

OSINT Beginner's Investigation Checklist

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1 SEED DATA — Gather Before You Start

- Full legal name (and any known aliases or maiden names)
- Date of birth
- Last known address and city/state
- Phone number(s)
- Email address(es)
- Known employer or business name
- Social media usernames or handles
- Vehicle information (make, model, plate) if relevant
- Known associates or relatives

2 SEARCH ENGINE PASS

- "[Full name]" "[City, State]" — exact phrase search
Add quotes to force exact match
- "[Full name]" "[Employer]"
- "[Full name]" arrest OR conviction OR court
- "[Full name]" scam OR fraud OR complaint
- "[Phone number]" — search number in quotes
- "[Email address]" — search email in quotes
- "[Full name]" site:linkedin.com
Also try site:facebook.com and site:instagram.com

3 PUBLIC RECORDS

- State court portal — search name in every state subject lived/worked
Find your state portal: search '[state] court records search'
- PACER (pacer.gov) — federal bankruptcy, criminal, and civil cases
- County assessor — property ownership and mailing address
Search '[county name] assessor property search'
- County recorder — deeds, liens, mortgages, judgments
- Secretary of State — business registration by name or officer
- Voter registration — current address (availability varies by state)

- nsopw.gov — national sex offender registry (30 seconds, always check)
- UCC lien search — Secretary of State website, search by name

4 PEOPLE SEARCH TOOLS

- TruePeopleSearch.com — free name and address cross-reference
- Whitepages.com — basic identity and phone lookup
- FastPeopleSearch.com — quick name/address lookup
- BeenVerified or Intelius — paid, more complete (use if free tools insufficient)
- Note addresses that appear consistently across 3+ independent sources

5 SOCIAL MEDIA

- Facebook — search name, try phone number search
- LinkedIn — verify employment claims
- Instagram — check location tags and geotags
- X/Twitter — use advanced search with location filter
- Username search: whatsmyname.app or namechk.com
- Check profile creation date and post history depth

6 REVERSE LOOKUPS

- Reverse image search: Google Images + Yandex + TinEye
Drag profile photo into each engine
- Email: paste in quotes on Google
- Email: haveibeenpwned.com — confirms email is real
- Email: emailrep.io — account age and reputation
- Phone: truepeoplesearch.com or whitepages.com

7 VERIFY & DOCUMENT

- Cross-reference: same result in 3+ independent sources = strong signal
- Weight recent records (last 12 months) more heavily than old data
- Note every source URL, search date, and key finding
- Flag conflicts between sources as leads to investigate further
- Verify significant findings against primary government source before acting

■ RED FLAGS TO NOTE

- Profile photo reverse-searches to a different name or stock image
- No public record history for an adult with normal life activity
- Claimed address matches no public record
- Identity details conflict across sources
- Social media account created very recently
- Reluctance to provide basic verification

■ LEGAL REMINDER

OSINT using public records is legal for personal research. For employment, housing, or credit decisions, the FCRA requires written consent and FCRA-compliant tools. Using results to stalk or harass is illegal. When in doubt, consult a licensed attorney.