

How to Avoid Reverse Phone Lookup Scams

by Noah W - Tuesday, May 03, 2011

<https://www.searchbug.com/info/how-to-avoid-reverse-phone-lookup-scams/>

This is a follow up post to my blog about [Know Your Data Broker](#) where I talked about Tamara Thompson's blog.

I conducted some simple research to show the differences between what's available online regarding the various reverse phone lookup searches and will show three very different examples to include what bad web sites do to trick consumers and what a good web site should do to show they are trustworthy.

As usual, I will also include what SearchBug does and what makes us different (and better) and why SearchBug customers appreciate everything we do.

First test subject was found via a Google Advertisement. This company pays for traffic and has to use tricks to get customers. When I visited [cellphonenumberlookups123 \[dot\] com](#) it looks professional enough but has an annoying gentlemen telling me it's a "premier" service. I'm sorry, he is annoying.

At first glance I want to see the contact us page. I expect to see a phone number, fax number and address for a legitimate company that wants me to enter payment information online. How can I trust a company that won't even provide a mailing address or phone number.

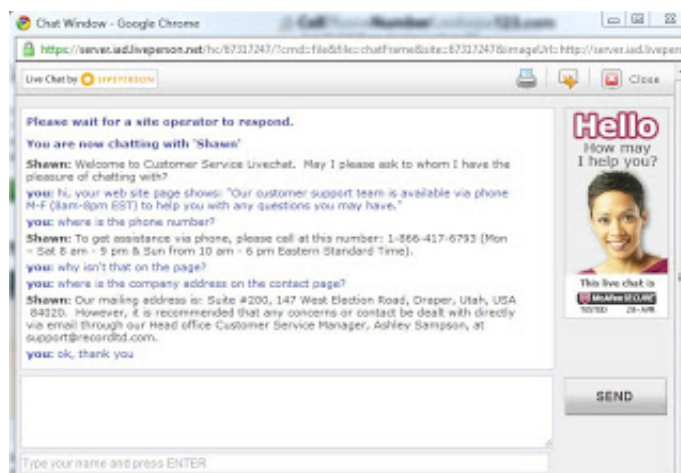
The image below is a screen shot of the contact page I found on their web site. As you can see, no phone number or address anywhere. But they do say, that you can reach them via phone for help, however to get the phone number, I had to engage in a live chat session during business hours.

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During my chat session I asked why the phone or address was not available on the web site. I was not provided with that answer. I was however given a phone number for customer service but was encourage to email them. No way to tell if I was dealing with someone at the company or if it was outsourced to a third party.



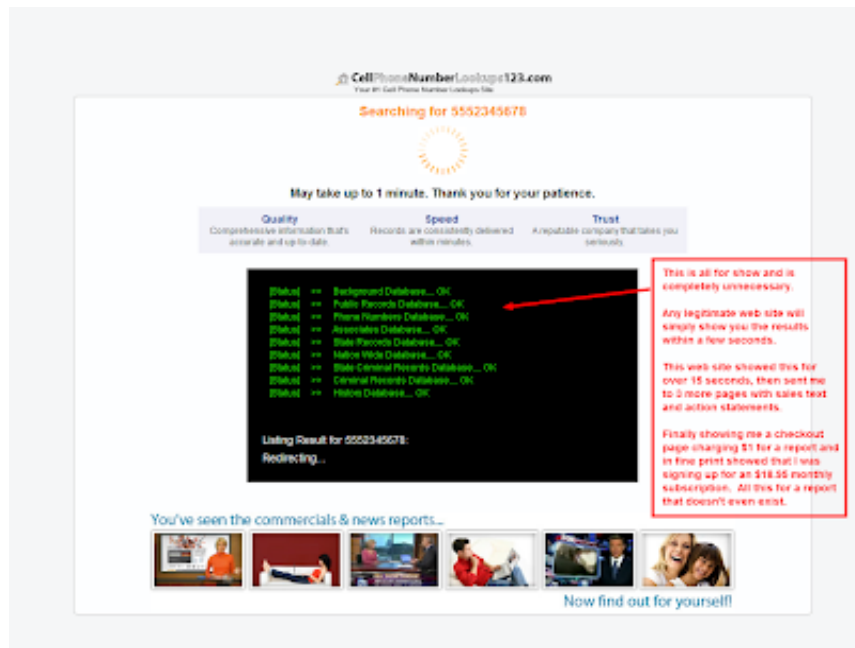
Now on to my test searches. I purposefully used an invalid phone number to see what web sites would tell me. Would they tell me it was invalid or offer any information, or just try to take my money?

