



Toddington International Inc.

Online Research and Intelligence Newsletter

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Welcome to the Newsletter

This last month has seen TII staff engaged at a number of conferences across North America including [OSMOSIS15](#) organized by the Hetherington Group and held in Las Vegas on October 12th to 14th, 2015. The Online Social Media & Open Source Investigator's Summit was very well attended with a wide range of delegates from law enforcement, government, military and the private sector. OSMOSIS16 is scheduled to take place next October in Anaheim, CA and you can email the Hetherington Group's [Paul Atkinson](#) for more details.



Julie Clegg speaking at the fully booked OSMOSIS15 conference

TII is making available speakers for conferences into 2016 on topics ranging from Online Intelligence Gathering Techniques to Advanced Investigative

Tradecraft and Cyber Operational Security. Please feel free to [contact us](#) for more information and availability.

Congratulations to the following students who have successfully completed the 40 hour Using the Internet as an Investigative Research Tool™ e-Learning program:

Nikhil Shivdas - Commonwealth Bank (Australia); **Charlotte Jansson** - Skatteverket (Swedish Tax Agency); **Nurfarhana Nasrulhaq binti Mohd Zulkifli** - CyberSecurity Malaysia, **Christian Josephson**, **Jordan Depratto** and **Peter Sandru**.

Using the Internet as an Investigative Research Tool™ **E-Learning Program Relaunched**



We are pleased to announce the re-launch of our highly popular Using the Internet as an Investigative Research Tool™ e-Learning program.

Initially launched in 1998, continually updated and recently redesigned, this highly acclaimed program has been successfully completed by over eight thousand investigators, researchers, and open source intelligence professionals worldwide.

For a fraction of the cost of a classroom-based training course, this flexible and interactive virtual classroom environment allows students to progress at their own pace and competency level with a qualified personal instructor on hand at all times to ensure success.

Enrollment takes only a few moments; online credit card payments are accepted, and group discounts and licensing options are available.

Visit the [TII e-Learning page](#) to find out more and instantly register, or [contact us](#) directly with any questions

Time-limited Introductory Offer Available Now!
Sign up now for just \$399 CAD (Regular price \$750 CAD)

How to be a "Ghost" Online



Image by [David D](#) via Flickr

*By Norm Wilhelm,
Associate, Toddington International Inc.*

A few years ago I had someone ask me 'How do I become invisible online?'. The question can be expressed in many different ways, including 'how do I minimize my online profile', 'how do I remove my footprints', and 'how do I increase my online privacy', with one of the currently popular phrases being 'how do I become a ghost online'. In all its varied forms, this question is still asked by a lot of people today. Here is my current answer to that question:

"The easiest method for becoming a ghost online is: don't own a house or property; don't buy a car, a recreational vehicle, a boat, a plane or heavy equipment; don't get a loan or mortgage; don't use a credit card; don't commit a crime, get a traffic ticket, get a fishing violation, or break a municipal law; don't get sued by a business or financial institution; don't be a witness in a court case; don't get divorced or interviewed by the media; don't graduate from high school, college or university; don't associate with friends or family or coworkers; don't

show up for school or team pictures; don't own a website or a business; don't sell anything online; don't open a social networking account, forum profile, or personal blog; don't own a mobile device; and finally don't go on the Web."

There are a few other points that cover other ways of being found online, but you get the point. Basically, you need to become a hermit, isolated from all forms of modern life, social interactions and electronic communications. And even then, no matter how much effort you put into it, there is always a chance that a family member, associate, or organization, will post your information online in some way or form, defeating all of your efforts.

Summary: if you are living in most parts of the world, it is very difficult to make yourself completely invisible online for the duration of your life.

So, you've thought about it and you want to become invisible, to be a ghost online. Or at least as close to a ghost as you can. It's easy enough to start monitoring your personal information and controlling the information you put onto the Web. The difficult part is getting rid of all the stuff you've posted over the last few years, or that other people and organizations have placed online about you. Some of this information can be removed and some can never be removed. For the purposes of this article I've divided your online electronic information into the following categories: Government Databases; Credit Reports; News Media and Publications; Classified Advertisements; Geolocation /Mapping programs; and, Social Networking Websites.

(Of note, the way that records are stored and accessed can differ greatly from country to country, province to province, state to state and city to city. As a result, the following descriptions are generalizations. Electronic records in the reader's region of the world could conceivably be stored and accessed in a completely different way from what I describe below.)

Government Databases

By government databases I mean any electronic information about you held in a database at the federal, provincial, state or municipal level. This usually covers civil court cases, criminal court cases, prison records, land title records, business licensing, and registered property agreements such as liens and mortgages (for purchases of items like residences, cars, boats, planes, heavy equipment, etc.). Sorry, but these are official records that are usually kept for eternity, and you cannot get them deleted. Depending on where the records are, access to these types of electronic records can be open to public viewing, limited access requiring payment, limited access requiring an account, or limited to public officials and licensed security professionals only. Information from these databases are unlikely to show up in public search engine results. In some places, these records may be paper copy only, and may only be accessible to people who show up and request them in person.

