BACKGROUNDING PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES ON THE WEB

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First things first

- Develop a strategy
    - Know what you're after.
    - Know what is available.
    - Know when enough is enough.
- Be a smarter searcher; don't waste your time.
- Be skeptical – treat each online source just as you would any other.
- Think about your own life – practice backgrounding yourself.
- For businesses, find a guide to help you.

The Basics: Questions to ask and steps to follow:

- Who is he/she?
    - Google, yes, Google
    - Also check at least one other search engine: (Yahoo, Clusty, etc.)
    - Zoominfo
- Where has he/she lived?
    - Zabasearch
    - Find neighbors with Whitepages.com (Do a reverse lookup to find the address, then select the person's name and finally click on "neighbors.") When looking for neighbors, don't list apartment numbers; it's been my experience that they limit the search.
- Does the person still live there? Do they own?
    - Property records. Get to know your local assessor's and recorder of deeds office. An example: City of St. Louis Assessor's Office
    - BRB Publications – links to public records databases by state and county. Awesome.
- Court records? Criminal information?
    - Arizona courts – If you don't know whether your courts have information online, check out the BRB site. Not all courts have online searches.
    - Federal courts (Pacer is still a pay site, sorry. But, there are some other links on this page that might be helpful.)
    - Sex offender registry
    - Inmates: Arizona
    - Criminalsearches (Please note, this is not complete, but can be helpful. Make sure you always verify your information.)

- Deep Web searches:
  - [Facebook](#)
  - [Pipl](#)
  - [123people](#)
  - [Whostalkin](#)
  - [Samepoint](#)
  - [Icerocket](#)

Other stuff to think about:

- [How much](#) do government employees make? (Note: this page links to news and other sites that have listed public employee salary databases. It probably isn't inclusive, but it's a start.)
- Check [campaign contributions](#) – did the person donate any money to candidates? Don't forget to look at local elections as well: [Missouri](#) and [Illinois](#) are a couple examples.
- If a person is an elected official, make sure you check out their personal financial disclosure form. Sorry, this may not be online.

Investigating politicians:

- Salaries, travel: www.legistorm.com
- Personal financial disclosure: http://www.opensecrets.org/pfds/
- State financial disclosure: http://www.publicintegrity.org/StateDisclosure/
- Cash and votes: www.maplight.org
- From the source: www.fec.gov

To background a business:

(Check out other tipsheets in the IRE Resource Center for more information.)

- Company's own Web site
- Think licenses and business filings:
  - Corporate records- [Arizona Corporation Commission](#)
  - [Liquor licenses](#)
  - City business license
  - [Fictitious business names](#)
  - Professional licenses – Look up your state at [BRB](#)
- Look for lawsuits and court records
- [SEC](#) filings

- UCC and liens:
  - AZ [UCC](#)

- ▣ [Form 990s](#) for nonprofit organizations
- ▣ [Trademarks](#) and [patents](#)
- ▣ [Lobbying](#) and lobbyists
- ▣ Federal [tax court](#)
- ▣ Think about other data that might be relevant
  - ■ [OSHA](#) inspections
  - ■ Federal contracts
  - ■ SBA