Getting Your Name Off the Lists

A step-by-step removal plan for data brokers and people-search sites

Set your expectations first

You are not going to disappear from the internet, and any service that promises that is selling you something. What you can do — in about two hours of work, spread over a few evenings — is move yourself from "anyone can find my address in ten seconds" to "finding me takes real effort." That single change defeats most scam targeting, and it is entirely achievable.

The second thing to know: this is gardening, not surgery. Brokers rebuild their files from public records every few months. Removal is not permanent. Plan on an hour twice a year, and you will stay ahead of it.

Before You Begin: Three Minutes of Setup

Do these three things first. They make everything that follows faster and safer.

1. **Create a "privacy email" address.** Set up a free email account you use only for opt-out requests — something like yourname.optout@gmail.com. Most brokers send a confirmation link you have to click, and this keeps your real address off file at a company whose business is selling addresses. One caution: this address is a doorbell, not the thing being deleted. When a form asks which email addresses to remove, give your real one. Step 4 of the formula explains how to tell the difference.
2. **Make a tracking list.** Paper is fine. Four columns: site name, date requested, confirmed yes/no, and recheck date. A blank tracker is on the last page of this handout.
3. **Gather your variations.** Write down every version of your name and every address and phone number from the last twenty years — maiden name, middle initial, nicknames, old landline, the house you sold in 2009. Brokers file these as separate records. Most people have four to six listings on a single site, and removing one leaves the rest.

Part 1: The Four National Blocks

Start here. These four take about thirty minutes total, they are official, and they cut off the largest pipelines at the source. Everything else in this handout is cleanup by comparison.

1. Pre-approved credit and insurance offers

Go to optoutprescreen.com or call 1-888-567-8688. This is run by the credit bureaus themselves and it is free.

- Online or by phone stops the offers for five years.
- To stop them permanently, complete the form online, then print, sign, and mail it. The permanent option requires a signature — there is no way around that.

Why this one matters most: those "you are pre-approved" envelopes are a favorite target of mail thieves, who use them to open accounts in your name. Stopping them is a security measure, not just a clutter measure.

2. Junk postal mail

Go to dmachoice.org. There is a $6 processing fee and it lasts ten years.

- If you would rather not do it online, mail your name, address, and signature with a $7 check or money order payable to "ANA" to: DMAchoice, Consumer Preferences, P.O. Box 900, Cos Cob, CT 06807.
- The same site has a Deceased Do Not Contact list and a Do Not Contact list for someone in your care — both useful if you are handling mail for a spouse or parent.
- Expect up to 90 days before you notice a difference. Mail already printed is already on its way.

3. Telemarketing calls

Go to donotcall.gov or call 1-888-382-1222 from the phone you want registered. Free, permanent, and it covers cell phones as well as landlines.

4. Marketing email

The Email Preference Service at dmachoice.org is free and lasts ten years. Register the address you actually use.

Part 2: The Formula

Every people-search site works essentially the same way. Learn this six-step loop once and you can remove yourself from any of them, including sites that did not exist when this handout was printed.

1. **Search for yourself on the site first.** You cannot remove a listing you have not found. Type your name and city into the site's own search box.
2. **Copy the web address of your listing.** Click into your own profile, then copy the address from the bar at the top of the browser. Most opt-out forms ask you to paste it in.
3. **Scroll to the very bottom of the page.** Look in the footer for a small link reading Privacy, Do Not Sell My Personal Information, Opt Out, or Remove My Info. It is almost always there — state law requires it — and it is almost always at the bottom, in small grey type.
4. **Fill in the form — and read the email field carefully.** Paste in your listing address, then look at what the form is actually asking for. This is the one place people get it backwards, and there is a box below explaining how to tell.
5. **Open that email and click the confirmation link.** This is the step people skip, and skipping it means nothing happens at all. Check the spam folder — confirmation messages land there constantly.
6. **Write it down, and set a recheck for 90 days out.** Then search the site again to confirm you are actually gone.

Which email do they actually want?

If the field says "enter your email to receive a verification link" — that is only a way to reach you. Use your privacy address. A people-search record is keyed to your name, address, and phone, so removing the listing removes every email attached to it.

If the field says "which email addresses should we remove?" — that field is the record itself.

> Give your real address. A throwaway here suppresses a mailbox nobody was mailing while your real inbox keeps receiving.

> **Three rules that will keep you out of trouble**
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> **Never pay a site to remove your own listing.** Removal is free at every legitimate broker. A site charging you to delete your own information is running a shakedown.
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> **Never give a Social Security number, driver's license number, or full date of birth to an opt-out form.** Your name, city, and an email address are enough. A form demanding more than that is harvesting, not removing.
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> **Be careful with photo ID requests.** A few legitimate brokers do ask for ID to verify you. If you choose to comply, black out everything except your name and photo before you send it.

Part 3: Where to Go

Links change. If one of these fails, do not give up — go to the site's home page and use the footer method from Part 2. That method always works.

Group A: The people-search sites

These are the consumer-facing sites that publish your address, phone number, age, and relatives, and they are what a stranger, a landlord, or a scammer actually sees when they look you up. Start with the first five — they carry the most traffic by a wide margin.

