BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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Searching Yourself First — What People-Search Sites Show, and Quick Opt-Outs

What people-search sites show about you, and how to quietly take it back down

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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THE 60-SECOND VERSION

1 The 60-Second Version

The whole idea, if you only have a minute.

There are dozens of websites — with names like Spokeo, Whitepages, BeenVerified, Intelius, and Radaris — that quietly collect your name, age, home address, phone number, and even your relatives, then put it all on a page anyone can look up. They did not hack you. They gathered it from public records and lists they buy and trade. The good news is that most of them will take your information down if you ask, and asking is free.

- First, look yourself up so you know what is actually showing — it is usually less scary than people fear.
- Then use each site's own opt-out page to request removal; most ask for the link to your profile and an email to confirm.
- Google has a free tool called 'Results about you' that can hide listings from its search results.
- If chasing it yourself sounds like too much, a paid service such as DeleteMe, Incogni, or Optery will do the rounds for you for a yearly fee.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> None of this is an emergency, and you do not have to do it all at once. Removing the five or six biggest sites covers most of what a casual searcher would ever find. You can handle one site over coffee and come back to the rest another day.

HOW IT GETS THERE

2 Why Your Information Is Already Online

It was gathered in the open, not stolen.

The first thing to understand is that this is not the result of a break-in. Companies called data brokers make their living by collecting information about people from sources that are perfectly legal to use, then packaging it into profiles they sell or show online. People-search sites are the storefronts where a lot of that information ends up on display.

Where it comes from

- Public records: property deeds, court filings, marriage and divorce records, voter registrations, and business licenses are open to anyone by law.
- Things you signed up for: warranty cards, store loyalty programs, magazine subscriptions, sweepstakes, and online accounts often share or sell your details.
- Purchases and apps: some retailers, websites, and phone apps pass along what they learn about you.
- Other brokers: the companies buy and trade lists among themselves, so one piece of information can spread to many sites.

Because so much of it starts with public records, you cannot erase the original source — a property deed is a public document. What you can do is ask the people-search sites to stop displaying it, which is what the rest of this guide is about.

> *Nobody picked on you. These sites scoop up everybody the same way, quietly and in bulk. Knowing that takes the fear out of it and leaves just a chore to work through.*

LOOK YOURSELF UP

3 Searching Yourself the Way a Stranger Would

See exactly what is showing before you change anything.

Before removing anything, it is worth spending ten minutes seeing what is actually out there. This does two things: it tells you which sites to tackle first, and it almost always turns out to be less alarming than people imagine.

1. Open a private or incognito browser window so your own saved logins do not color the results. In most browsers this is under the menu as 'New Private Window' or 'New Incognito Window.'
2. Search your full name inside quotation marks, like "Jane Smith", then add your town or state, like "Jane Smith" Atwater Ohio.
3. Look through the first two or three pages of results. Jot down the site names that show your information — Spokeo, Whitepages, and the like.
4. Try a few variations: your name with a middle initial, a maiden name, or a former address, since sites file people in different ways.
5. Search your phone number and email address too; some sites are organized around those instead of your name.

TIP

Keep a simple written list of the sites where you find yourself, with a checkbox beside each. Crossing them off as you go turns a vague worry into a tidy to-do list you can actually finish.

WATCH OUT

Some people-search sites try to sell you a 'full report' on yourself or scare you into paying to see it. You never need to buy anything to look yourself up or to opt out. Ignore the upsells and close any checkout pages.

GOOGLE'S OWN TOOL

4 Google's "Results About You" Tool

A free way to pull listings out of Google's search results.

Google offers a free tool called 'Results about you' that watches for your personal information in its search results and lets you ask Google to remove it. It is important to understand what this does and does not do: it hides the result on Google, which is where most people would find you, but it does not delete the information from the people-search site itself. For that, you still opt out directly with each site.

