BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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Why Your Name, Address, and Age Show Up Online

Where your name, address, and age come from, and how to quiet it down

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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What's Inside

Everything in this guide, with page numbers. Skip to whichever chapter answers your question right now.

The 60-Second Version 3

Where This Information Comes From 3

The Companies That Buy and Bundle It 4

The Ways You Hand It Over Yourself 5

The Breach Pile 6

Why Most of This Is Legal 7

What Actually Goes Wrong 8

Cleaning Up Your Google Results 9

Opting Out of People-Search Sites 10

Tightening Your Social Media 11

Sharing Less at the Checkout 12

What You Cannot Erase 12

Keeping It in Perspective 13

Everyday Cheat Sheet 15

A Picture to Follow Along 16

A Second Look 17

A Note From Bill 17

Your Visit — and My Promise 18

THE 60-SECOND VERSION

1 The 60-Second Version

The whole picture, if you only have a minute.

Your name, address, age, and the names of your relatives show up online because dozens of companies collect those details from public records and everyday life, bundle them into profiles, and put them on search-style websites. Most of this is legal, and it is happening to nearly every adult in the country. It is not a sign that you were careless or that your accounts were hacked.

- Where it comes from: public records (property, voter rolls, court and business filings), companies that buy and combine data, loyalty and warranty cards, social media, and data breaches.
- The real risks: it makes scam calls, spoofed numbers, and the occasional stalker easier — not an immediate emergency, but worth tending to.
- What you can do: clean up Google's search results for your name, opt out of the 'people-search' sites, tighten your social media, and simply share less at the checkout from now on.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> You cannot erase everything, and you do not need to. True public records, like who owns a house, are meant to be public and will stay available. The goal is to turn down the volume on the easy, aggregated listings — not to disappear, which no one can do.

THE PUBLIC RECORD

2 Where This Information Comes From

A lot of it was never private to begin with.

A surprising share of what you see online started as an official public record. For centuries, governments have kept records that anyone may inspect, so that property, elections, and courts stay honest and open. None of this was created to track you. It simply exists, and now it is easy to copy and search.

The main kinds of public records

- Property records: when you buy or sell a home, the deed, the price, and your name become a public county record.
- Voter registration: in many states your name, address, and party are available to those who request the rolls.
- Court and legal filings: lawsuits, bankruptcies, divorces, and similar matters are generally part of the public docket.
- Business filings: if you have ever registered a business, your name and address may sit in a state's open database.

Add a few neutral facts like your approximate age, which can be estimated from decades of these records, and you have the backbone of almost every listing you will ever find about yourself.

> *Most of what startles people on those sites isn't a secret that leaked. It's a public record that always existed, now just a search box away.*

THE MIDDLEMEN

3 The Companies That Buy and Bundle It

Meet the data brokers.

On their own, scattered public records are tedious to dig up. The reason your details arrive neatly packaged on one web page is an industry of companies called data brokers. Their whole business is to gather information from many sources, combine it into a single profile, and sell or display it. California's official registry listed more than 575 registered data brokers as of early 2026, up from 459 the year before, so this is a large and growing field.

Two kinds worth telling apart

- People-search sites: names you may have seen, such as Whitepages, Spokeo, and BeenVerified. They turn public records into a profile anyone can look up, often showing your address, age, phone, and relatives.
- Marketing brokers: quieter companies that package your buying habits and interests to sell to advertisers. You rarely see these, but they are the bulk of the industry.

The people-search sites are the ones that make you wince, because they are built to be read by a person. They are also, happily, the ones you have the most power to opt out of, which a later chapter walks through.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> These companies did not single you out. They sweep up records on essentially every adult and build a profile automatically. That is why the listings feel so impersonal — they are.

THE EVERYDAY TRAIL

4 The Ways You Hand It Over Yourself

Loyalty cards, warranty slips, and sweepstakes.

Not all of it comes from government records. A good deal is information you were asked for in ordinary moments — and there is no shame in having given it, because that is exactly what these forms are designed to encourage.

