



# Public Records Resources Online

How to Find Everything There Is to Know About "Mr./Ms. X"

*\*Please see disclaimer at end of document\**

## Summary of public records on Mr. / Ms. X . . .

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Starting with one or more Background Reports from the sources below can help provide an overview of where the person has lived and worked, as well as other pertinent information for searching, such as middle name or initial. They might also contain adverse filings and licensing information that you can later verify in other sources. Examples of vendors that provide background reports (for a fee):

- [Westlaw/CLEAR \(Thomson Reuters\)](#) \$
- [Lexis/Accurint](#) \$
- [TLO](#) \$

## His/her social security number is . . .

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These tools can help verify if an SSN is valid and related to a living person.

- [SSN Validator](#)
- [Selective Service Online Verification](#)

## He/she was born / died / naturalized . . .

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In addition to the Summary Reports in the first section of this guide, official death records may be found in resources on the federal, state, and local levels. The Genealogy Resources section of this guide might have other helpful resources for death records.

### Social Security Death Records

The official federal record is the Social Security Death Index (SSDI). Only the subscription databases, such as **Lexis**, **Westlaw**, and **TLO** (all \$) will have the most recent SSDI records, due to privacy restrictions. Try variations of spellings, or using only the last name and birth or death year and location if you're not finding an SSDI record.

- [Ancestry Library](#) \$
- [Genealogy Bank](#)
- [SSDI Research Guide](#)
- [SSDI Databases Online](#)

### State and Local Death, Burial, and Cemetery Records

State and local death records will often provide more detailed information than an SSDI record, but they are not as easy to find. One good place to start is [Death Indexes Online](#), which provides links to official records, genealogy records, and obituaries on the state and local level. [Find a Grave](#) is another good source for death information. For that site, click on "Search grave records" under "Find Graves" on the right, rather than the famous grave search on the left. **Lexis** and **Westlaw** (\$) have death records for selected states only.

- [Death Indexes Online](#)
- [Ancestry Library](#) \$
- [Find a Grave](#)

- [Billion Graves](#)

## Obituaries

While not official death records, obituaries and death notices can also be informative. The sites below are just a few examples of where to find them, some focusing on obituaries of prominent people. Web searching and news searching (specifically searching the local newspaper if you know where the person died) are also good strategies. In addition to the resources below, **Westlaw** and **Lexis** (\$) have separate obituary files.

- [Ancestry Library](#) \$
- [America's Obituaries & Death Notices \(Newsbank\)](#) \$
- [Obituary Links Page](#)
- [Obits Archive](#)
- [Legacy.com](#)
- [Family Search](#)
- [Obituaries 101](#)
- [Obituary Daily Times](#)

## Naturalization / Immigration Records

These resources can help you find existing records and explain what records might be available and where.

- [Ancestry Library](#) \$
- [National Archives - Naturalization Records](#)
- [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services - Researching Individuals](#)
- [RootsWeb Guide to Naturalization Records](#)

## Vital Records Services

Not every death record (or even most) will be online. The sites below have contact information for offices from which you can request records. The sites might also provide a fee-based retrieval service.

- [VitalChek](#) (some \$)
- [VitalRec](#) (some \$)

## He/she was married or divorced . . .

**Lexis** Public Records includes a file on Marriage & Divorce Records. In both **Lexis** and **Westlaw**, a docket search may reveal divorce records, as well as Adverse Filings on **Westlaw**. Those two databases are your best bet for the most recent records. Ancestry, GenWed, and others will include records that are more historic. When there is no online coverage for your jurisdiction, VitalChek and VitalRec can help you figure out how to order the original records. The Genealogy Resources Section and the News Section of this guide might have other helpful resources for marriage and divorce records.

- [Ancestry Library](#) \$
- [GenWed](#)
- [Western States](#)
- [RootsWeb Marriage Records](#)
- [RootsWeb Divorce Records](#)
- [Cyndi's List - Marriages & Divorce](#)
- [VitalChek](#) (some \$)
- [VitalRec](#) (some \$)

## He/she lives / lived . . .

These are additional sources to find people globally and obtain more information on telephone numbers and locations.

## People Locators

In addition to these websites, also consider checking Social Media profiles.

- [International White and Yellow Pages](#)
- [Infobel](#)
- [Addresses.com](#)
- [MelissaData](#)

## Phone Number Analyzers

These tools can provide location and carrier information, helpful if a subpoena is needed. The law enforcement sources are maintained by phone companies and should consider number portability, saving you time by not serving the wrong carrier. Accurint, CLEAR, and TLO (ask your librarian), may also have carrier information.