1. Sign in to your Google account. You must be 18 or older and in a country where the tool is offered, which includes the United States.
2. Search for 'Results about you' or open it from your Google account menu or the Google app.
3. Enter the personal details you want Google to watch for, such as your name, home address, phone number, and email.
4. When Google finds matching results, review them and request removal on the ones showing your contact information.
5. Choose whether you want Google to email or alert you when it finds new results, so you can keep an eye out over time.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> As of early 2026 Google widened this tool to also help with government ID numbers, such as Social Security, passport, and driver's license numbers, if they ever appear in results. If you ever spot something like that about yourself, request its removal right away.

Think of Google's tool as the front door. Pulling a listing out of Google means most people will never stumble onto it. Opting out at the source, covered next, is how you close the back door too.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

WHAT TO EXPECT

5 How Opt-Outs Really Work

A calm, realistic picture before you start.

Opting out is not hard, but it helps to know the rhythm of it so nothing catches you off guard. Nearly every site follows the same basic pattern, and once you have done one, the rest feel familiar.

- You find your profile on the site, then open that site's opt-out or 'suppression' page.
- You paste in the link to your profile, or search for it again, and give an email address.
- The site sends a confirmation email; you must click the link in it or the request is ignored.
- Removal is not instant — it commonly takes anywhere from a day to a few weeks.

WATCH OUT

Here is the part nobody likes: a listing you remove can quietly come back months later, because the sites refresh their databases from the same public records. Many people find profiles reappear within a few months. This is normal, not a sign you did it wrong — it is simply why re-checking matters.

GOOD TO KNOW

Use an email address you do not mind the sites having — your everyday one is fine, or a free secondary address kept just for these confirmations. The sites use it only to verify the request, and having one place where all the confirmation emails land makes the whole job tidier.

> *I tell folks to treat this like weeding a garden, not pouring concrete. You will not do it once and be done forever, but a little tending a few times a year keeps things clear.*

THE BIG SITES

6 The Opt-Out Pages for the Major Sites

Start here — these cover the most ground.

You do not need to chase every site in existence. A handful of large ones account for most of what a casual search turns up, and several of them own smaller sites, so opting out of one can clear several. Here are the main ones and where their opt-out pages live. Because these companies change their web addresses now and then, always confirm the current page by looking for an 'Opt Out,' 'Do Not Sell,' or 'Privacy' link in the footer of the site itself.

Site	Where to opt out	Good to know
Spokeo	spokeo.com/optout	Paste your profile link; confirm by email
Whitepages	whitepages.com (Privacy / suppression page)	May require a phone verification step
BeenVerified	beenverified.com/f/optout/search	Also covers its sister site PeopleSmart
Intelius	suppression.peopleconnect.us	One request covers Truthfinder and Instant Checkmate
Radaris	radaris.com (Privacy / 'Remove My Info')	Harder than most; may need a repeat try

TIP

Opt out of the ones that own other sites first — Intelius and BeenVerified each cover siblings — so you clear several listings with one request and save yourself steps.

WATCH OUT

Last verified: November 2026. Opt-out web addresses and steps change often. If a link above does not work, go to the site's home page and look in the small print at the very bottom for a privacy or opt-out link rather than trusting an old bookmark.

STEP BY STEP

7 Opting Out of One Site, Start to Finish

Spokeo as the example — the pattern repeats everywhere.

Let us walk through a single site slowly, so you can see exactly how it goes. We will use Spokeo because it is common and straightforward. Once you have done this one, every other site will feel like the same dance with slightly different music.

1. Search your name on the site and open your own profile. Copy the web address of that profile page from the top of your browser.
2. In a new tab, go to spokeo.com/optout (or find the opt-out link in the footer of the site).
3. Paste your profile link into the box and enter an email address where you can receive a confirmation.
4. Complete any 'I am not a robot' check, then submit the request.
5. Open the confirmation email the site sends and click the link inside it. Without this click, nothing happens.
6. Mark the site off your list, and note the date so you know when to check back.

TIP

If a site makes you search for your listing again on the opt-out page rather than pasting a link, pick the entry that matches your age and town. If you see more than one profile for yourself, remove each one separately.

