How to Find Someone: Tips, Tricks, and Tools for Finding Contact and Location Information

by Amber Iven - Tuesday, July 14, 2020

https://www.searchbug.com/info/how-to-find-someone/

There are many reasons why you might need to locate an individual or business. We don't need to know the reasons, we just want to show you how to find someone.

"Find" can mean a few things. Are you looking for someone's physical location? A mailing address? Phone number? Email? Here we cover ways to gather contact and location information.

There are both free and paid options, it just depends on how much work you're willing to do to find the information you need.

How to Find Contact Information Using Just a Name

Phone Book

Do you remember the days of landlines and phone books? That was how we used to find addresses and phone numbers for businesses and individuals using just a name---sometimes just a last name, depending on the name and the size of your area.

The downfall of a phone book is that you were limited to the listings in your area. What if you needed the number for someone out of state? Or what if the information changed within the year the phone book was issued? Dial 0 for operator!

Directory Assistance

Dialing 0 for an operator used to be a good way to get the phone number of your local radio station or relative (00 for national non-local numbers, 01 for international). You can still dial 0 for general information. For example, dialing 0 gives instructions to dial 911 for an emergency, 411 for directory assistance, 611 for customer service, and 011 + country code + phone number for placing an international call.

There is a fee for using 411 directory assistance. You can make up to three requests for around a buck or two. There is a free option: 1-800-FREE-411 (1-800-373-3411). After a brief ad, you can request information for business, government, or residential. In addition to the name, however, you will also need to provide the city and state of the contact you're trying to reach, and the directory does not provide wireless numbers.

The paid 411 provides the following request options:

- local and national phone number directory assistance
- yellow pages category search where you can search by name or business type (plumber, florist, church, etc.) - information can include addresses, phone numbers, and hours of operation (you can even get lists of movie showings for local theaters!)
- International directory assistance as per the North American Numbering Plan (NANP) which provides numbers for the US, Canada, and Puerto Rico
- and reverse directory search where you can search names and addresses for up to three phone numbers

You can also dial 1-area code-555-1212 for long-distance directory listings. However, you do need the area code for this service. If you need a toll-free number for a company, you can dial 1-800-555-1212 to call AT&T's Directory Assistance Bureau to obtain the toll-free service number. And of course there are always online directories you can use to find information by searching a name.

Google or Other Search Engine

Phone directories might seem a little old fashioned since the rise of the Internet, but they can be useful in situations where your phone is lost, stolen, damaged, or dead and you need to locate help using someone else's phone without access to your own contacts.

But if you'd rather not call an operator or you aren't in an emergency situation, you can use an Internet search to find information associated with a person's name. Here are some pros and cons:

Pros

- You can often locate more than just contact information such as social media profiles, criminal records, relatives, etc.
- You can quickly match demographic information to narrow down the search; there might be many results for John Smith, but only one or two who are in their 30s, for example
- You don't necessarily need to know the city and state of the contact you are trying to search, but it can help narrow down the results

Cons

- Social media profile results might provide usernames or email addresses, but rarely will you be able to find a phone number or address solely through social media
- Reports like BeenVerified and Whitepages require subscriptions and charge fees to access the information they find for a search
- You might need to know the city and state or another piece of identifying information to locate someone with a common or historical name; an Internet search results in the most frequently searched keywords, so depending on the name of the person you're trying to locate, it might require some digging

Google also offers reverse image search. If you have a photo of someone you'd like to identify, you can upload the image to Google and see what information comes up. Go to images.google.com and upload the photo you want to search. This can be done from a computer or personal device.

The Internet is a great resource when it comes to finding information. And there are tons of different resources available. But when you need to contact a business or a specific employee or representative, that information isn't always so readily available. Next, we cover how to find someone within a business.

How to Find Contact Information for a Company

If you Google search a company, the number that results is not always a direct number. It might be a customer service number or worse, an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) number that may or may not get you to a person. Even if you do reach a human representative, it's very unlikely they will be able to connect you with a specific person within the business.

Personal and business contact information is not always readily available through a basic search for safety and privacy reasons. However, we can show you how to get a direct number for a business and at least an email address for a specific person you might be trying to reach within the company.

Google Maps

First, you can enter the company name and location into [Google Maps](https://www.searchbug.com/info). The size of the company determines how specific you might need to be in your location parameters.

Once the location is identified, you can also view the street address and phone number associated with that physical location. This number can get you directly in contact with a representative at that location bypassing any call center or automated customer service line.

Then, you can check social media to find people who work at that location, so that when you call, you can ask for that specific person.

Social Media

You can often find company contact information for individuals through social media platforms like Facebook and especially LinkedIn. This might be a good place to start as well if you don't know the name of the person who holds the position within the company you're trying to reach.

Search the business or individual's name. If there is no phone number listed, try Google Maps. If there is no email address listed, it's actually pretty easy to guess what a good email address is. Company email addresses typically follow the same pattern. For example, firstname.lastname@company.com or firstinitiallastname@company.com.

If you can identify the pattern, you can fill in the blanks with your contact's name. Usually the domain will be the company name, but there are ways to find this out for sure.

