

How to Find out Who Owns a Phone Number

by Noah W - Tuesday, November 12, 2013

<https://www.searchbug.com/info/2013/11/who-owns-a-number/>

Have you ever received a call from an unknown number and wondered who it was? Maybe you missed the call or wanted to know who it was before you called back. We all have those unknown calls that we just don't want to answer, but sometimes we're just curious about who was on the other line.

Most of us have used a site such as Yellowpages or whitepages to search company or residential phone numbers by name, but what about the various reverse phone lookup sites? Do they work? Are they accurate, and what are the costs?

How Can I Find Who Owns a Number?

The popular search term that often comes up in Google instant search when you start typing reverse phone, is known as "reverse phone lookup". This enables users searching the internet to find a website that can get a phone trace performed.

Generally, results include the owner name, address, phone issuing location, phone carrier, and line type. Sometimes social networks, emails, and more are also added to results. Sites promise accurate, up-to-date information to instantly show after a search. This is what reverse phone lookup sites promise, but do they deliver?

The majority of the time, after a search is done, a reverse phone lookup site will excitedly tell you that they have found information for the phone number you have entered. The "read report" button, when clicked, displays a free trial offer, or full report purchase option. The most a phone number search site will give is the original a phone carrier or location (typically called the "rate center") which has nothing really to do with where the phone actually is used. More often than not, you're looking for a name and often, this information falls short. And, even more often, many sites try to sell you information that is available from phone books or free reverse phone lookup sites.

White pages search results display the area code, carrier, phone number, city, state, zip, and time zone of the phone number. You probably already know the area code and full number which you most likely entered in the search bar. The city and state is a given because you most likely have the area code. The helpful information here that can help narrow down your search is the carrier. Sites like anywho.com and Yellow Pages display a note below the search bar saying "cell phone numbers are not available." This drastically narrows down the search ability.

In this day and age, even some businesses are run from cell phones. So what is the best way to find information on your missed phone call? Sometimes searches on sites like Google, Yahoo, or Bing turn up better results than most reverse phone lookup sites. A quick search for a random cell phone number entered into the search bar can sometimes find information including social media accounts and email

addresses. These results all depend on how much information someone has placed online and if they've included their phone number. This search tactic can be a hit or miss, but when it works you've got the information you're looking for.

Should I Pay to have a Number Researched?

Maybe you're thinking about paying the fee, (which can sometimes be as low as \$0.99) that some sites ask for, promising they have more information on the number you searched. These fees are often promoted as discounted, unmatched, or special one-time prices. If you're willing to take the gamble then it may pay off, but if you want to save yourself some frustration, pass up the special offer. Chances are it will not be money well spent and you'll end up having to cancel future charges from fine print trial offers.

In reality, most numbers these days are unlisted or non-published. These numbers don't show up in any published phone directory or phone book. It wouldn't be smart for a business to have an unlisted number so this only pertains to residential numbers. Anyone can request that their number be unlisted and since the rise in popularity of phone solicitors, many people don't want their number published.

Because of this, standard reverse phone lookup databases can't offer detailed information on phone numbers. They simply have no way of retrieving that data for themselves, let alone for others. If you really want to find out who owns a phone number, our recommendation is to pass up the "special offer" sites, do a little digging on the search engines; try a couple of different free reverse phone lookup sites and if your searches don't turn up anything, remember that the reality is, it's most likely not available for free.

Keep in mind that some websites, especially SearchBug use a multitude of databases including LNP, CNAM, public records, private data feeds with phone records, plus a variety of "premium phone records" and combine them with algorithms to try and locate the most reliable information possible. If information is not available via all these online databases, then SearchBug offers advanced assisted searches where private investigators can dig even deeper to get accurate results.