GOOD TO KNOW

Set aside maybe twenty minutes for your first site and ten for each one after. Doing two or three in a sitting, a couple of times, clears the major sites without turning it into a marathon.

THE STUBBORN ONES

8 The Sites That Fight Back

A few are harder than the rest — here is how to handle them.

Most sites remove you politely. A few are known for being difficult, and it helps to know which ones so you do not think you are doing something wrong when they resist.

- Radaris is the one people struggle with most. Its opt-out can be fiddly, and it sometimes keeps a separate combined profile even after the main one is gone. Be prepared to repeat the request and re-check.
- The PeopleConnect family — Intelius, Truthfinder, and Instant Checkmate — is handled through a single suppression site, which is handy, but it may ask for extra details like your date of birth to find you.
- Some sites still insist on a phone call or a text-message code to verify you. If a site offers only a phone method, that is the one to use, even though it is less convenient.

If a site truly will not cooperate after a couple of honest tries, it is reasonable to let it go and move on. The stubborn sites are also exactly where a paid service earns its keep, because chasing them is the tedious part they are built to handle.

WATCH OUT

Never give a people-search site your Social Security number, a photo of your driver's license, or payment information to 'verify' an opt-out. A legitimate opt-out needs only enough to find your listing and an email to confirm. Anything more is a red flag — back out.

DO IT OR PAY

9 Do It Yourself, or Pay Someone?

An honest comparison, with no wrong answer.

You have two real choices: work through the sites yourself for free, or pay a service to do the rounds for you. Both are perfectly sensible. Which fits depends on how much time you have, how many sites you want covered, and how much the upkeep nags at you.

	Doing it yourself	A paid service
Cost	Free, just your time	Roughly $100-$250 a year
Sites covered	The ones you choose to tackle	Dozens, often continuously
Upkeep	You re-check and re-file	They keep watching for you
Effort	A few evenings, then periodic	Sign up and mostly forget
Best for	A few big sites, hands-on folks	Many sites, or no time to fuss

A fair middle path is to do the five or six biggest sites yourself — which covers most of what anyone would casually find — and then decide whether the long tail of smaller sites is worth paying someone to keep swept. For a lot of people, the big ones done by hand are plenty.

GOOD TO KNOW

A paid service never removes everything forever, and it cannot touch the public records underneath. What you are really buying is someone else doing the repetitive chasing, over and over, so you do not have to remember to.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

THE PAID OPTIONS

10 The Main Paid Services Compared

Rough prices as of late 2026 — always confirm before you buy.

Three services come up most often. They all do the same basic job — find your listings across many data brokers and file opt-outs on your behalf, then keep watching — but they differ in price and in how they report back to you.

Service	Rough price (late 2026)	Notes
DeleteMe	about $129/year for one person	Long-established; sends you a removal report each quarter
Incogni	about $8/month billed yearly (near $100/year)	Simple, hands-off; shows progress on a dashboard
Optery	free basic report; paid tiers roughly $39-$249/year	Only one with a free tier; higher tiers cover more sites

WATCH OUT

Last verified: November 2026. These prices are rough ranges and change often, and introductory offers can make the first year cheaper than later ones. Always check the service's own website for the current price and exactly which sites it covers before paying.

Optery's free tier is a gentle way to dip a toe in: it will show you a report of where you appear at no cost, and you can decide from there whether to opt out by hand or pay it to do so. That makes it a nice first stop even if you never pay a cent.

GOOD TO KNOW

Before you subscribe, read how each service handles cancellation and whether it bills monthly or only once a year. And remember you can always start with the free, do-it-yourself route and add a paid service later if the upkeep wears on you.

KEEPING IT CLEAN

11 Keeping Yourself Off Over Time

A light routine so the work does not undo itself.

Because listings can drift back as the sites refresh their records, a little upkeep is what keeps your effort from quietly unwinding. The trick is to make it small and regular rather than a big project you dread.

