

Is People Search Enough, or Do You Need a Professional Background Check?

by Amber Iven - Monday, July 20, 2020

<https://www.searchbug.com/info/professional-background-check/>

Thanks to the Internet, there are many sources of personal information available on demand. A people search and professional background check are great ways to find out personal details on anyone.

Anytime you provide register your information, whether online, at school, at work, on social media, a financial institution, apply for a credit card, auto loan, home loan, register to vote, etc., that information is stored in some database somewhere.

This information is then shared by the various entities you provided them to (unless you take the time to complete that privacy statement or opt-out) and becomes available to data aggregators and data providers to use for marketing and other purposes. If someone has it and you need it, you can probably get it pretty easily unless the person you're trying to locate is off the grid on purpose.

If you happen to need to contact an old friend or a specific representative with a company you'd like to do business with, you can usually locate their contact information and make sure your message reaches its destination.

However, if you need a more in-depth report to help determine if someone is being truthful with you, or you want to dig deeper based on a hunch or suspicion, a background check can provide you with much more useful information. Especially when it comes to protecting your safety when associating with a particular individual.

Background checks can be very useful when evaluating the people behind a business deal, knowing more about a neighbor, or even a potential professional you might hire. In this article, we discuss the benefits of a people search and professional background check and when you might need one over the other.

What are People Search Engines?

People search engines aggregate data from public records into one database anyone can use to search for information on another person. They are great for locating contact information for someone you want to reach out to by letter, phone call, or email.

People search engines are fairly easy to use, and some information can be accessed for free. All you need is a name, number, address, and in some cases the city, state, or county to narrow down the search depending on the number of results.

Searchbug's [people search](#) finds names, aliases, phone numbers, line types (wireless or landline), last known addresses, 3-year address history and dates, date of birth, as well as relatives and their dates of

birth. There are also [tricks](#) you can use to find the information yourself without a people search tool, depending on the information you need. Below are some examples of how people search can help you.

When to Use People Search

There are a number of reasons why you might need to find someone. Personal examples include locating old friends and classmates; locating long lost relatives; appending and updating contact lists with current phone numbers and addresses; and gathering and verifying background information on neighbors, new friends, potential relationships, and prospective employees.

People searches also work well for business and professional reasons. You can build your social circle and professional network by finding professionals you might want to connect with. You can also use people searches to find contact information for individuals or businesses you might want to reach out to for potential leads or partnerships.

What People Search Lacks

Unfortunately, there are some drawbacks to people searches. The information generated from your search comes from public records such as phone books, vital records, real estate records, subscriptions, voter registration, and proprietary sources. For this reason, a people search cannot guarantee 100% accuracy.

Gaps in results occur, then, if information is not publicly available. For you to be able to gather the information, it first has to be registered somewhere. Some people don't get out much and others take precautions regarding where they volunteer their personal contact information.

There are also ways for people to opt out of having their personal records displayed on some people finder websites. In some cases, they can fill out a form and [have information removed](#).

Searching a common name can make people search challenging as well. In these instances, you might need to employ extra research tactics or provide additional information to narrow down the results.

Finally, you cannot use people search services to make official decisions for legal choices such as commercial employment, personal credit, or scholarships. This is where a professional background check comes in handy.

Benefits of a Professional Background Check

People searches are great when you just need a little contact information or to verify someone using small details. Background checks are more in-depth and more official. Use a background check to get the full picture of someone's past.

Searchbug's [advanced background check](#) reports data from multiple data APIs from top tier data management firms. Therefore, the information is legitimate and up-to-date. Examples of information generated by Searchbug's professional background check include

- Names and aliases
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Current and previous address history
- Phone numbers
- Email addresses
- Marital status
- SSN status
- Occupation type
- Vehicles
- Property details
- Relatives
- Neighbors
- Public, civil, and criminal records with matching social profiles and associated web links
- Criminal background check report with case details and dates, charge, probation, conviction, and sentence information if applicable
- Reported bankruptcies, foreclosures, tax liens (city, county, state, and federal), tax warrants, civil and federal judgements, notice of default, small claims, and suit filed
- Social profiles from Facebook and LinkedIn and relevant web links.

These results are pulled not only from public records but also from city, county, state, and federal criminal and social records. You might need to perform a professional background check if you are hiring someone to work in your home or business.

Uses of Background Checks

Employers conduct background checks for three main reasons: verification, safety, and performance. Employers need to know whether applicants are who they say they are, whether they will be a liability to the company or a threat to other employees, and whether they are the best fit for the position.

Landlords are the second most common background checkers. It's important for them to know that a prospective tenant will be willing and able to pay rent. Credit histories help landlords discern this detail. Secondly, someone with a history of violence or other crimes might not be the right tenant for certain properties.

Using a background check to screen potential hires and clients helps protect your business's reputation, your own personal safety, and the safety of other employees. While people searches help you to discover information you might be missing for someone or get in touch with them, a background check is typically used to confirm or validate that people are who they say they are.

Running a Self-Background Check

We mentioned earlier that on some websites you can request certain information on yourself to be removed, but there are some life events you can't erase from history, no matter how hard you try. If

there's information about you available to potential employers and associates, wouldn't you want to be prepared to meet those inquiries?

There are some instances where it can be valuable to perform a background check on yourself. If a background check is designed for others to confirm your identity and learn the details of your past, it might be a good idea to present most of that information to them up front.

Running a self-background check can help prepare you for upcoming questions or just better impressions in general. You can prepare for an interview by both predicting what questions might be asked and quickly and easily provide any necessary legal information and documentation that might be required.

Furthermore, if you run a self-background check, and there's information that isn't accurate, you then have a chance to correct it. Plus, you might not know what information can show up on a background check, or you might have forgotten about certain events that you need to be prepared to explain.

And, since data is aggregated by and from multiple sources, accidental cross indexing can also happen, especially if you have a common name. Certain pieces of information in various categories eventually fall off of your record after a defined number of years, so you also don't want to bring anything up that won't show on the background check to begin with!

When to Use a Reverse Background Check

Most examples of background checks involve employers vetting potential employees. But how can potential employees be sure they are interviewing with a company that will meet their needs? This is the purpose of a [reverse background check](#).

A background check on a company or potential employer can answer a few vital questions:

- Is the pay fair?
- What is the turnover rate?
- Does the company have a good reputation?
- What benefits does the company/employer offer?
- What are the core beliefs and philosophy of the company or employer?
- Where are they located?
- Have there been any reports of illegal or unethical behavior?

While it might seem obvious that candidates and applicants want to be selected and will say whatever is necessary to secure the position, the same is true for the other side: landlords need tenants and employers need employees.

Just like landlords, employers, schools, financial institutions check your background to see if you're the right candidate, you should do the same research to see which option suits *you* the best.

Conclusion

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You can use the Internet to research anything. If there's information you need, chances are it's on the Internet. However, don't forget that this means *your* information is out there, too. Don't be afraid to perform a self-background check to prevent any surprises that might arise in an interview or screening.

You have also access to the information that exists on anyone you do business with. There's nothing keeping you from running a check on a potential employer, landlord, dentist, etc. The point of a background check is to validate the information people readily provide and discover the information they don't.

Use Searchbug's [people search](#) first to locate someone you'd like to get in touch with, then use Searchbug's [advanced background check](#) to find out exactly who they are, where they've been, and what they've been doing!

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