Upon entering my fake phone number 555-234-5678 this web site shows a "processing" screen which took almost 20 seconds (a big waste of time for nothing, other than to make customers think they are really trying to find stuff). Remember, this is the age of computers, we can tell if the number is valid or invalid in split seconds. Here is the first of 4 screens I had to endure to get to the end.

Click on any image to enlarge it and read my comments on the screen shots

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After this screen came the next screen in the series.

Here they try and convince me that they found information for the bogus number I entered.

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CellPhoneNumberLookups123.com
Your #1 Cell Phone Number Lookup Site

SEARCH SUCCESSFUL! Results For 5552345678

5552345678
Owner Name: [Click Here](#)
Phone Type:
Location: Dannemora, NY

Address: [Click Here](#)

Line Type:

Phone Carrier:

City: DANDEMORA

State/Province: NY

Country: US

CONTINUE TO NEXT STEP

Based on other web sites we know this is Bologna...

What happens when I clicked on this? It took me to another screen that showed processing for another 20+ seconds

[Perform another search](#)

Home | [FAQ](#) | [Login](#) | [Register](#)
© 2011 Cell Phone Number Lookups

When I click that continue to next step button I get the screen below which tries to convince me they are searching for even more stuff for some reason.

Year #1 Cell Phone Number Lookup Site

"Quickly Find Accurate, Personal Data for People It's Easy!"
Over 1,000 Successful Searches Made Everyday!

CellPhoneNumberLookups.com

Extracting And Compiling Data
Full report includes, when available:

- Complete Full Name
- Complete Age & DOB
- Complete Address
- Complete Relatives
- Complete Avg. Income
- Complete Property Value
- Complete Address History
- Complete Family Records
- Complete Background Check
- Complete Aliases
- Complete Friends
- Complete Bankruptcies

This is the 3rd page shown after entering the phone # I wanted to search for.

Read Carefully...

FULL RESULTS MAY TAKE A FEW MINUTES.

Sample Report:

You've seen the commercials & news reports...

Now comes the third sales page that tries to tell me
I can get the information I want for just \$1.00

Notice this page does not show you the phone # you searched. Nor does it tell you the number you searched was invalid. They send you to yet another page, the checkout page which has all the fine print no one reads. It says that in addition to the \$1 they charge you below you will be signed up for a 7 day trial and if you don't cancel you're charged \$18.95 per month.

Your Report Has Been Downloaded.

**For a Limited Time, We are Offering Your Report for \$1.
Please Continue Within 3 Minutes to Ensure You Get Your Report.**

Why Does it Cost \$1.00

Due to the nature of this valuable and sensitive information, there is a \$1.00 processing fee for one report. Other companies offer you free reports, because they are only using public records. We charge you because we provide real results.

**\$1
Special price
today with
database trial!**

SHOW ME MY REPORT!

Sample Report:



Your #1 Cell Phone Lookup Site

Here comes the checkout page,
the fine print is really scary.

It basically says for your \$1.00
you get a 7 day trial to some type of service
and after 7 days you'll be billed
\$18.95 per month until you cancel.

