

SELF ASSESSMENT

Your Online Presence

One of the easiest ways for people (e.g., potential employers, criminals, etc.) to get information about you is through your online presence. Anyone can research you with just a few clicks of the mouse and a quick Internet search. It is important to know what is publicly available about yourself, and then decide what to do about unwanted information.

Review your social media accounts and available data aggregator websites to determine what, if any, negative or unwanted information is out there about you. Remember, your close contacts (including family members) may have unintentionally exposed information about you. Therefore, it is important to review what others may have posted about you, posts you have been tagged in, or other associations that make you easier to find.

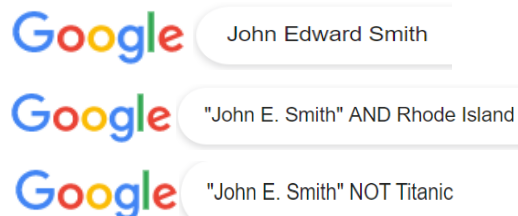
Search Engines

Use various search engines, such as Google, DuckDuckGo, Bing, etc. to search yourself and compare the differences and benefits of each (for a few examples, please see the third page.) Google appears to yield the most accurate results and captures more relevant information for people searches.

Prior to researching, ensure you are not logged-in to any of the search engine sites, such as Google or Yahoo. Be sure to delete your browser history and clear cookies before you begin and again when you have completed all your research.

These next instructions are specific to the Google search engine but can be applied to most other search engines:

Start with basic personal information such as First and Last Name. If you have a common name, you may want to search First, Middle, and Last Name; or your name associated with your address or an associated organization. Searching terms within quotations marks " " will yield results that have the same terms in the same order as the ones inside the quotes. So "John Edward Smith" will not necessarily return the same results as "Edward, John Smith."



Boolean Logic

Boolean logic defines logical relationships between terms in a search. Boolean search operators are "and," "or," and "not." You can use these operators to create very broad or very narrow searches. "And" combines search terms so that each search result contains all of the terms. Also, if your search results continue to include items that are not relevant, use the dash (-) to exclude certain search terms like this: "John Smith" -Pocahontas

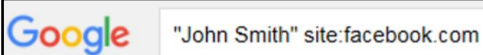
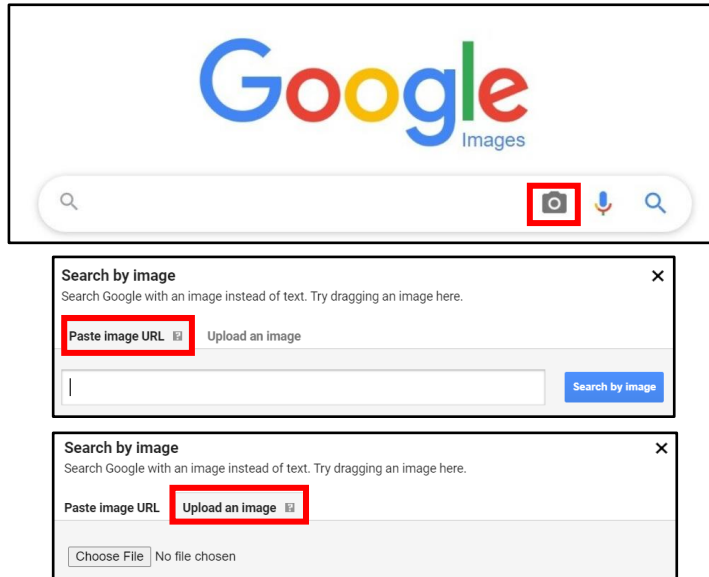
Google supports Boolean logic; however, you can also use Google's search methodology which can be found here: <https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/2466433?hl=en>

Search engine results will give you an idea of the information that can be quickly collected on you. For example, during your self assessment you may have found information about your previous work experience, hobbies (e.g. sports,) or schools (e.g. graduation announcement,) which can be used to conduct follow-on searches or hijack your identity.

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Image Searches

You may want to conduct an image search on any photos you have used as profile pictures on social media accounts or posted to other places online. The reason for this is to ensure that advertisers and/or any other company or individual hasn't taken your picture for their own personal use. To conduct an image search using Google, go to images.google.com, click the camera icon, then select "Upload an Image." Select the image you want to use to start your search.



