

Skip Tracing Manual



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Overview

This skip tracing manual is part of a student handout given to skip tracing students of the Advanced Skip Tracing course by Brad Lyons and Thinkedu.com.au.

This is not the complete Skip Tracing Manual.

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What is Skip Tracing?

Skip tracing is a commonly used term for locating people, this could be for a missing person's case, locating debtors or current customers. In the past skip tracing use to include things like "Dumpster Diving" and "Pretext calls" to utility companies, these days skip tracing is conducted online with using paid search sites and a very small volume of phone calls. Websites like Facebook and Myspace have made a skip tracers life a lot easier.

Skip Tracing has basically been divided into two areas. Quick checks and Skip Tracing. Quick checks are simply running a name through a database before giving up. This is cheap, quick and good to identify some quick wins.

It is important to have good time management skills and you are organized, for example it takes around 1 minute and 26 seconds for a landline phone to ring out, rather than just sitting and waiting for the phone to ring out you could have completed several searches on the customer in this time. The reason for this is simple, you need to know as much as possible about a person before you call them to reduce the risk of them giving you false information. Every time I call a person I am searching the phone number on Google, their name, email address and home address, that way if they answer the phone I will already know if they use the mobile number for work and if so who they work for, if the email address is attached to a website or employer and having a look at street view may show a courier truck in the driveway.

I say courier truck as this was the case for one of the people I was trying to locate, Google street view showed a courier truck in the customers driveway with the company name on it, when the customer told me he was unemployed you could imagine his surprise when I asked about the courier truck out the front.

So always make sure you are conducting searches while the phone is ringing and if you are able to continue searching while speaking with the customer (and still listen to what they have to say) then continue your searches while they are on the phone, every phone number they give you, Google it and see if there are any listings, if they give you a new address, Google it and ask them about something that is close or if it is the house with the “Red fence”.

If you can see that next door has a red fence on Google maps and the customer tells you he doesn't know what you are talking about it could be because they have just given you a false address.

It is important to treat every call to a customer or third party as the last call, so get as much information as possible that will help you locate them again if they skip. Always ask for a next of kin or reference, email address, landline, mobile, home address, work address, employer, occupation. A next of kin may help you find the person on Facebook, occupation can help you limit what suburb the customer lives in if they skip again and a landline can help you confirm the home address.

In this manual we will go over the online and offline tools a skip tracer can use to locate people and a few tips on how to make sure you are prepared to speak with third parties and customers.



Understanding the problem

Who

Ensure your client gives you enough information to identify a unique individual.

While you can locate a person with just a name, it will be a lot faster to have more information.

Why

Knowing why you have been tasked to locate a person can help identify to what lengths the person may go to in attempts to hide.

Where

Last known addresses are always good. Along with locations the subject has been known to frequent.

Your client may know the last 3 addresses the subject stayed. This is a big help!

What you need (in an ideal world):

- Their name
- Date of birth
- Last Known address
- Phone numbers
- Current or Previous employer
- Known Family and friends
- Interests/Hobbies
- Email address
- Website

Any additional information is a bonus. In some cases the client will have the original loan application, or other information that was collected when they first encountered the subject.

Where to start?



Google is a powerful search site (also known as indexing site) that has more functions than most other search sites available to the public. It is important to know that Google doesn't find everything, it only searches around 4% of the internet known as "Surface Web", and the rest of the internet is known as "Deepweb" and is simply not indexed. Things like your email, internet banking and other password protected content also sits here.

The 4% that is easily accessible is vast and requires some basic training to reduce the results down to a more manageable level. In this example we will use a common name like John Smith, if you just type John Smith into Google you will get around 900 million results. You can reduce these results to around 14 million. By adding quotations like this "John Smith". So what is the difference?

If you type John Smith you are actually searching two things, the name John and Smith, by adding the quotation marks you have changed your search to the exact phrase or name you enter.

14 billion is a lot less however you will not be able to go through all of these results. You can reduce the results even further by adding information you know about the subject to the search query. For example, say the John Smith we are looking for is a builder, we can add this information to the search query by typing the following;

“

John Smith” ~Builder

By adding the tilde (~) you have now asked Google to return any results that have the name John Smith and anything related to building. Tilde is like a wildcard search, by using this in a search Google will return results related to building, this could be carpenters, developers or anything related to the building industry.

This will reduce your search results to around 1.2 billion by adding QLD you will then reduce the results to around 5 million. The end search query should look like this “John Smith” ~builder QLD.