Credit Reports

Credit reports usually include your personal information confirming your identity, then your credit history, account details, debt, and collections; some types may include information on where and when you recently used your credit card. In Canada, or any country that I know of, you cannot delete your credit information, consisting of a record of where and when you spent your money. The rules for accessing this information can differ greatly for different countries. For Canada, you can get a copy of your own credit report from one of two major companies for a nominal fee (e.g. [Equifax](#) and [Transunion](#)). In general, a copy can be ordered by law enforcement representatives, and some regulatory agencies, without your permission, but anyone else would need a signed document from you giving them permission to request your credit report.

Professional News and Media Publications

Media and newspaper records are pretty simple. If your name appears in a published online article by a professional publishing organization (newspaper or magazine), there isn't much you can do about it. Draw comfort from the knowledge that nowadays most media and newspaper records are put into archive after a period of time, currently averaging about two years. The articles may still be available in that newspaper or media archive, but that article will then start dropping off of search engine results (see later paragraph on what to do about search engine results).

Other News and Media Publications

These are like news and media but include organization newsletters and pseudo-journalism websites. It looks like a news publication, but they do not have the same protection as true journalism-related websites. You can make a request to these organizations to remove content you object to, but it is not uncommon that it requires a civil court case to have information removed from these websites, with court decisions made on a case-by-case basis. The current trends for these types of publications is that, due to privacy concerns, most documents are being removed from public viewing on websites; or may now require an account to access; or search engines are being prohibited ('disallowed') from accessing the contents.

Classified Advertisements

The whole point of these types of websites is to let as many people as possible know that you have an item you want to sell or buy and how to contact you. If you post your information here, then you really can't blame anyone else, and don't be surprised if it shows up in search engine results. Currently, it is not unusual for information about listed ads to disappear from search engine results within six months, usually less for websites like Craigslist. Due to the massive abuse of contact information posted on ad websites by spammers, fraudsters, and 'collectors of contact information', it is becoming less common for people to even post contact information. If you have contact information on these types of websites it may disappear from search results eventually.

Geolocation / Mapping Programs

This heading includes any program that takes pictures of public places and ties them to a map grid system or address location system. This would include the Google series (Maps, Streetview, and Earth), Bing Maps, Mapquest, etc., and many others that have either been phased out or just aren't that popular. Information from images shot overhead or at oblique angles, using either satellite, aircraft or drone, are considered to be in the public domain (as supported by numerous civil cases against Google since Streetview came out). However as a result of other civil court cases over the last few years (not all of them in North America), it is now possible to request that specific images and viewpoints are not only blurred to obscure identifying information (likes faces, plates and house numbers), you can now also request to have entire street frontage removed. Each mapping program has its own request system, so you have to search how to do that. These requests are not always successful; be specific, identify the dates of imagery, from where to where, and giving a good reason for why you want it removed will increase your chances of success.

Search Engine Results

As a result of a civil court case in 2014, it is now possible to request that search engine results can be removed. The process differs for each search engine, but essentially follows a similar process. Like images in mapping programs, you can't just request everything about yourself to be removed or deleted. Be specific, describe the result, provide the URL address, and identify why and/or how this is damaging to you.

Social Networking Websites

This is the big one. Most content about you on social networking websites is likely to have been put there by yourself over the last few years, and its only now that you realize you don't want it to be visible to the general public. Removal of personal information from social networking websites is time-consuming and requires a lot of communication with website administrators: including numerous forms, faxes, emails, and even telephone calls. It is possible to delete a lot of accounts and account information yourself. A lot of websites will remove information for a valid reason, but don't be surprised if some websites refuse to remove your information without a very darn good reason or even require a legal court order of some kind.

Websites and Tools

Having decided to get rid of your information, you probably needs some help and/or some additional guidance. Below is a selection of websites that act as examples of the many ways that can be used to remove your online information. It is only a short list of all the websites and tools available, with a full list containing hundreds of links. As a caution, remember that some older websites are 'dead'; there is no active administrator and it may take a long time to find someone who is willing to help you access the dead site and remove that personal

information.

