

Craigslist strikes back, files suit

May 20 2009



A man walks past the office of online site Craigslist in San Francisco, California, in 2006. Craigslist announced Wednesday that it had filed suit against a state attorney general who has threatened criminal charges against the online classifieds site in a dispute over "erotic services" ads.

Craigslist announced Wednesday that it had filed suit against a state attorney general who has threatened criminal charges against the online classifieds site in a dispute over "erotic services" ads.

Craigslist last week dropped its "erotic services" ads following a campaign by law enforcement authorities and a high-profile murder in which police say the killer used the website to find his victim.

Chief executive Jim Buckmaster said in a blog post Wednesday that although Craigslist had removed the erotic ads, the [attorney general](#) for South Carolina, Henry McMaster, was still threatening to take action against the site.

Buckmaster said Craigslist has filed suit against McMaster in federal court in South Carolina seeking a "restraining order with respect to criminal charges he has repeatedly threatened against Craigslist and its executives."

McMaster has accused Craigslist of promoting prostitution and made demands that the Craigslist CEO said would effectively force the San Francisco-based company to shut down entirely in South Carolina.

"Mr. McMaster's repeated threats of criminal prosecution should we refuse to shut down Craigslist for South Carolina have left us little choice but to seek declaratory relief before the court," Buckmaster wrote.

New York state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo announced meanwhile that police had broken up a prostitution ring operating on Craigslist and arrested seven people.

Cuomo, in a statement on Wednesday, said those arrested were involved in a prostitution enterprise called Room Service Entertainment that "advertised exclusively in the Erotic Services section of Craigslist."

"Until Craigslist gets serious about putting real protections in place, it will continue to be an environment where criminal operations thrive with impunity," Cuomo said.

"Today's arrests underscore the inherent risks posed by Craigslist and, most importantly, the need for protections that are full-fledged, not half-baked," he said.

Craigslist responded to the New York arrests with a statement saying that "misuse of Craigslist in connection with illicit activity is unacceptable, and we work closely with law enforcement to address it."

It also noted that the operation by New York police "took place in 2008, well before Craigslist eliminated erotic services and commenced manual screening of all ads posted to adult services."

After shutting down its "erotic services" section under pressure from state [law enforcement](#) authorities, Craigslist opened a new "adult services" category with all ads being screened by hand to discourage those promoting prostitution.

The pressure to shut down "erotic services" intensified recently with the arrest of a Boston-area medical student charged with murdering a woman who had posted an ad on [Craigslist](#).

(c) 2009 AFP

Citation: Craigslist strikes back, files suit (2009, May 20) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-05-craigslist.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--