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The screenshot shows a website for 'CellPhoneNumberLookups123.com'. At the top, it claims to be the '#1 Cell Phone Number Lookup Site' and 'Clearly Find Accurate Personal Data for People It's Easy! Over 1,000 Successful Searches Made Everyday!'. Below this are logos for various media outlets including WIRED, FOX NEWS, abc, and CBS NEWS. A green oval highlights these logos with the text: 'I find it hard to believe the web site was seen on any of these programs. I found no evidence of this at all.' A red box at the top left contains the text: 'Read the fine print closely. They tell you it's a bargain of just \$1.00 today and it's a 7 day trial and if you don't cancel within 7 days you get charged \$18.95 each MONTH until you wish to cancel.' The main content area is titled 'Your Order' and 'Cell Phone Number Lookups Report'. It includes a 'Secure Payment Form' with fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Your Location', 'Zip/Postal Code', 'Email', 'Card Type', and 'Card Number'. A red oval highlights the 'Card Number' field with the text: 'I paid \$1.00 today, due to the nature of this valuable and sensitive information, there is a \$1.00 processing fee. After your 7 day trial, if you do not cancel your membership your credit card will be billed \$18.95 and each month thereafter that you continue your membership. If you wish to cancel please feel free to contact us via live Chat or by calling 888-394-0078.' A 'GET FULL REPORT NOW' button is visible at the bottom of the form. On the right side, there is a 'GUARANTEED RESULTS' section with a photo of people working and a 'SAFE & SECURE' logo at the bottom.

Remember, this is all for a phone number I know is Bogus, and here they still try and tell you they found your information, want you to pay \$1.00 for it and sign you up for an \$18.95 monthly subscription.

That is what I call "wrong". Caveat Emptor - Let the Buyer Beware

Next up - we have Reversephonedirectory [dot] com. These guys appear to be a landing page or reseller for Intelius because when you click thru pages you end up back on Intelius. Here you can clearly see they tell you there are 8 results in some premium database but they don't give you any hint on the names.

Also, if the number is invalid, why don't they tell you that? Seems that they don't reveal that information. They do show you the cities and states, and as far as I know, a phone number can't really be from several different states unless it was a cell phone and the owner moved and kept their number. But they don't tell you if it's a land line or a cell phone either?

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Reverse Phone Directory

Home | Reverse Phone Lookup | People Search | Resources | News

8 Results Found in Premium Database

Sorry, we couldn't locate a match for free on 555-234-5678.

The following information is available in our Partner's Premium Database:

Name	Age	Email	Relatives	Location
✓			✓	Grants Pass, OR
✓	✓		✓	Cincinnati, OH
✓	✓			Phoenix, AZ
✓				Houston, TX
✓				Fletcher, OH
✓			✓	-
✓				Danmora, NY
✓				Johnstown, VA

Buy This Report

I would clearly stay away from this site. No contact information, no about us info?

they tell you it's not available for free. Ok, great, but why?

no warning about the area code being fictitious or that it's possibly or likely an invalid number.

They just want you to blindly purchase the report.

They don't even disclose price or show you any part of the name or explain why a phone number would have different cities or states associated.

About | FAQ | Site Map

© 2003-2011 Reverse Phone Directory

Now we have Intelius and USSearch. Since Intelius now owns and operates USSearch, I would expect similar results from a company their size. The interesting thing here is that these guys have more computer engineers than any of the other people search web sites in the USA. Why they only tell you the number is invalid and nothing else amazes me.

INTELIUS
Live in the know.™

Sign In | Register

People Search | Background Check | Public Records | Reverse Lookup

Reverse Phone Lookup | Reverse Cell Phone Directory | Reverse Address Lookup | Reverse Email Lookup | Reverse Social Net Lookup

Find Their Info Now for Any Number! Cell, Landline or Unpublished

Reverse Phone Lookup

Phone Number
(555) 234 - 5678 Search

This appears to be an invalid phone number. Please correct the field marked in red.