- Loyalty and rewards cards: in exchange for discounts, the store builds a record of what you buy, which can be sold or shared.
- Warranty and registration cards: the little card in the box asks for your name, address, age, and income. The product is already under warranty without it; the card is mostly for marketing.
- Sweepstakes and 'free prize' entries: entering often means agreeing to have your details shared with 'marketing partners.'
- Social media: birthdays, hometowns, family tags, and photos you post can all be scraped and added to a profile.

None of these are traps, exactly. They are trades — a small convenience or chance for a bit of your information. Knowing the trade lets you decide when it is worth it and when to politely decline.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> The warranty card is the one I most often tell folks to skip. Your purchase is covered whether or not you mail it in. Filling it out mainly feeds a marketing database with your age and income.

WHEN A COMPANY IS HACKED

5 The Breach Pile

The source you did not choose.

The last major source is the one you have the least control over: data breaches. When a company you did business with is hacked, the information it held about you — email, phone, address, sometimes more — can end up dumped online, where brokers and scammers scoop it up and fold it into their profiles.

This is worth understanding calmly. A breach at a store or service is the company's failing, not yours. You cannot prevent other companies from being hacked, and fretting over it changes nothing. What you can do is sensible housekeeping that limits the damage.

- Use a different password for your email and your bank than you use anywhere else, so one breach does not unlock everything.
- Be extra wary of calls or emails that already know a detail about you — that detail may simply have come from a breach.
- Freezing your credit with the three credit bureaus, which is free, blunts the worst use of breached information.

GOOD TO KNOW

A little of your information being in a breach pile is now so common it is nearly universal. It is a reason for steady habits, not for alarm. The sky is not falling because an old account turned up in a leak.

WHY IT'S ALLOWED

6 Why Most of This Is Legal

The uncomfortable truth, explained plainly.

People are often surprised, and a little indignant, to learn that almost all of this is legal. It helps to see why. Public records are public on purpose, and in the United States, collecting and reselling information that is already public has long been treated as lawful. The information you volunteered on a card or a form was, legally, given with your consent in the fine print.

That is slowly changing at the edges. A handful of states, led by California, now say that once a broker combines public records into a searchable profile, that profile can fall under privacy law and you can demand its deletion. California has even built a central deletion tool for its residents. But for most people in most states, the honest summary is that this is permitted.

> *I won't pretend it's fair. But knowing it's legal changes the game: you stop looking for someone to sue and start using the opt-outs that actually work.*

GOOD TO KNOW

The practical upshot is freeing. Because you usually cannot force this to stop, the smart move is to use the removal tools that do exist and then let the rest go. That is a far calmer place to stand than waiting for a law that may never come.

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 REAL RISKS

7 What Actually Goes Wrong

Honest about the danger, without the scare.

It is fair to ask: if all this is out there, what is the actual harm? For the great majority of people, the answer is not dramatic. The risks are real but manageable, and naming them plainly is better than vague dread.

The risks worth knowing

- Scam calls and mail: knowing your name, age, and address lets a scammer sound convincing — 'I'm calling about your home at...' The information makes the pitch believable.
- Spoofed and targeted calls: your number on a list means more robocalls, and sometimes a call that fakes a local or familiar number to get you to pick up.
- Stalking or harassment: for most this is not a concern, but for someone leaving a difficult relationship, an easily found address is a genuine worry worth acting on.

Notice what is not on this list: simply being listed does not drain your bank account or steal your identity by itself. Those harms take an extra step — usually a scam you can learn to spot — which is why your own caution remains your strongest protection.

WATCH OUT

If a caller already knows your address or age, that is not proof they are legitimate. Scammers buy those exact details. Treat a caller knowing your information as a reason for more caution, not less.

GOOGLE'S FREE TOOL

8 Cleaning Up Your Google Results

The first and easiest win.

For most people, the details that sting most are the ones that pop up when someone searches their name on Google. Google offers a free tool, called 'Results about you,' built exactly for this. It watches for web pages that show your personal contact information and lets you ask Google to remove them from search results.

1. On a phone or computer, go to goo.gle/resultsaboutyou, or open the Google app, tap your account photo, and choose 'Results about you.'
2. Enter the details you want watched — your name, and the address, phone number, and email you want to catch.
3. Google scans and shows pages that contain those details. The first check usually finishes in under six hours.
4. For a page you want gone, open it and choose 'Request to remove.' Google reviews each one.
5. Turn on notifications so Google alerts you when new pages show up later.