Site	Go here to opt out
Whitepages	whitepages.com/suppression-requests
Spokeo	spokeo.com/optout
BeenVerified	beenverified.com/f/optout/search
Radaris	radaris.com/ng/control/privacy *(requires creating an account)*
MyLife	mylife.com/ccpa/index.pubview
PeopleConnect	One form covers Intelius, TruthFinder, Instant Checkmate, and US Search: suppression.peopleconnect.us
PeopleFinders	peoplefinders.com/opt-out
TruePeopleSearch	truepeoplesearch.com/removal
FastPeopleSearch	fastpeoplesearch.com/removal
Nuwber	nuwber.com/removal/link
ThatsThem	thatsthem.com/optout
FamilyTreeNow	familytreenow.com/optout
ClustrMaps	clustrmaps.com/bl/opt-out
PeekYou	peekyou.com/about/contact/optout

Site	Go here to opt out
InfoTracer	infotracer.com/optout
SearchPeopleFree	searchpeoplefree.com/opt-out
USPhoneBook	usphonebook.com/opt-out
ZabaSearch	zabasearch.com — *use the Privacy link in the footer*

Group B: The wholesalers

These companies rarely show up in a search for your name, but they are the suppliers — the people-search sites buy from them. Removing yourself here is slower and less visible, and it lasts longer. Each of these has a consumer privacy or opt-out page reachable from the footer of its home page; the exact addresses change often enough that the footer is the more reliable route. For this group especially, a written blanket request is usually more effective than a web form — see Part 5.

Site	Go here to opt out
LexisNexis	optout.lexisnexis.com
Acxiom	acxiom.com — *Privacy, then US Consumer Choices*
Epsilon	epsilon.com — *Privacy, then Consumer Information*
Experian Marketing	experian.com/privacy/opting-out
Data Axle	dataaxleusa.com — *Privacy, then opt-out request*
CoreLogic	corelogic.com — *property and mortgage records*
Thomson Reuters (CLEAR)	thomsonreuters.com — *Privacy, then Your Privacy Rights*
Verisk	verisk.com — *insurance and claims history*

Part 4: How to Find the Rest

There are well over a hundred of these companies, and the list in Part 3 is a starting point, not the whole universe. Here is how to find the ones that actually have your file.

Use the state registries — they are free, public, and complete

Four states now require data brokers to register with the government and publish contact and opt-out information. These are the best broker directories in existence, and they cost nothing.

- **California — the big one.** Roughly five hundred registered brokers, each entry listing the company's opt-out link: cppa.ca.gov/data_brokers. You do not have to live in California to read this list and use those links.
- **Vermont:** bizfilings.vermont.gov/databrokersearch/Search
- **Texas:** the Secretary of State maintains a searchable data broker registry.
- **Oregon:** the Department of Consumer and Business Services maintains its registry.

Search for yourself the way a stranger would

- Put your name in quotation marks in Google, with your city: **"Dorothy Reynolds" Nashville**. Then do the same with your phone number in quotes, and your street address in quotes. Whatever comes back on the first three pages is your real exposure — work that list.
- Search under your maiden name, your middle initial, and any nickname. Different name, different file.
- Set up a Google Alert on your own name so you find out when a new site publishes you.

A note on the removal services

Paid services will do this work for you on a subscription, and several offer a free scan that tells you which sites have your information. The scan is genuinely useful even if you never subscribe — run it, write down what it finds, and remove yourself by hand. If you do decide to pay for one, understand what you are buying: not a better result, but someone else doing the repeat visits.

Part 5: Your Legal Leverage in Tennessee

The Tennessee Information Protection Act took effect on July 1, 2025. As a Tennessee resident you now have the right to see what a covered company holds on you, correct it, delete it, and opt out of having it sold. Companies have 45 days to respond.

The efficient way to use it: do not try to list every email address, phone number, and old address you can remember. Send one written request that identifies you by full name and current mailing address, notes any former names or previous addresses you want covered, and asks them to delete all personal information they hold about you and stop selling it. A blanket request like that sweeps in the records you have forgotten — including email addresses you stopped using years ago — and it saves you from the guessing game a form field invites. Most brokers list a privacy request form or a privacy@ address in the footer of their home page.

If a broker ignores you, misses the deadline, or refuses without a good reason, file a complaint with the Tennessee Attorney General's Division of Consumer Affairs. That office cannot handle your individual request for you, but complaints are how it identifies repeat offenders — and a broker that has been complained about tends to answer faster next time.

> **Worth watching: the one-click future**
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> California switched on something genuinely new this year. Its Delete Request and Opt-Out Platform, DROP, lets a California resident file a single request that every registered broker in the state must honor — and as of August 1, 2026, those brokers are legally required to check the system and act. One form instead of a hundred.
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> Tennessee has no equivalent yet, so for now the work in this handout is the work. Connecticut has passed a similar system slated for 2027, and if it spreads, this whole handout gets a great deal shorter. It is a reasonable thing to ask your state legislator about.

Try It Tonight

Twenty minutes, and you will have done the highest-value part of this.

1. Set up your privacy email address. *(5 minutes)*
2. Go to optoutprescreen.com and stop the pre-approved credit offers. *(5 minutes)*
3. Register at donotcall.gov. *(2 minutes)*

4. Search your own name in quotes on Google and write down the first five sites that have listed you. *(8 minutes)*

Next week: work down that list of five using the six-step formula. Then the rest, a few at a time. There is no prize for finishing in one night.

> **What success actually looks like six months from now**
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> Noticeably less junk mail, and no more pre-approved credit envelopes. Fewer unknown numbers calling. Your name and address no longer sitting at the top of the first page of Google results. A couple of stubborn sites that keep republishing you, which you clear again in ten minutes each spring and fall.
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> What it does not look like: total invisibility. Court records, property deeds, voter rolls, and business filings are public by law, and no opt-out reaches them. That is not a failure of the method — it is the actual boundary of what anyone can do, and knowing where that boundary sits is part of the point.
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> The real win is smaller and better than disappearing: you have made yourself an inconvenient target, and you know exactly how the machinery works. That is a permanent gain, and nobody can sell it back to you.

Your Tracking Sheet

Fill in a row each time you send a request. The recheck date is 90 days after you were confirmed removed — that is roughly how long it takes for a file to be rebuilt.

Site	Date sent	Confirmed?	Recheck on