

## How To Skip Trace Without Pretext by Frank Ahearn

My name is Frank M. Ahearn and I am a skip tracer, a skip tracer is someone who finds people, my clients range from private investigators, lawyers to finance companies. Typically, the people I search for have done something to someone like cheated them out of money, cheated with a mate or some other type misdeed.

A skip tracer is usually the last line of defense; we come in when the client has exhausted all means and cannot locate a subject. A good skip tracer picks up the phone, calls family, friends and neighbors for leads to the subjects whereabouts.

The face of skip tracing has changed with the new law passed it prohibits people from calling telephone companies and creating a subterfuge for information. The phone companies have always been a well of information for skip tracers - those days are over.

Interestingly enough, the internet is a great place to locate information and I'm not talking about the database companies that sell regurgitated information for \$9.99. Those databases are good for a starting point in your investigation but be cautious the information provided has never been checked or confirmed - your buying a piece of a persons history with no real proof of what is true or untrue, buyer beware.

The question now is how one finds all the good information online. The answer is in how you search for your subject, simply putting their name in Google or Yahoo does not give you what you need. The key is the sites you hit and how you manipulate the subjects name. For example, Zabasearch is an excellent web site for information, you can put a person's name, search it by city, state or national. You can even search it by year of birth if you have or only last name with a first initial. What is good about Zabasearch besides being free is you can pick up a subjects month and year of birth, sometime a phone or cell number is located.

The next step is after you located some information about your subject from Zabasearch and it appears credible, take some time and hit Superpages, run the addresses you located in the reverse listing, run the name in the Whitepages area and if you pick up a phone number run that through the reverse listings as well. Through Superpages, you may pick up a spouses name or a parent's address the subject may have resides at some point. Take the names you located and go back to Zabasearch and run the names, you will be surprised at what you find.

The inability to pretext phone companies have certainly put a damper in the skip tracing and investigative world, however, people can still be located with out pretext. It's not easy nor is it quick, there is a lot of chipping away at the stone. From my perspective as a skip tracer, I have to become more resourceful and figure out where people have left information behind that I can utilize in my skip trace.

Look at Myspace, people load up information beyond belief. They put up birth dates, occupation, some list high schools, colleges, fraternity, even better some list, cities, states, family member's names and email addresses, not to mention photos. One skip trace I worked where an investigator was doing a disability case on a subject. By manipulating the subjects name I located his Myspace account, the subject had videos of himself riding dirt bikes in an amateur competition. Remarkably enough, the subject listed his next motocross event on his Myspace account; the investigator was there to video tape.

Another skip trace for a client was to assist in locating employment or business entities on a subject. My client had an email address on the subject, what I did was drop everything after the ampersand so the email became joebadguy77. Where ever the subject posted something online be it a Blog an Op-ed site or signed a web sites guest book I'm gonna get a hit. With this particular case, the subject was listed in Zoominfo, busted as we say in the business.

As time goes on, the laws will change and restrict more, and more how information is obtained, its important investigators and skip tracer reinvent the process of locating people and assets. We at AhearnSearch have drastically overhauled our skip tracing methods; there was a time we were paid for information, now we are paid for the process of searching for information.

I truly believe in time that pretext itself will be outlawed which will affect several industries, like banking, financial, investigative and including the legal industry of locating witnesses. My suggestion to all the Investigators, Repoman, Collectors, Lawyers and suspecting spouses either perfect your internet search skills or utilize a company like AhearnSearch for your skip tracing needs.

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<http://www.ahearnsearch.com>  
<http://www.disappear.info>

