

# Locating People with the Internet



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Published on [www.lorman.com](http://www.lorman.com) - January 2018

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Locating people might have been an arduous task in the era before personal computers, but desktops, laptops, tablets, and the Internet have all made finding people significantly less difficult. In the age of the Internet, anyone who considers themselves to be an experienced researcher is likely to have the ability to follow a few simple procedures to find people online.

Information that was always traditionally kept in the middle of cumbersome files and stacks of paperwork in brick-and-mortar buildings can now all be easily located online. For a thorough researcher, using readily available resources on the web typically makes the job of finding one specific individual into an uncomplicated process.

## **Social Networking**

Popular social networking websites might not be most conventional choice with regards to searching for people, but they can be powerful tools if they are used correctly. If a person either feels that they have nothing to hide or doesn't believe that there is anyone searching for them, then they might choose to list their city of residence on a social networking website. A person's Facebook or Myspace page might list their actual location or places where they have lived in the recent past.

Even if somebody doesn't choose to divulge their physical location on a Facebook or Myspace page, taking a moment to examine their profile can still lead to finding them.

Looking at a person's profile can reveal where they went to school, which businesses they frequent in their local community, or who their friends are. The Internet isn't necessarily always anonymous or private; finding a person on a social networking website can provide a significant level of assistance with locating them in the real world.

If a person's profile on a social networking website doesn't provide any of the typical clues to his or her actual location, then emailing the person's coworkers, classmates, love interests, and colleagues might. Some individuals might not return an email and others may not have the desire to freely reveal any information, but there is a chance that a different acquaintance may willingly provide it. A social networking website might be a potent online resource to help with find someone, but relying on only one individual profile might not always reveal the most reliable information.

A few of social networking websites that many people are likely to be familiar with might include:

- <http://www.facebook.com>
- <http://www.myspace.com>
- <http://www.deviantart.com>
- <http://www.twitter.com>
- <http://www.linkedin.com>
- <http://www.multiply.com>
- <http://www.ning.com>
- <http://www.orkut.com>
- <http://www.tagged.com>
- <http://www.livejournal.com>

Like responses from acquaintances on a person's list of friends, there is a chance that a profile might contain misinformation and gross falsities. For a skilled researcher, the ability to differentiate between what information looks real and what content appears to be fabricated will be priceless in the hunt for a person's location. Scrutinizing profiles on more than one social networking website carefully may generally reveal what can be accepted as true and what information is likely to be outdated or false.

When attempting to contact others through email in reference to locating a person through the Internet, it is advisable to be honest about the reasons behind needing an individual's whereabouts. If the person has warrants for their arrest or is part of an investigation, then revealing that may persuade others to be cooperative with offering information. Coworkers, classmates, and acquaintances may be less likely to delete an email if they are allowed to know who it is from and why the information is needed.

Even if an individual doesn't use social networking websites, there is still a chance that he or she might be a fan of one or more popular massively multiplayer online role playing games. Online games like these often require players to pay a monthly fee for the privilege of playing the game. Sending a subpoena to the makers of the online game is likely to be all that might be needed to reveal the whereabouts of an individual who might play it for recreational purposes.

Some online games are free to play, others

offer a free trial, and several require players to pay a fee to play before beginning:

- <http://eu.battle.net/wow/en/>
- <http://www.vendetta-online.com/>
- <http://www.runescape.com/title.ws>
- <http://www.perpetuum-online.com/>
- <http://www.eveonline.com/>
- <http://www.darkfallonline.com/>
- <http://www.hitechcreations.com/>

Most online game creators who are interested in running a reputable business are likely to respond favorably to information requests. If a person is an online mmorpg fan, then playing a preferred game for an extended period of time is likely to be a hobby that requires the submission of credit card information. Attempting to locate a person through an mmorpg is likely to reveal a significant amount of information in terms of their actual physical location.

### **Online Public Records**

Unlike social networking websites or several other methods of locating people through the Internet, online public records leave little room for speculation. When a law enforcement official, government agency, or other trustworthy authority makes information available to the public, then it can typically be relied upon to be accurate. A search through official records on the Internet is generally quicker and easier than searching for the same information in person, but it is likely to still be a tedious endeavor.

Online public records, especially records between different jurisdictions, aren't always kept in one single obvious place. Using different Internet sites as sources can be recommended. Hunting for a person's actual location through online public records can usually mean using several different websites as references. After an exhaustive search, a significant amount of pertinent data is likely to be uncovered. Finding numerous bits of information about a person online may point a thorough investigator in the direction of their whereabouts.