- [NumberingPlans.com](#)
- [Twilio](#)
- [Fone Finder](#)
- [Area Codes Locator](#)
- [NPAC Database \(Law Enforcement only\)](#)
- [Somos \(800 numbers. Law enforcement only\)](#)

## Address/Geographic Resources

These tools can be used to verify validity and correctness of addresses. The Geographic Names information System (GNIS) includes geographic names for all known places, features, and areas in the United States that are identified by a proper name. Each feature is located by state, county, and geographic coordinates. Identifying the county for a place that you are researching is a key piece of information as public records are often recorded at the county level.

- [Mail Drops Database](#)
- [USPS Zip Code Lookup](#)
- [Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#)
- [Google Maps](#)
- [Guide to Postal Addresses \(US and Foreign\)](#)

## He/she is/was in the military . . .

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The databases in the Military Records section below tend to have records 60 years and older (with the exception of death records, which are more recent). The Personnel and Record Locator resources could help you find more recent military records, but they will likely not be online.

## Military Records Online

- [Ancestry Library \\$](#)
- [Fold3 \\$](#)
- [Online Veterans and Military Documents - NARA](#)
- [NARA Access to Archival Databases - Military Personnel](#)
- [Online Military Indexes and Records: A Genealogy Guide](#)
- [World War 2 U.S. Army Enlistment Archive](#)
- [Cyndi's List - U.S. Military Resources](#)

## Military Personnel and Record Locators/Resources

- [Military.com Buddy Finder](#) - Free registration required.
- [VetFriends.com](#) - Free registration required

- [Locating Service Members or Getting a Mailing Address](#) - Department of Defense FAQ
- [Military Personnel Locators](#)
- [Military Personnel Records](#) - NARA
- [Active Duty Status Record Request Information](#)
- [American Red Cross Emergency Communication Services](#)
- [Court Order Requirements for Military Records](#)
- [Electronic-CFR](#) - Service of Process requirements are at: 2 CFR 516 and 32 CFR 720

## He/she owns or is licensed to drive . . .

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### Asset Searching - General

In addition to the sites below, vendors such as **Lexis**, **Westlaw**, and **TLO** (all \$) provide records on assets.

- [Public Records Search Directory](#) - Choose state and then use the drop-down menu at top left to choose county.
- [Search Systems](#) - Choose state and county for local records. Also has foreign public records sources.
- [ISO ClaimSearch](#) - Database of insurance claims. Law enforcement or industry use only. LE needs to provide ORI for access.

### Real Property, Appraisals, and Land Records

- [NETR Real Property Records Online](#)
- [Vision Government Solutions](#) - Parts of New England and VA only.
- [Courthouse Direct Real Property Documents](#) \$
- [Redfin](#)
- [Zillow](#)
- [Trulia](#)
- [TerraFly Property & Neighborhood Information](#)
- [BLM Land Records](#)

### Vehicles and Aircraft

- [50 State DMV Links](#)
- [National Insurance Crime Bureau VINCheck](#)
- [National Motor Vehicle Title Information System](#)
- [FAA Databases](#)
- [Landings.com Aircraft Ownership Records](#)
- [Airline Reporting Corporation](#)

### BIN and Bank Routing Number Searches

- [BIN Database](#)
- [Exact BIN Database](#)
- [USSS eLibrary](#) (must register)
- [Federal Reserve E-Payments Routing Directory](#)
- [GT Bank Routing Numbers](#)
- [RoutingNumbers.org](#)
- [RoutingBank.com](#)
- [Other Bank Account Resources](#)

## He/she is a licensed . . .

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Resources below include links for verifying licenses as well as discovering what licensing requirements are for a profession. In addition to the sites below, vendors such as **Lexis**, **Westlaw**, and **TLO** (all \$) provide licensure records.

- [Professional License Verifier from BRB Publications](#)
- [Links to Regulatory Boards and Colleges](#)
- [Licensing Requirements by State, Occupation, or Agency](#)
- [DocInfo - Active physicians only](#)
- [Attorney Information Links from LegalDockets.com](#)
- [Disciplined Attorneys Search](#)
- [Researching Attorney Discipline](#)
- [National Lawyer Regulatory Data Bank \\$](#)
- [Foreign Registered Agents Search](#)

## His/her employment/corporate affiliations. . .

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Search by person's name to find corporate or organizational affiliation. **Lexis**, **Westlaw**, **Bloomberg Law**, and **TLO** (all \$) can also help tie people to companies through various databases.

- [ZoomInfo.com People Directory \(Browse only\)](#) - To search ZoomInfo data, go to Google and put in the name you are seeking followed by site:zoominfo.com.
- [LinkedIn](#) - **Use caution!** Subject will get notifications about profile views. Searching site:linkedin.com on Google will provide some information as will Web Analytics on **Westlaw**. See [Social Media section](#) for more information.
- [Open Corporates](#)
- [Federal Salaries Database](#) - Limited state information also available.
- [FedsDataCenter](#)
- [FederalPay.org](#)

## Information on his/her companies or charities . . .

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Sources needed to research organizations will vary, depending on the type. Companies must file for incorporation in the states in which they do business. The first link below will help you find those records. Of course, vendors such as **Lexis**, **Westlaw**, **Bloomberg Law**, **D&B**, and **TLO** (all \$) may provide more detailed information as well as proprietary records that have more information than public records.