Social Media Sites

www.facebook.com
www.linkedin.com
www.myspace.com
www.twitter.com
www.tumblr.com
www.classmates.com
www.instagram.com
www.vk.com
www.pinterest.com
www.flickr.com
www.meetup.com
www.youtube.com
www.snapchat.com
www.reddit.com
www.tiktok.com

Social Media Searches

Take an inventory of the social media accounts that you currently maintain. Some examples include, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. First, without being logged-in to any social media accounts, conduct open-source searches on yourself to see what is viewable to the public. Remember, if your social media accounts don't show up during your open-source searches that doesn't mean your account is completely private. It's important to check out the applicable Smartcards to help you lock down your accounts according to your own personal preferences.

Next, login to those accounts and thoroughly review your profile for sensitive information and consider removing unnecessary data: Review your profile to see what data is available to the public (address, employment, phone number, etc.). Check any photos that you have posted or have been tagged in (this can be done through your Activity Log if using Facebook). * See applicable Smartcards to learn how to properly set privacy settings.

If you post something on your social media account, it may show up on search engine search results. Remember to set your privacy settings accordingly to help avoid this.

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Common Search Engines

www.google.com

Google is a search engine that specializes in Internet-related services and products. These include online advertising technologies, search, cloud computing, and software. The majority of its profits are derived from AdWords, an online advertising service that places advertisements near the list of search results.

www.bing.com

Bing is the second largest search engine in the United States. Searches conducted using Bing generally yield similar results to Google. However, Bing's image search capability (<https://www.bing.com/images>) is considered superior by most.

www.duckduckgo.com

DuckDuckGo is a search engine that distinguishes itself from other search engines by not profiling off of its users and by deliberately showing all users the same search results for a given search term. It does not store or compile any of your data, to include searched data or personal information. DuckDuckGo emphasizes getting information from the best sources rather than the most sources, generating its search results from key crowdsourced sites such as Wikipedia, and from partnerships with other search engines like Yandex, Yahoo!, Bing, and Yummly.

<https://searx.thegpm.org>

Searx is a metasearch engine, aggregating the results of other search engines while not storing information about its users.

<https://archive.org>

The Internet Archive is an American digital library with the stated mission of "universal access to all knowledge." It provides free access to collections of digitized materials, including but not limited to: websites, software applications, music, videos, moving images, and millions of public-domain books.

Relatives

Though you may have found most of your information conducting your individual search, it might be a good idea to conduct a light search on friends and family members. Remember, they may have posted information about you that an adversary may be able to access.

Ensure nothing posted in any of the search results implies or outright displays personal information you don't want discovered.

Ask immediate family members (spouse, children, etc.) to review their account settings and postings to ensure they have not inadvertently posted personal information about you or themselves.

Provide family and friends with copies of the Smartcards to help them with locking down their accounts and devices.

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People Finders

You can conduct an initial search on data aggregators (aka people finders) for free, but all these sites require payment to access a full report. These sites require no special authorities; anyone with Internet access and a credit card can purchase reports, so it is a good idea to be familiar with the information that can be discovered through them.

If you find information in any of the reports that you do not want publicly available, contact the organization to opt out and request that your information be removed. (Refer to the Data Aggregator Opt-out and People Search Opt-out Smartcards for specific steps and processes) Once you've opted out of or suppressed any sensitive information you found, consider setting up Google Alerts so that you're notified if the information re-appears.

People Finder/Fee-Required Sites

www.ussearch.com
www.beenverified.com
www.intelius.com
www.radaris.com
www.truthfinder.com
www.findpeoplesearch.com
www.privateeye.com
www.usa-people-search.com
www.spokeo.com
www.locateplus.com
www.peakyou.com
www.thatsthem.com
www.familytree.com
www.instantcheckmate.com
www.publicrecords.com
www.whitepages.com
www.reversegenie.com
www.social-searcher.com
www.infospace.com
www.publicrecordsnow.com
www.findoutthetruth.com
www.truepeoplesearch.com
www.checkpeople.com
www.peoplefinder.com
<https://carsowners.net>
<https://allpeople.com>