Searching through vital records online is likely to be a good starting point. Information regarding deaths, births, and marriages can usually be found online through a variety of different websites. Some of these websites offer information for free, and others usually charge a small fee. State departments in charge of keeping records of health information or government vital statistics offices generally maintain accurate records of births, deaths, and marriages; many of these offices have websites.

In addition to death certificates, obituaries often contain pertinent information regarding individual people. Newspapers available online often list obituaries on their websites, and using a Social Security death index is always an option. Plenty of websites provide information related to death certificates and obituaries, and many of them often offer information free of charge. If finding out whether or not someone is still alive is an essential piece of information, then looking online can facilitate the

process. An online search can usually reveal the necessary data more quickly than letters to government agencies or a search through hard copies of printed information.

If a person isn't dead, then looking for his or her phone number through an online phone directory might be an open possibility. Online yellow pages and white pages often offer an abundance of information with regards to the names and addresses of individuals, families, and businesses. If a person has been married or divorced in the past, then using an online phone directory may reveal the names and addresses of former spouses. For individuals who might have had children, using an online phone directory or reverse directory might also uncover the names, addresses, and contact information for their kids.

These resources might seem like obvious online counterparts to printed directories, but it doesn't always occur to everyone to use them:

- <http://www.yellowpages.com>
- <http://www.whitepages.com>
- <http://www.anywho.com/whitepages>
- <http://inter800.com/index.html>
- <http://www.infobel.com/World/>

Taking advantage of information freely provided through the Internet may provide valuable clues hinting at a person's actual location and can typically save money. In most cases, resources like these offer a method that can be utilized to easily uncover the addresses and contact information for a person's former employers.

Contacting business owners, coworkers, and supervisors that a person may have been known to associate with in the past, in some cases, may be likely to lead to the discovery of a correct forwarding address.

Like any other type of employment history, military records can be verified through the web. Before going to the trouble to ask for an individual's military records, having all of their correct data can be recommended. Facts like a person's dates of service, branch of service, and social security number are all important to have. Persuading a person's closest relatives to consent to a request for this kind of information may be an essential step to take.

Going to the right website and following the correct procedures for requesting information can typically lead to promising results:

- <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/index.html>

Studying a military record can generally show a significant amount of data with regards to a person's medical history, abilities, demeanor, and general character. Finding a person through the Internet isn't likely to be exactly the same as getting into a car and attempting to find them through more time-honored methods. Taking the time to discover who a person is and what he or she might really be like may be a simple measure that eliminates a significant amount of frustration. If nobody is familiar with a person's real personality and attributes, then knowing where the person might be

becomes much more difficult.

For individuals with professional licenses, online evidence of their credentials isn't typically data that is kept a secret. Verifying whether or not someone is really has a license to practice law or medicine can be done online. By referring to the correct website, it is completely feasible to uncover a specific individual's professional qualifications. Generally, websites constructed to make official data available to the public contain much more accurate, reliable information than what might be found through a social networking website.

Finding out which states that a person has a license to practice law or medicine in can lead to additional information about his or her specific location:

- <http://webapps.ama-assn.org/doctorfinder/home.html>
- <http://lawyers.findlaw.com/>

In addition to basic information regarding whether or not specific professional qualifications are real, websites like these often offer carefully constructed profiles. With regards to public records concerning specific individuals, an online public record meant to verify professional credentials might include data about individual legal or medical specialties, related certifications, or general reputations.

If a rental property, dorm, or shared residence that a person may have lived in is still in business, then additional information can usually be found through an online directory. Making contact with a business like an apartment complex through a website, like emailing a former employer, might also lead to a forwarding address. Through careful analysis of data available through online resources, it is typically feasible to determine where a person lived in the past, where they might have gone at later point in time, and where they might currently be.

Checking a person's criminal history can be easily done online. Often, state and federal authorities make lists of wanted persons available to the general public. If a person is either wanted for questioning in relation to a crime or wanted for committing a criminal act, then trusted authorities typically make that information available to the public. For those who might be sex offenders, violent criminals, or part of terrorist activities, there really aren't many places to hide. Conducting a nationwide or state by state search for any possible criminal history that a person might have can typically reveal clues leading to their actual location.