- [Secretaries of State - Find Corporation Information and Online Searchable Databases](#)

### Public Companies

Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) filings can be a wealth of information. To pinpoint specific language, use Lexis or Westlaw for full-text search functionality. To learn more about SEC forms and content, see [SEC Forms table and description](#).

- [Securities and Exchange Commission Filings \(SEC EDGAR\)](#)
- [Thomson Financial Guide to SEC Filings](#)
- [SEC Forms table and description](#)
- [SECInfo](#)
- [SEC Enforcement Documents Search](#)
- [CORI Contracts Database](#) - Contains SEC filings as well as private contracts. University of Missouri sponsored.

### Contracting and Procurement

- [System of Award Management \(SAM\) - Federal](#)

- Federal Procurement Data System - .gov registration required
- Past Performance Information Retrieval System - .gov registration required
- Government Contracts Won (DOD only)
- POGO Federal Contractor Misconduct Database
- USASpending.gov
- HHS OIG Excluded Individuals / Entities
- National Association of State Procurement Officials

## Foreign and international

- US Customs Rulings Database
- Kompass
- OpenCorporates
- OFAC Sanctions List Search
- Defense Trade Controls List of Statutorily Debarred Parties
- Corporate Prosecution Registry - US and additional countries covered.
- International Trade Commission Filings - Free registration required.

## Searches by Industry

- FCC Telecommunications Company Database
- Other FCC Search Tools
- ThomasNet (Manufacturing Companies)
- Insurance Company Search
- Patent & Trademarks
- Commodity Futures Background Affiliation Status (NFA)
- CFTC Case Status Reports
- FINRA BrokerCheck
- FDIC Failed Bank List
- Pension and Benefits Data - Free registration required.

## Non-Profits

- Foundation Center 990 Finder
- Nonprofit Explorer
- IRS Exempt Organizations Check
- Guidestar Charity Search
- NCCS Data Archive
- America's Charities
- Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance
- Charity Navigator
- Grant Space Knowledge Base - Further 990 forms information.

## Other Background and Government Sources

- Offshore Leaks Database
- How to Use the Offshore Leaks Database
- Federal Trade Commission search
- National Labor Relations Board search
- EPA Enforcement Case Search
- Global Unique Device Identification Database (National Library of Medicine)
- US Food & Drug Administration Databases
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Complaint Database

- [Violation Tracker from Goodjobsfirst.org](#)
- [EWG's Farm Subsidy Database](#)

## His/her court records and filings . . .

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In addition to the sites below, vendors such as **Lexis**, **Westlaw**, and **Bloomberg Law** (all \$) provide extensive legal proceedings databases.

- [DOJ Libraries Guide to Court Resources](#)
- [Court Reference – Court Records Directory](#)
- [PACER \\$](#)
- [Justia](#)
- [BOP Inmate Locator](#)
- [National Sex Offender Registry](#)
- [USA.gov - Prisons and Prisoners](#)
- [Inmate Locators on the Web](#)
- [Criminal Record Sources](#)
- [VINELink](#)
- [Black Book Online](#)
- [Article - The Truth About a Nationwide Criminal Record Search](#)
- [Public Records Search Directory](#)
- [States' Public Notice Websites](#)

## His/her Website or Email address . . .

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Finding out who or what organization owns a website can be a way to locate a person, address, or phone number not available any other way. Some of these tools could help with digital evidence for investigations.

- [FaganFinder URLInfo](#)
- [CentralOps.net](#)
- [ARIN WHOIS Database Search](#)
- [DomainTools.com](#)
- [Domain History - Includes archived Whols data](#)
- [IP Address Guide](#)
- [Network Solutions Company Website Lookup](#)
- [DNS Stuff - Domain Name Server Info](#)
- [Network-Tools.com](#)
- [Geektools.com](#)
- [Unshorten It – To check shortened URLs](#)
- [Wayback Machine - Cached Web pages](#)

Use [Google](#) to search: "email \* @companydomain.com" or "email \*\* companydomain.com" to find someone's e-mail address (try e-mail also) | [How to Find Anyone's Email Address in 60 Seconds or Less](#)

## He/she went to college . . .

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### Academic Credentials

Academic credentials are not easily verifiable for free, but the sites below could help verify the existence and/or stature of the degree(s). The National Student Clearinghouse, included below, can also verify for a fee.

