

How the link to Backpage was revealed

1. Real estate data company **CoStar** sued **Xceligent** for allegedly stealing and using its online content, a charge **Xceligent** denies.

2. The alleged content theft is linked to an offshore company, **Avion**, in the Philippines.

3. As a result of a court order, documents are seized that show that **Avion** also worked for **Backpage**, a classifieds service known for its sex-related advertisements and criticized for its alleged role in facilitating prostitution and human trafficking.

4. Although **Backpage** has been the subject of lawsuits based on content appearing in its adult section, the 1996 Federal Communications Decency Act provides website operators, such as **Backpage**, an immunity from prosecution and certain lawsuits arising out of content published on their sites by third-party users.

5. But materials seized from **Avion**, such as phone conversations, emails, text messages and training manuals, show **Avion** was working to solicit sexual ads for **Backpage's** website and to lure potential customers.