[Account Killer](#)

- a compilation of websites with information on how (if possible) to remove related information

[Apple Support](#)

- describes the steps for removing personal information or access to information from Apple devices

[AVG Privacy Fix](#)

- downloadable program for PC, Mac and mobile that helps track privacy options

[Bing Clear History](#)

- clear all of your Bing History information (repeat if you use Bing again in future)

[Google Information](#)

- directions for (possibly) removing information that appears in Google search results

[Google Maps History](#)

- directions for deleting your Google Maps history

[Google Streetview](#)

- directions for deleting Google Streetview imagery

[Just Delete Me](#)

- a compilation of websites with information on how (if possible) to remove related information

[My Permissions](#)

- browser and mobile app that sends you alerts when other apps try to access your information

[Peekyou Optout Form](#)

- online request form for removing your information from the Peekyou database

The Future

If you really really really want to have a zero Web presence, this is just the tip of the iceberg. You need to set up your system a specific way, use the right programs, and use the right detection programs that prevent other programs and websites from acquiring your personal and/or system information. That takes a lot more technical advice and knowledge than can be expressed in a simple article.

In closing, let's stick to just your online information and your future. Pretend you currently have a clean slate. There is no more information about you anywhere on the Web that you are able to find, no results show up in any search results, and all your accounts have been deleted. Unfortunately, none of this works very well if you just go back to doing what you were doing before. From this point on, you should be thinking about what personal information you are handing out to people and organizations. How are you accessing the Web? What emails you are using? What names are you putting on accounts? What information are you posting? What information about you are friends and family posting? With a little bit of thought, the right programs, and some advice from the right people, you can remain as anonymous as it is possible to be while still enjoying the Internet.

Upcoming Training - Vancouver, Canada



INTERNET INTELLIGENCE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Vancouver, BC
December 3rd and 4th, 2015

Building upon the principles of the intelligence cycle, this comprehensive 2-day workshop provides detailed instruction in the production of timely, actionable, and relevant tactical and strategic intelligence products for all sectors, levels of authority and operational requirements.

Attendees will learn how to:

- Plan and prioritize projects based on scope, time, quality and budget.
- Categorize information based on operational, tactical and strategic goals.
- Integrate and corroborate offline information with online information.
- Gather and evaluate information from a wide variety of online sources including the surface web, deep and dark web, social media and networking platforms.
- Maintain online Operational Security.
- Contextualize information in conjunction with supporting intelligence.
- Identify knowledge gaps and locate necessary information.
- Convert raw data into an appropriate format for analysis.
- Consider local, regional, national and international standards for dissemination of final intelligence products.

Click [here for more information, a full brochure and to register](#), or [contact us directly with any questions](#)

"Early Bird" price extension for TII Online Research and Intelligence Newsletter subscribers
Sign up now for just \$999 CAD!

Resources for the OSINT Professional



[SnoopSnoo](#) - Reddit and Subreddit analytics tool

[Busbud](#) - View the most "Instagrammed" locations in Canada & the US

[Moz Open Site Explorer](#) - Analyze a site's link profile over time and determine possible associations

[Advangle](#): Site that lets you conduct advanced web searches with Google and Bing

[HTTrack](#) - Free tool for saving websites for (browsable) offline viewing

[Archive.is](#) - A "personal Wayback Machine" that takes a 'snapshot' of a webpage that "will always be online even if the original page disappears"

[Social Searcher](#) - Free Social Media search engine

[FindExif](#) - Site that lets you extract and view the EXIF data from any online JPG file

[ManyCities](#) - Explore the spatio-temporal patterns of mobile phone activity in cities across the world

[Norse Attack Map](#) - Fascinating global, real-time cyber attack map

[Library of Congress Virtual Reference Shelf](#) - Good selection of free online resources sorted by category

[Instant Street View](#) - Instant Google Street View

[Freenet Project](#) - Downloadable censorship-resistant software for web anonymity

[Cyotek WebCopy](#) - Save websites or parts of a website to a hard disk for offline browsing

On Asking the Right Questions...



“In this world we do not see things as they are. We see them as we are, because **what we see depends mainly on what we are looking for**”

Sir John Lubbock

Profiling your personal life, one Facebook "Like" at a time: ["What Our Digital Footprint Says About Us"](#)

[This Next-Gen Stingray Uses Facebook and WhatsApp Messages to Track Users](#)

[Tor Messenger: A guide to using Tor's encrypted instant messaging tool](#)

[Facebook indexes trillions of posts to make them more easily searchable](#)

[10 Offline Browsers For Windows](#)

How to effectively delete your social media accounts: ["How to Make a Clean Break with the Clingiest of Social Networks"](#)

[How to Stop Google Ads from Following You around the Internet](#)

[Six things everyone should do to secure their Facebook account](#)

[How to do Reverse Image Search on your Mobile Phone](#)

[How to Create RSS Feeds for Google Search Results](#)

[Six things firms should do to improve cybersecurity](#)

[Find the Person Behind an Email Address](#)

[Startup Echosec collects social media from world's most volatile hot spots](#)

[What is semantic search and why does it matter?](#)

[The "Internet of Things": 17 Facts Everyone Should Know](#)

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