



Web Search Secrets: 9 Ways to (Ethically) Spy on Someone Online

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I deliver [sales keynote presentations](#) and [sales training and digital reputation workshops](#) all over the globe and work with companies of all sizes helping teams master Sales Intelligence — ensuring relevancy and providing value by talking to the right person, at the right time, with the right message. By doing your homework before any call, conversation or even email, you can learn what your prospect truly cares about. When you implement ethical online sleuthing techniques you can use what you find to differentiate from the competition, gain permission to ask challenging questions, build meaningful relationships and ultimately make a lot more money.

While my programs are primarily focused on helping business executives and sales teams succeed, after every one of my programs, attendees ask me: “Can I use your search secrets in my personal life?” The answer is YES. Whether it’s doing your homework prior to a job interview, researching a first date, negotiating a major purchase, locating a lost relative — the techniques for finding and leveraging information are the same.

Yet while it may seem that the answer to every question is out there online somewhere, the reality is not all internet searches are created equal. Most everyone knows to pop somebody’s name into Google, but do those results alone really tell the tale? In a word: no.

The internet is a vast ocean of data. Casting your net in the wrong place or in the wrong way can make you pull that net back empty — when a few yards away you missed a whole school of fish. According to research firm Find/SVP, 55% of online searches return results that are unfocused and irrelevant. How you search, and where, makes all the difference in terms of the completeness, complexity and credibility of the information you find.

Following are some web search secrets I share with sales teams who want to uncover the most information possible about prospective clients. But anyone can use them to mine the internet treasure trove, oftentimes resulting in knowing more than you ever thought possible.

Better Info In, Better Info Out

Effective online searching is really a mathematical algorithm. Use the following in just about any search engine and you’ll receive better results:

- **OR.** Typing OR in all uppercase between two words tells the search engine that you want this, OR you want that. Wisconsin OR Minnesota returns results featuring one or both terms.
- **Minus.** Filter results using the minus sign. If you want information on the Vikings — the marauders from Norway with the swords and boats — but don't want results about the professional football team, your search would look like this: Vikings -football (make sure the minus sign touches the word you want to remove).
- **Quotations.** Put words within quotations and the search engine will treat the words as a single entity. Searching for William Scott Johnson returns 240 million results, each with the word William, the word Scott, and the word Johnson somewhere on the page. "William Scott Johnson" returns 14,000 results, all featuring only that exact phrase.
- **Combo Searching.** "Joe Smith" Duluth OR Rochester -"New York" -NY will only return results about Joe Smith who lives in Duluth or Rochester, but not Rochester, NY.

News – www.yougottthenews.com: Search news articles about a person, company or topic and then sort your results by general news, business news, press releases and more (do not use quotes around phrases as YouGotTheNews does that automatically).

Businesspeople – www.linkedin.com: Put a name within quotes, and then use All Filters to narrow your search. A search on Joe Smith returns 37,000+ results. A search on "Joe Smith" returns 9,900+. Click the All Filters button on the upper navigation, enter a city in the location field and click the Apply button. "Joe Smith" in Denver returns 88 results.

All People – www.facebook.com: Use the filters along the side navigation. Enter the name of a person in the main search form. On the results page, click the People tab. Then use the side navigation to sort by location, school, company, etc.

Personal Info – www.truepeoplesearch.com: Enter the name of a person and a location. Find current and previous addresses, phone numbers, possible relatives and more.

Public Docs – www.blackbookonline.info: On the main page, scroll down and choose a state. Then choose a public record type. The results will show websites/databases that contain the data you desire. Use each site's search features to locate information.

These are just a few of the techniques I share in my keynote presentations, sales training workshops and online programs. Use them and you'll start to ferret out information like a pro in less time than you think. **For more Web Search Secrets, download a FREE guide at: www.samrichter.com/searchtips.**

Often called the "Modern Day Dale Carnegie" and one of the world's foremost Sales Intelligence and digital reputation experts, award-winning speaker and bestselling author Sam Richter takes the phrase, "Knowledge is Power," and turns it into reality. Learn more at www.samrichter.com.