

U.S. Marine Corps

Command, Control, Communications and Computers
(C4)

Cybersecurity Division

Public People Search Database Removal Guide



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C4 Cybersecurity staff members created this guide to assist Marine Corps personnel with removing their personal information from publically available people search database websites, which gather information from existing public records. These sites operate on implicit consent, which means individuals have to explicitly opt out of each website in order to discontinue access to personal data from the online records. One thing to keep in mind is that this alone sometimes does not discontinue access to information from Google caches, and may require an extra step with a longer waiting period for Google to re-index the new information and overwrite the old record. Instructions on removing access to information from Google searches are in the final chapter of this guide.

Please note that this guide only covers some of the companies and websites that provide these services. However, most websites have a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section listing options to opt out with easy-to-follow instructions.

Some of the sites listed in this guide only allow up to five removal requests per email address and/or Internet Protocol (IP) address, and one may have multiple entries of personal information per site. In some cases, individuals may receive a message that states, “In order to prevent abuse, we must limit the frequency of automated privacy requests,” or something to that effect. The solution is to use an email address from FakeMailGenerator.com and use a free proxy server like [TurboHide](#) to repeat the steps and continue to opt out.

Some of the sites allow individuals to opt out through requests online while others require individuals to upload a copy of a government-issued ID such as a driver’s license to complete the process. It is recommended that the photo and the ID number be blacked out before submitting the copy to the site.

It is crucial for individuals to revisit the sites and perform a self-search periodically. These companies are always collecting information from new public records and refreshing their database. It is highly possible that access to certain information will resume on some sites at some point in the future.

Other than the “Do-It-Yourself” option, there are services individuals can purchase to eliminate access to their personal information on such sites. The terms and conditions vary among different service providers and should be carefully examined and evaluated prior to any purchase or subscription to services.

Intelius

On the page where you select your report, the site lists the information that the report includes when available. The site generates a report from its own regularly updated database that is built from billions of public records. These records are obtained from a wide variety of public and commercial sources.

To opt out, go to <https://www.intelius.com/optout.php>

ZebaSearch

All information found using ZabaSearch comes from public records databases. That means information collected by the government, such as court records, country records, state records, such as the kind of information that becomes public when you buy a new house or file a change-of-address form with the United States Postal Service. More often than not, individuals themselves put their own information into the public domain, without realizing they are doing so.

To opt out, you need to provide proof of identity. Proof of identity can be a state issued ID card or driver's license. If you are faxing a copy of your driver's license, they require that you cross out the photo and the driver's license number. They only need to see the name, address and date of birth, and they will only use this information to process your opt-out request. Please fax to (425) 974-6194 and allow 7-14 days to process your request. For more information, go to http://www.zabasearch.com/block_records/

Spokeo

Spokeo organizes data from various sources, including public record data, surveys, and social data (that has not been deemed private). Spokeo makes this information more easily accessible for people to research themselves or others.

To opt out, go to http://www.spokeo.com/opt_out/new. For more information, go to <http://www.spokeo.com/faqs>

PeekYou

PeekYou collects and combines scattered content from social sites, news sources, homepages, and blog platforms to present comprehensive online identities. Google calculates the likelihood of any link being associated with a keyword. PeekYou calculates the likelihood of any link being associated with an individual.

To opt out, go to <http://www.peakyou.com/about/contact/optout/index.php>

US Search

US Search's network of databases contains information from a variety of publicly available sources including government records, court documents, professional licensing organizations, and phone books. US Search gathers data from various state and private agencies, and their network extends nationwide, as not all counties and states report the same information.

To opt out, go to <http://www.ussearch.com/privacylock>

PeopleFinders

PeopleFinders is a Data-as-a-Service ("DaaS") provider for consumers and businesses seeking detailed insights on people, places and things. The Company is one of the largest owners of public records data in the U.S. including information on virtually every adult in the U.S., and has unique access to other commercial data sources.

To opt out, go to <http://www.peoplefinders.com/manage/default.aspx>

PeopleSmart

The site provides search access to contact information and public records. Recently, the site updated the information for each State's Court Agency page in our public records database. This is where users can go to find information about retrieving public records from a state's court office.

To opt out, go to <https://www.peoplesmart.com/member/optout-go>

PrivateEye

Currently the web site offers name and address records, phone records, marriage records, divorce records, death records, real property records, bankruptcy/tax lien/civil judgment records, and criminal records. The site constantly updates its data and adding new public records sources.

To opt out, go to <http://secure.privateeye.com/optout-form.pdf>

WhitePages

The site ingests billions of records every month from a variety of public sources and organizes that data by linking individual records to create an intricate contact graph of names, phone numbers, and addresses.

To opt out, go to <https://support.whitepages.com/hc/en-us/articles/203263794-How-do-I-remove-my-people-search-profile>

USA People Search

On USA People Search, users get access to the most recent public records. These records include full names, phone numbers, addresses, and other useful information. It is the easiest way to find people today, or learn more about them.

To opt out, go to <http://www.usa-people-search.com/manage/default.aspx>

Removing Information about You from Google

Removing data from Google and its caches can be extremely difficult, however not impossible.

1. The first step is to remove the information from the original source, meaning whichever website has published the information, remove the data from that publishing and hosting site first. Most websites are not under obligation to remove your data from the site. In fact when you submit, publish, interact, or take part in the website, you most likely fall under the sites terms and conditions, which automatically mean you will lose any right to the data that you have posted, as soon as you post it or take part in the site. The most important thing to remember is that whatever you post to the internet will be there forever, otherwise known as a “digital tattoo.”

2. Do not take no for an answer. Persistence wins in this game. The key is to continuously seek to find a person who manages the website and then continuously follow up and be polite but persistent, send emails, and call. The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

3. Be nice. They are not only busy, but they are under no obligation to help you. If they do help, it is really as a favor. No one will want to help you if you are a jerk, so be nice!

4. Delete things from Google using Googles URL Removal tool.

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/removals?pli=1> Site the reason as “outdated content” and Google will over write the cached data when they re-index the web pages. Just fill in the form from the link above and enter a word that is still cached but not on the live site and they will send a response within 48 hours. You will need to have a Google account to do this. It may take longer than 48 hours for the re-indexing to overwrite the record.

5. Report any legal violations, cyber bullying, copyright and trademark violations, child pornography, spam and misuse of another's identity immediately and Google and other sites. They are obligated by law to remove it and will normally remove these types of items quickly.

For any questions, concerns, or comments regarding personnel privacy issues or social media security:

POC: Ms. Stephanie Clearwater, HQMC C4 Cybersecurity – Privacy:
C4_CY_Privacy@usmc.mil

POC: Ms. Darcy Hotchkiss, HQMC C4 Cybersecurity – Social media Security:
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