Identify Email Patterns

First and foremost, if you've been in email communication with anyone else from the company of the

person you're trying to reach, you can pull up their email and use that as a template or basis for finding the email pattern. Then, just fill in the blanks with your contact's name.

You can also use your applicant tracking system (ATS) to scour their database for any email addresses that share a domain with the company you're searching.

Plugins

Hunter.io is a helpful tool for finding email addresses for contacts within a business. You can search the domain to find email addresses that use it. If you're unsure of the domain, you can install the Hunter.io plugin and navigate to the company's website. Once there, activate the plugin and it will provide you with email addresses associated with that website.

Results often include the job title of the owner of the email address. This is helpful if you're looking for contact information for a specific position or department without a particular name in mind.

If you don't see the specific contact you're looking for, you can at least find the domain or pattern and fill in the rest. Unfortunately, this information is still not always available. If Hunter.io does not generate results for you, here are some other options.

Search for Media Contacts or Press Releases

Most corporations have investor relations or media relations persons on staff. If you can find their email address tied to the company you're searching, you can use that email pattern. Here's what to do:

Open your web browser and search ("media contact" OR "media contacts" OR "press release") company name. From the results, select any press releases or media reports that come up. Then, look for contact info. You might not be searching for this particular individual, but it can help give you the email pattern to use for the person you are trying to contact.

Use a Boolean Search

You can also find email patterns using a Boolean search. Again, using your web browser, search "email * * company.com". You don't necessarily need to select any of the results, but scroll down the list of results and try to identify patterns in the email addresses to use to search for the specific person you are trying to contact.

Depending on the size of the company, you might consider narrowing down the search by adding a country, city, or county to the search criteria. But here's the thing: although these are effective ways to guess (for lack of a better word) someone's email address, you might want to make sure your guess is valid before you send a message.

Verifying Email Addresses

When identifying email patterns, you are still, at the end of the day, just guessing. Therefore, it's a good idea to take your "guesses" and verify them before adding them to your contact list or database.

Searchbug offers an email verification tool. All you have to do is input the email address you'd like to verify. Results include whether or not the email address is valid, invalid, or unknown. If the address is unknown, that usually means that the domain is accurate, but the prefix cannot be identified.

This tool can also provide the name associated with an address if you have the address but not the contact's name. Some searches result in the gender and/or location of the contact associated with the address. If you have a bunch of addresses to verify, you can also use the bulk email verifier to save time and money.

How to Find Someone's Address Once They've Moved

An obvious concern when using any of the methods above is whether or not the information is up-to-date. If you have what you suspect is an outdated mailing address for a contact, you can use the good, old-fashioned US Postal Service to get the current address.

The US Postal Service will provide the new address of someone who has filed a PS Form 3575, or change of address order. You will, however, need to complete and sign a "Request for Change of Address or Boxholder Information Needed for Service of Legal Process" form. You can access this form from your local post office or US Postal Service website.

Here's another way: send a letter to the address you have. Under the return address, write, "Return Service Requested. Do Not Forward." If the person you're trying to locate has filed an address change with the post office, you will get the letter back with the new address.

There is of course an obvious drawback: it could take weeks to get your letter back or form submitted! Here's a quicker solution:

Searchbug's people search tool allows you to get the most up-to-date contact information for an individual---in seconds! The standard people search results include last known contact information such as address, phone number, and email address if available.

You can access full name and known aliases, current address, and 3-year address history with reported dates, all known phone numbers with line type (wireless or landline), date of birth, and relatives with their date of birth using the premium search.

You can search by phone number only, email only, address only, or name and some part of the address (full address, city or state). There is no subscription necessary, and you only pay if information is found.

How to Find Someone Using a Phone Number

By now it probably seems pretty easy to find someone using even the slightest bit of information you have. But what if you don't even have a name? This frequently happens when you miss a phone call from an unknown number or see a charge or listing on your account from a number you don't recognize. Or, maybe, you need a current phone number for an old contact.

Don't worry. There are tools for that, too. For unknown numbers, you might be able to simply type the number into your search engine. For large, well-known, listed companies, the search will result in a company name. You can also use a search engine to search personal numbers, but these results aren't always up-to-date or accurate.

The best way to find out who owns a phone number is to use a reverse phone lookup tool. You can use this to either find out who currently owns a number that you have or to find the current number for an outdated number. You can also use a phone number to find someone's physical location.

How to Find Someone's Physical Location

If you need or want to find the current physical location of a friend or contact via text message, you simply need to send them a link. It could be an article or funny photo or video. First, take that link and paste it into IP Logger. Then, copy that new link and send it to your contact.

When the contact opens that link (activating the read receipts setting on your phone can help notify you when this happens), their location pings and you can track it. Return to IP Logger and select the first tab to track the location where that link was opened or viewed. Voila. You now know where your contact is.

Conclusion

If the person you're trying to find has a phone number, physical or mailing address, or email address, it's listed or registered somewhere. That means you can probably find it.

It's much easier to stay in touch these days than it was thirty years ago, yet landlines and snail mail still exist and are still viable options for contacting someone. However, if you're in a hurry or if you have a lot of contacts to find, try some of the tricks in this article!

—————————————————————————————

Searchbug.com