

THE GEEK PROFESSOR®

CTRL+Z – How to Reclaim Your Privacy From The Internet

SHARING ONLINE

Data posted online is visible to **everyone**, good or bad and may remain online forever. Do you really want your future employer, future schools, or future love interests to see what you're posting? You can't control what they think of you, but you can control some of the information they have about you.

Be particularly cautious with:

- Private thoughts and feelings
- Controversial political or religious topics
- Personal information (yours or others')
- Travel plans, schedule, etc.
- Hobbies that might help someone guess passwords or use to bully you.
- Information about addictions, medical problems, or other exploitable weaknesses
- Data about your location and valuables you carry or own.

HUNTING YOUR DATA DOWN

Using Google®:

- Quoted search – Use to search for words together instead of separate:
 “jeremy duffy” vs jeremy duffy
- The “minus” operator – type words separated by spaces like normal, but use a minus symbol (without spaces) in front of any word you specifically DON'T want to see.
 “jeremy duffy” –lawyer –shanley
- Site search – A quick way to scan specific sites or domains
 site:.mil - Searches only on military domain sites
 site:army.mil - Searches only on army military sites
 site:hood.army.mil - Searches only the Fort Hood army website
- URL search – Look for keywords anywhere in the website address
 inurl:forum jeremy duffy – Matches: www.sitename.com/forum/members/201782.html

Other services to try:

- Pipl.com – Search by name, username, or other identifiers. A great way to get a picture of their online activity.
- 123people.com – Very similar to pipl.
- Public records – Only state websites and not 3rd party!
 Search for “washington public records” gives:
 - <http://dw.courts.wa.gov/> (**good!**)
 - <http://www.washingtonpublicrecord.com> (Some 3rd party. Avoid.)

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DATA ELIMINATION

Stuff you control

- Delete or replace photos and other submissions
- Remove or sort “friends” into groups. Target access and future postings on those groups
- List profiles you want to get rid of. Change all data possible to fake information and THEN delete the account (poison the well)

Stuff others control (forum posts, comments, reviews, etc)

- Ask nicely
- Lawyer up, but beware the Streisand Effect.

Data brokers

- Use opt-out lists or services to get out of online databases

Public records

- Make note of unflattering information (short term)
- Support better privacy laws (long term)

OUTSHINE THE NEGATIVES

- Register a domain name with your name in it
- Use search engine optimization to make sure it can be scanned properly by search engines
- Have either very interesting or very relevant information
- Spread your name and content around. Comment on forums and other pages using your name
- Sign up on major websites and create full profiles (but only with information you WANT public)

DO BETTER NEXT TIME

- Talk to your friends and family and teach them to protect their and your information better
- Always assume that information given away will be lost or shared
- Opt out of directories or databases whenever possible
- Before submitting any content to the Internet, ask yourself if you would want this brought up someday when you run for President. If the answer is no, reconsider posting.