### **Online Information Providers**

Entering a person's name into an Internet search engine might reveal more than what

an average researcher might initially think that it would. Looking for a specific individual through an online site like Google or Yahoo can reveal what social networking websites they might be using, personal web pages they might have, or unrelated data about a person with a similar name. When searching for a specific person through various Internet sources, there is never any certainty about what might be found.

Most online information providers offer a significantly larger amount of data than what might be found through an average popular search engine. Using an online information broker can provide information such as a person's criminal record, current address, or court records. Paying to use an online background checking service can save a researcher from any unnecessary time and effort that might be needed to look up specific public records through a multitude of different websites. Instead of having to go from site to site, an online background checking service gives anyone willing to pay a fee access to public records instantaneously.

In most cases, paying for online services like these can open up access to information like the names of a person's family members or close associates, their educational history, and records of any personal property of value. If an individual has ever filed for bankruptcy or had a history of drug abuse, it



is possible to find that information online through this method. Instead of having to tolerate the hassle of going from one website to another or one government agency to another, websites like these provide all of the necessary personal information in one convenient place. Social security numbers and employment history can be verified, and finding a person can become much less troublesome.

Typically, obtaining a person's credit report through the Internet is a simple process whether this kind of service is used or not. In some cases, it is possible to do an international criminal records search through an online background checking service. Generally, there isn't any kind of information that can't be found online through the use of this method. Not all online background checks offer exactly the same types of data, but all of them offer comprehensive reports. If someone is on a terrorist watch list or has ever had to register as a sex offender, then searching online can usually reveal that information easily.

The only few drawbacks to this method of locating someone through the Internet are the possible inconsistencies in data. Using a single online background checking service isn't the same as going directly to a specific government agency, employer, or educational institution. In some instances, records that should have been sealed become

revealed through the website. In other cases, the data is incorrect. Consulting a single online background checking service isn't always the correct course of action simply because it is easy.

## **Contact Shelters and Charity Organizations**

Not every person lives his or her life out in the open where their whereabouts can be easily discovered. Even for the most experienced researcher or legal authority, a homeless person or transient can usually be difficult to locate. Doing a traditional search like a social security number trace or employment history check on this kind of individual is likely to lead to a multitude of dead ends. Instead of revealing definitive results indicating a person's actual physical location, this kind of a search may lead to frustration. Doing a background check on this type of individual is likely to be an exercise of running in circles if the person who is conducting the search isn't careful.

An effective strategy for locating this variety of unconventional individual through the Internet is to think outside of the ordinarily accepted boundaries. Rather than consulting traditional resources, scrutinizing locations where the average person might not be instead is likely to be the course of action that may lead to results. Homeless shelters and charitable organizations don't typically



give out information about people that might have used their services, but they are all likely to comply with the law. If an individual has warrants for his or her arrest or is being investigated, then a nonprofit group may willingly provide the needed information.

Contacting homeless shelters, soup kitchens, food pantries, or other social services that a transient person might have used in the recent past, in some cases, may lead to a means to find the person's actual physical location. Charity groups generally keep records of most of those that they help, and many of them ask for identification. If there is an essential reason why there is an effort being made to locate someone through the Internet, then a charity group is likely to comply with anyone they view as a person of authority.

Asking a charity group the right questions can lead to a plethora of information. Whether or not an individual used the charity in the recent past, whether or not they might return in the near future, or where they might have gone might all be determined by making a few contacts through the Internet. Finding a person that lives life outside of the conventional boundaries can be challenging, and not every answer is likely to be easily looked up through the Internet or found on an obvious paper record.

Locating an unorthodox type of person through the Internet can often be an exercise in finding the solution to a problem that doesn't necessarily have a black-and-white answer. A person that doesn't want to be found might also do things like live with friends or hitchhike from one place to another. Asking for the assistance of others online can be a powerful tool to reveal where an individual might be. There is a possibility that a homeless person or transient might have had minor altercations with the law even if he or she doesn't have a serious criminal record or outstanding warrants. Searching for records of any minor offenses that a transient person might have committed may reveal their whereabouts.

No matter what means of locating an individual through the Internet are utilized, computer data isn't a replacement for deduction and reasoning. Taking a moment to keep in mind that data from the Internet can't be a replacement for intelligence or normal higher level thinking skills is advisable. A website might offer numerous bits of information about a person, but that doesn't mean that it isn't still the responsibility of a real person to make sense out of it all.

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