved it."

– Oobah Butler, *NPR*.

"Restaurant-goers can — and should — question [TripAdvisor's] value, integrity and validity."

– Josh Barrie, *London Eater*.

"Strangers were leaving their own fake reviews for The Shed, not to build the restaurant's credibility, but to help to build theirs. Being the type of person who ate at The Shed, the number 1 restaurant in London, had started to mean something."

– Hannah Smith, *The Opportunist* podcast.

"Within the current climate of misinformation, and society's willingness to believe absolute bullshit, maybe a fake restaurant *is* possible?"

– Oobah Butler, *VICE*.

“The story of how a fake restaurant went to the top of the ratings on TripAdvisor is a lesson in trust and authenticity.”

– Rosalyn Page, CMO (marketing company)

———Group 1 above; Group 2 remainder of document ———

“This feat is the perfect example of “following the crowd” in information cascades. When connected by a network, people often become influenced by the decisions of other people.”

– Eli Rosenberg, *Washington Post*.

“Eating out in London is increasingly experiential; it’s about cultural and social capital — about bragging rights and securing the most exclusive and elusive reservations that one’s contemporaries have not. The Shed at Dulwich was by appointment only, and ‘so popular’ as to be unbookable.”

– Josh Barrie, *London Eater*.

“Writing fake reviews on TripAdvisor.... convinced me that TripAdvisor was a false reality.”

– Oobah Butler, *VICE*.

“It certainly demonstrated the power of social influence, not to mention also the psychology of consumers to follow what's hot.”

– Rosalyn Page, CMO (marketing company)

“In an era increasingly influenced by disinformation online, The Shed at Dulwich also has served as another reminder of the ease with which pranksters and other dishonest actors are able to game online platforms.”

– Eli Rosenberg, *Australian Financial Review*.