- [Database of Postsecondary Institutions and Programs - U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [CHEA Database of Institutions Accredited By Recognized U.S. Accrediting Organizations](#)

- [Diploma Mills and Accreditation - U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [National Student Clearinghouse](#) \$

## Dissertations and Theses

Might help verify a Ph.D. or Master's degree.

- [OCLC WorldCat](#)
- [Proquest Dissertations](#) \$
- [NDLT Dissertations](#)
- [CRL Foreign Doctoral Dissertations Database](#)

## Information about him/her in the News . . .

In addition to the sites below, vendors such as **Lexis**, **Westlaw**, and **Bloomberg Law** (all \$) provide news databases.

- [Newsbank](#) \$
- [Newspaper Archives](#) \$
- [Newspapers.com](#) \$
- [Google News](#)
- [Google News Archive](#) – To access the more recent archived news, do a [Web search](#), then click on the **News** tab, then click on Tools, then Any time, then Archives (if it appears), or put in a Custom Range, but it does not always work.
- [More Archived Google News Content](#)
- [OpenSource.gov - 1996 to present](#) - English translations of foreign media. .gov registration required.
- [Foreign Broadcast Information Service \(FBIS\) Daily Reports](#) - English translations of foreign media, 1974-1996 \$
- [Courthouse News Service](#)
- [ABYZ News Links](#)

## His/her voter registration & campaign contributions . . .

In addition to the sites below, vendors such as **Lexis** and **Westlaw** (\$) provide voter registration and donor records.

- [State Voter Registration Verification websites](#)
- [Federal Election Commission Databases](#)
- [OpenSecrets.org](#)
- [FollowtheMoney.org](#)
- [Project Vote Smart](#)
- [Campaign Finance Information Center](#)
- [IRS Political Organization Filing & Disclosure](#)
- [Senate Lobbying Disclosure Act Database](#)
- [House Lobbying Disclosure Database](#)
- [Open Secrets Lobbying Database](#)

## Information about him/her on the Web . . .

Use combinations of the person's name to ensure a thorough search. Make use of Google's "verbatim" feature (under Search Tools) and [proximity searching](#) for more precision. Use site: on Google to get results from facebook.com, and others without having to log into the site.

### Search Engines

- [Google](#)
- [Google Advanced Search](#)
- [Bing](#)

- [DuckDuckGo](#)
- [Wayback Machine - Cached Web pages](#)

### Social Media Sites

- [Facebook](#)



- [Twitter Search](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Google+](#)
- [MySpace](#)
- [Other social networking sites](#)

- [Relationship Science](#)
- [PeekYou](#)
- [Pipl](#)
- [Prabook](#)

## Discussion Groups & Blogs

- [Google Groups](#)
- [Omgili Discussions Search](#)
- [Boardreader](#)
- [Blog Search Engine](#)

## Video

- [Google Video Search](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [Bing Video Search](#)
- [C-SPAN Video Library](#)
- [TV News Archive - Archive.org \(2009-present\)](#)

## Web Profiles

- [ZoomInfo](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

## Social Media Searching

- **Westlaw, Lexis, and TLO (\$)** all have social media searches.
- [Google Social Search on Social Searcher](#)
- [Storyful Multisearch Chrome Browser Extension](#)
- [Searching Facebook](#)
- [Explanation of Facebook Graph Search](#)
- [Stalkscan](#) - "Public info Facebook doesn't let you see."
- [Google - Use site: search](#)
- [Social Media Information Blog](#)

## Images and Reverse Image Searching

- [Google Images](#)
- [Bing Images](#)
- [Tineye](#)
- [EXIF Data](#)
- [RevIMG](#)
- [Image Raider](#)

## Genealogy Sites

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- [Ancestry Library \\$](#)
- [Archives.com](#)
- [Archives.gov](#)
- [Cyndi's List - Including U.S. Census Records](#)
- [Family Search](#)
- [Family Tree Now](#)
- [Family Tree Searcher](#)
- [FindMyPast.com](#)
- [Fold3 \\$](#)
- [Genealogy.com](#)
- [Genealogy Bank](#)
- [Genealogy Search Engine](#)
- [Heritage Quest \\$](#)
- [MyHeritage.com](#)
- [USGenWeb.org](#)

## Additional Resources

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- [Access to Archival Databases System](#)
- [Asset Search Blog](#)
- [Black Book Online](#)
- [Craig D. Ball](#)
- [Digital Journalist's Legal Guide](#)
- [Einvestigator.com](#)

- [Finding People Resources and Sites on the Internet](#)
- [Global Locate](#)
- [Journalists' Toolbox - Public Records](#)
- [Portico](#)
- [Public Record Research Library](#)
- [Public Records Search Directory](#)
- [Search Systems](#)

*Updated June 18, 2018 Jennifer L. McMahan*

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