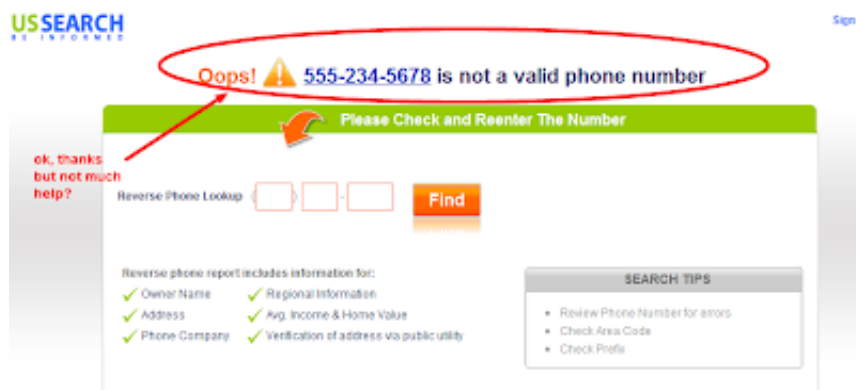
Other helpful searches:
Find Someone's Phone and Address
Search People by Name
Search People by Address

Other than telling us the number is invalid not much help here.

What is a Reverse Phone Lookup?
Know who is calling you or your family! The report includes name, phone owner details, and more for any cell phone, unlisted, non-published, or other phone numbers.

At least USSearch shows it big enough to see. Intelius is whispering the information like

it's a secret or something.



There are hundreds of other examples of similar web sites. The important thing to keep in mind is to make sure the web site is reputable, has their address and phone number clearly displayed on the web site and provides enough information for you to make an informed decision if you want to do business with them or not.

You know I saved the best for last. Here is the same number entered into the SearchBug system. Note that we tell you the number is Likely to be Invalid in big letters. We also tell you the reason (because 555 is a fictitious area code). We also tell you the line type, carrier and calling area are unknown (likely because the area code is fictitious).

So why would there be any names or addresses found in public records for a bogus phone number? Well, these are public records and as such get input from many resources. Even though the number is invalid, people evidently used the number on documents that end up in public domain and databases that are made available to the public and data brokers.

Keep in mind that because the phone number is fictitious the names and addresses could also be fictitious, however it's impossible to check the information until the full records are purchased.

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SearchBug
The Best People Search

Home | People Finder | Company Finder | Research Tools | Unlinked Accounts | List Clean Up

Search People | Investigate | Property & Vehicles | Skip Tracing | Verify SSN & ID | Name Directory | Feedback

Find People by Phone - Results

Whois | Public Records | Current Owner | Investigator Services

Search = Results for (555) 234-5678

Success - Results Found (Number Is Likely Invalid)

NXX in 919Area Code
Frequently used in phone numbers for movies, television, etc. 1-XXX-555-1212 will connect to directory assistance for the specified XXX area code.

A legitimate web site tells you the number is likely invalid and tells you the area code is 919Area.

They also show you that the type, carrier and calling area are unknown.

So why are results available for \$1.97? These are public records. Even though the number is invalid people evidently used the number on public documents which made their way into databases that data brokers access. The names and addresses could also be fictitious but it's impossible to know before purchase.

Public Records Results for (555) 234-5678 - Preview

Name	Address
1. Hollong (Full name available)	Full Address Available Madison, WI
2. Digons (Full name available)	Full Address Available Austin, TX
3. Ju (Full name available)	Full Address Available Grants Pass, OR
4. Hogon (Full name available)	Full Address Available Dannemora, NY
5. Hogon (Full name available)	Full Address Available Dannemora, NY
6. Kayla (Full name available)	Full Address Available Arctic Circle, AZ
7. Larsonya (Full name available)	Full Address Available Dallas, TX

View Results \$1.97 gets you detailed info for all records. [Sample Report](#)

FREE Phone Details for (555) 234-5678

Phone Type	Carrier	Local Calling Area
Unknown	Unknown**	Unknown

**Number provided is not confirmed. For actual carrier, phone type and calling area info.

SearchBug tries to manage customer expectations, providing as much information as possible to let their customers make informed decisions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Noah Wieder is CEO of SearchBug, Inc. and the founder of [Best People Search](#). SearchBug.com offers a [Free People Finder](#) and Company Search as well as Data Scrubbing Services. Bestpeoplesearch.com is a private investigator portal and Information Retrieval Services web site where investigators offer searches to businesses and individuals with specific search needs.

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