There are Internet services which when viewed alone seem to be beneficial to all parties. The deep discounting sites such as Groupon and Living Social are examples. The customer gets a great deal and probably visits establishments which they otherwise wouldn't have tried. If managed effectively these sites can be very beneficial to the restaurant / pub as well. Another example are the various reviewing site, Trip Advisor for example. Great for a first time visitor to get a feel for the options available in a location and great for the establishments who provide the best possible service. Or so you might hope? However there are a minority of Internet users who have combined these services to create a rather insidious and damaging hobby. You might call it ?Discount Code Review Trolling? Or for short let?s call them Discotrolls?.. The pattern of behaviours goes something like this. Trawl through the deep discounting sites and harvest your vouchers. Contact a bunch of like minded friends and prompt them to do the same. Visit the victims establishment and hoover up your meals, spending the absolute minimum on additional items or services. Return home and post damaging and vindictive reviews under a pseudonym using a throw away email account. The really sad part is that they do this week in, week out.

Here?s an example. Obviously fictional, but it will have an all too true feel about it to many in the industry?..

It is Thursday morning and there is a hard frost outdoors. You have a business group in for a lunch meeting in the conservatory and the restaurant and dining areas are just about booked up for lunch. The Chef and his crew are going to deserve a few free pints at the end of this shift. You move from area to area placing menus and specials cards on the tables and making sure that all the place setting are correct and lighting the gas fires as you go. Passing the log burning stove you stop to throw a couple of large logs in and open the vent allowing the stove to crackle into a full blaze. Nothing looks more inviting.

As you pass the main door you note a couple of cars parked off centre in the parking bays and very close to each other. The occupants have all four windows down and appear to be passing a steaming flask back and forth. You make a note to open as soon as possible and let them in, they must be freezing out there? Having got the float in both tills and stuck your head into the kitchen to be welcomed by the usual banter you replace a blown wall light bulb and gathering up your keys head to the main door to let your guests in. It is about fifteen minutes to twelve, but they have been sat outdoors in the cold for over half an hour as far as you know, maybe longer. Oddly enough your guests don?t make an immediate move, but some of the business group do and soon Helen your head waitress is ushering them through into the conservatory in a friendly and

efficient manner. You think to yourself that you really are fortunately with your present staff.

By twenty five past twelve most tables are occupied, there is a busy hustle and bustle at the bar and checks and food orders are passing back and forth to and from the kitchen. At exactly twelve thirty, six very cold looking guests appear through the front door. Helen greets them and shows them to the last remaining large table, which appropriately enough is in the raised area by the bar where the log burner is now belting out heat. You gesture to Helen who deftly slides the vent to the half way position causing the almost incandescent stove to moderate its heat output.

Within moments Sarah as summonsed to the table and takes the order. On her way back from the kitchen she adds ice and a slice of lemon to a large glass pitcher of water and delivers it to their table. Glancing across you note with some puzzlement that three of the party are still wearing the heavy jackets. In a moment between serving drinks you pop over to ask if you could take their jackets. The reply is that they are very cold. Possibly as a result of sitting in their cars with the windows down you think.

Their food is delivered to the table after about ten minutes. Six Grill Platters. Which they consume with gusto. Shortly after finishing their meals one of the party appears at the bar to pay, brandishing six vouchers entitling them to 50% off the bill. He pays the bill and confirms that they thoroughly enjoyed their meals and they depart. All is good. Or so you think.

The afternoon passes into early evening and the business meeting guests begin to leave. You have a couple of pints with the kitchen crew and at eleven forty five you finish your shift and pass the bar over to Ian who as on lates and early mornings until Tuesday.

Having almost forgotten the rather odd group a week earlier the Trip Advisor App on your mobile pings. Checking through the bookings for the previous week you realise that the disparaging review is by none other than Mr. Embitteredshaw, of the self same party of six. They are critical of your foreign staff, your badly laid out parking facilities, the dangerous tree overhanging the front door, the quality of their food, the cold dark and damp feel to the place and the surely landlord. Actually they are critical of everything, which is strange because you?d not had a review with less than a four star rating since the last time you offered Groupon / Living Social vouchers!

Trip Advisor refuse to remove their review which festers there impacting on your ranking for the following six months but thankfully you never see Mr. Enbitteredshaw or any of his fellows again??..