1. Pick a rhythm you will actually keep — three or four times a year is plenty. Tie it to something you already do, like the change of seasons.
2. Re-run the same name search you did at the start and see which sites have reappeared.
3. Re-file the opt-out on any that came back. The second time is always quicker.
4. Keep your running checklist with dates, so you can see at a glance what you have handled and when.
5. If you signed up for Google's 'Results about you,' glance at any alerts it sends and act on new ones.

TIP

Put a recurring reminder on your phone or calendar for the same day each season — say, the first of the month when clocks change. A thirty-minute sweep a few times a year keeps the big sites clear with almost no effort.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you ever move, the fresh property record can spark a wave of new listings a few months later. A move is a good moment to do an extra check and tidy up the new entries early.

FEWER NEW LISTINGS

12 Habits That Slow New Listings

Small choices that give the brokers less to work with.

You cannot stop every new listing, but you can turn off some of the faucets that feed them. None of these is urgent, and you can adopt them gradually.

- Be sparing with warranty cards, store loyalty sign-ups, and online forms that ask for more than they need. A phone number or birth date is often optional.
- Say no when a website or app asks to 'sell or share' your information; look for a 'Do Not Sell My Personal Information' link in the footer.
- Keep what you post publicly on social media modest — your town, employer, and birthday are exactly the pieces these sites love to stitch together.
- Consider a secondary email and a free call-forwarding number for sign-ups you do not fully trust, keeping your real ones for people who matter.

Think of it as lowering the water level rather than turning off the tap entirely. The less you hand out, the less there is to gather, and the slower new profiles form.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If you happen to live in California, the state runs a free tool called DROP that lets residents send one deletion request to every registered data broker at once. Most other states have nothing like it yet, so elsewhere the site-by-site approach in this guide is still the way.

COMMON QUESTIONS

13 Common Questions

The things people ask me most.

Is it legal for these sites to post my information?

Generally, yes. Most of what they show comes from public records and lawfully gathered lists, so posting it is not against the law. That is why the realistic goal is to get your listing removed on request, rather than to punish the site.

Will removing myself hurt my credit or hide me from anything important?

No. People-search sites are not your credit report, and they are not connected to banks, the government, or your doctor. Opting out of them has no effect on your credit, your benefits, or any official record.

If I remove one site, am I off all of them?

Usually not, though a few sites cover their siblings. Each company keeps its own database, so you generally opt out of each one separately — which is exactly why the big-sites-first approach saves the most time.

I am not very technical. Is this really something I can do?

Yes. If you can search a name and click a link in an email, you can do every step here. It is repetitive more than it is hard, and you can go at your own pace.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If it still feels like a lot, that is a perfectly good reason to either use the free Optery report to see where you stand, or let one of the paid services carry the load. There is no prize for doing it the hard way.

WHERE TO START

14 Where to Start

A simple first hour that gets you most of the way.

If you only do a little, do this. It is the highest-value hour you can spend on the whole subject, and it leaves you knowing exactly where you stand.

1. Search your own name in quotes, with your town, in a private browser window, and write down the sites that show you.

2. Set up Google's free 'Results about you' and request removal of the listings that show your contact details.
3. Opt out of the big five — Spokeo, Whitepages, BeenVerified, Intelius, and Radaris — one at a time, confirming each by email.
4. Put a seasonal reminder on your calendar to re-check, and decide calmly whether a paid service is worth it for the rest.

That is the whole job in miniature. Everything else in this guide is simply more detail on these four moves. Do them once, keep a light routine, and the picture a stranger sees of you stays close to what you would choose.

> *You will not scrub yourself from the internet completely — nobody can. But you can clear the front window so what people find is tidy, accurate, and on your terms. That is a win worth an afternoon.*

GOOD TO KNOW

If you would like a hand, I am glad to sit down with you, look yourself up together, set up Google's tool, and work through the big sites side by side — so the whole thing feels like a calm, finished project instead of a worry hanging over you.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this page handy. It points you straight to what to do for each task.