GOOD TO KNOW

In early 2026 Google widened this tool to also help remove results that expose sensitive numbers like a Social Security, passport, or driver's license number — the kind of thing it is most willing to take down quickly.

WATCH OUT

Removing a result from Google does not delete the underlying web page — it just stops it from showing in Google searches. To remove the source itself, you opt out at the site, which the next chapter covers. Removal is also reviewed, not guaranteed.

THE OPT-OUTS

9 Opting Out of People-Search Sites

Where the real cleanup happens, for free.

The people-search sites — the ones listing your address and relatives — almost all offer a way to remove your profile, usually free, because privacy laws increasingly require it. It is tedious but genuinely effective, and you do not need to pay anyone to do the basics.

1. Start with the biggest sites, such as Whitepages, Spokeo, and BeenVerified, plus any that showed up when you searched your name.
2. Find each site's opt-out or 'remove my info' page — search the site's name plus 'opt out' to find it.
3. Follow the steps for that site. Some ask you to find your own listing first and confirm by email; most do not need an account.
4. Keep a simple written list of which sites you have done and the date, because listings can quietly return and need a repeat.
5. Re-check your name every few months and opt out of anything new.

TIP

Do a few sites at a sitting rather than all in one marathon. This is housekeeping, not an emergency. A short list each week gets the job done without wearing you out.

GOOD TO KNOW

Paid removal services do this chasing for you, for a yearly fee, and can be worth it if the work feels overwhelming. Just know that nothing can remove true public records, so no service — free or paid — can promise to erase you entirely.

YOUR SOCIAL ACCOUNTS

10

Tightening Your Social Media

Closing a door you can actually control.

Unlike public records, your social media is one place you hold the keys. A few minutes in the privacy settings of Facebook or wherever you post keeps your posts, your birthday, and your family connections from being quietly harvested.

- Set your profile and posts to 'friends only' rather than public, so strangers and scrapers cannot read them.
- Hide your birth year, and your address and phone number, from your public profile — you rarely need them shown.
- Review your friends or followers list and remove accounts you do not recognize.
- Think twice before posting things that answer security questions, like your hometown, first pet, or mother's maiden name.

You do not have to quit social media or stop enjoying it. The aim is simply to share with the people you meant to share with, rather than with the whole internet by default.

> *Your Facebook settings are one of the few spots in this whole subject where you're fully in charge. Ten quiet minutes there is worth more than an hour of worrying about the rest.*

FROM NOW ON

11 Sharing Less at the Checkout

Slowing the trail going forward.

Cleaning up the past matters, but so does not refilling the bucket. The gentlest, most lasting habit is simply to share a little less in the everyday moments where your information is requested. None of this requires rudeness — a friendly 'no thank you' is plenty.

- At the register, when asked for your phone number, email, or ZIP code, it is fine to decline. Your purchase goes through either way.
- Skip the warranty and registration cards; your coverage does not depend on them.
- Pass on sweepstakes and 'spin to win' entries that ask for your details to share with partners.
- Keep a separate, free email address for stores and sign-ups, apart from the one you use for family and your bank.

Think of it as the difference between a leak you keep mopping and one you finally slow at the tap. Every form you decline is a little less to clean up down the road.

WATCH OUT

A simple line that works everywhere: 'No thanks, I'd rather not give that out.' You never owe a store an explanation, and a good one will not push.

WHAT STAYS PUT

12 What You Cannot Erase

Where to stop, so you don't chase the impossible.

An honest guide has to say this clearly: some information will stay online no matter what you do, and that is by design. Knowing where the line is keeps you from pouring effort into an impossible goal and feeling like you failed.

You can reduce	You can't erase

People-search listings	Property deed records
Google search results	Court and legal filings
Social media exposure	Business registrations
Marketing and junk mail	Most voter-roll data

The left column responds well to the steps in this guide. The right column is true public record — the same openness that lets you check who owns a property or verify a court outcome. It is not going to vanish, and for the most part it is the least sensitive information anyway.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Aim to make yourself harder to look up in bulk, not invisible. Invisible is not on the menu for anyone, and chasing it only brings frustration. 'Quieter and tidier' is a goal you can actually reach.