I want to...	Do this...
See what's showing	Search your own name in quotes, plus your town, in a private browser window
Use Google's tool	Sign in and open 'Results about you' to request removal from Google results
Opt out of a site	Find your profile, open that site's opt-out page, submit the link, confirm by email
Start with the big ones	Spokeo, Whitepages, BeenVerified, Intelius, Radaris cover the most ground
Decide on a service	DeleteMe, Incogni, or Optery will do the chasing for a yearly fee
Keep it clean	Re-check every few months, because listings can quietly come back
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

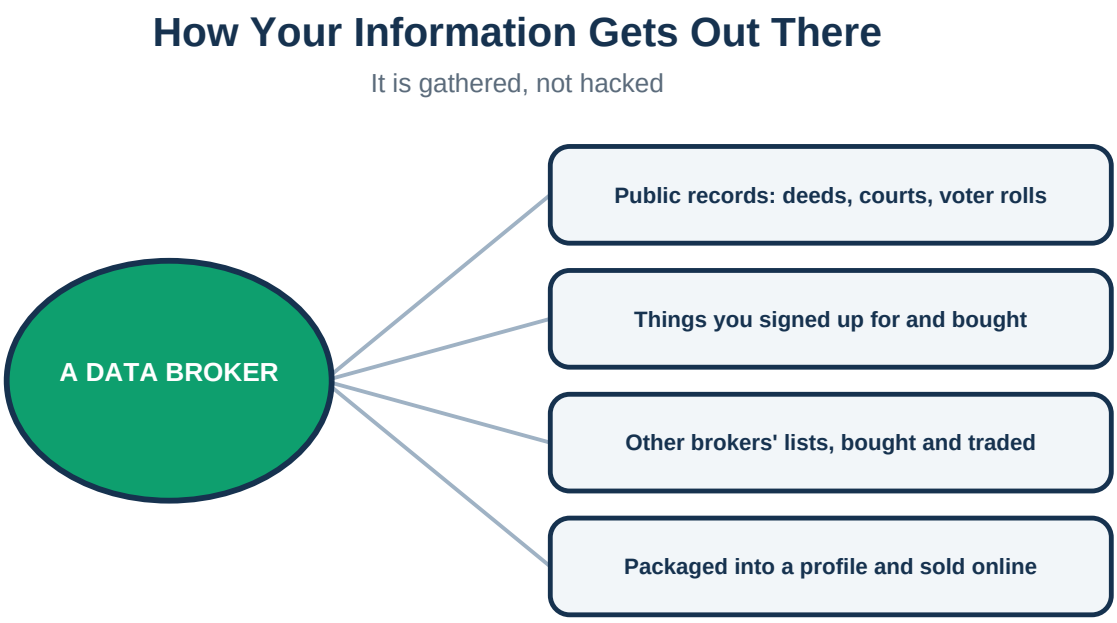


Illustration — a schematic. Set-up screens differ; each takes only a few minutes.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Taking Down One Listing

The same rhythm on every site

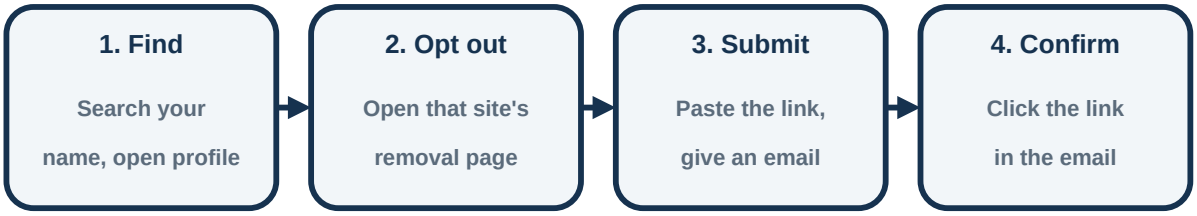


Illustration — a schematic. The order is a suggestion; do one box at a time.

A schematic of the plan — company steps vary; the order does not have to.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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