KEEPING PERSPECTIVE

13

Keeping It in Perspective

A steady place to land.

If this guide has a single message, it is this: the fact that your information is online is normal, nearly universal, and not a reflection on you. You did not slip up. You simply live in an age where records are easy to copy and sell, and that is true for your neighbors, your doctor, and your grandchildren alike.

- It is common: essentially every adult is listed somewhere. You are in very large company.
- It is mostly low-stakes: being listed is not the same as being in danger. The listings alone rarely cause harm.
- It is partly fixable: the free steps here genuinely reduce your exposure, and a little effort goes a long way.

- It is worth revisiting lightly: a quick check a couple of times a year keeps things tidy without taking over your life.

Treat it the way you would any bit of household upkeep — a gutter to clear now and then, not a fire to put out. A calm, occasional pass is exactly the right amount of attention.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If any of this feels like more than you want to take on alone, that is a perfectly normal feeling and an easy thing to get a hand with. Sitting down together to search your name, clean up Google, and knock out the first batch of opt-outs turns a vague worry into a short, finished project — and that is just the kind of thing I am glad to help with.

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 out there	Search your own name, city, and phone number in quotes
Clean up Google	Use Google's free 'Results about you' at goo.gle/resultsaboutyou
Remove listings	Opt out of people-search sites one at a time, keep a list
Tighten social	Set profiles to friends-only; hide birth year and address
Share less	Decline loyalty, warranty, and sweepstakes info at checkout
Stay calm	Treat it as common housekeeping, not a personal failing
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

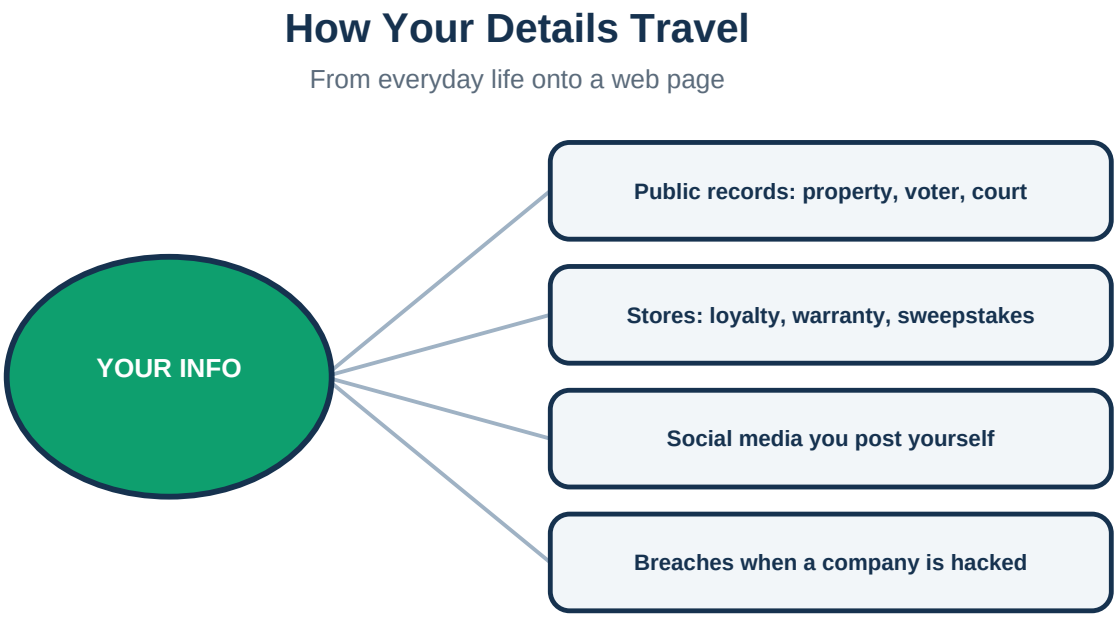


Illustration — a schematic. Set-up screens differ; each takes only a few minutes.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Quieting It Down, Step by Step

A calm order to work in



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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