A MAGIC SKIP TRACING BUTTON DOESN'T EXIST

How to Succeed as Skip Tracing Gets Harder.

Tips for Skip Tracers and Investigators.

BellesLink.com

A Magic Skip Tracing Button Doesn't Exist.

How To Succeed As Skip Tracing Gets Harder.

We talk with skip tracers everyday. Often they are looking for what we call **"the magic skip tracing button."** They're looking for the next great database that tells them exactly where their target is, or, they're looking for a tool so simple it's a slam-dunk every time.

If you have been looking for that magic skip tracing tool, forget about it. It doesn't exist. If your skips were that easy to find, your client wouldn't need you.

We understand. The easier it is to find skips, the better it is for you. You will be more profitable and your business will grow. We believe in the near future finding skips will be tougher and take more time than it does today. Now is the time to prepare.

In this guide we cover potential changes in the data-broker industry that will affect your skip tracing operations and we suggest strategies to help you increase your success in an era of new regulation.

BellesLink.com

Senate Action Likely to Affect Our Industry

On December 18, 2013, The United Sates Senate held a hearing reviewing data brokers: *"A Review of the Data Broker Industry: Collection, Use, and Sale of Consumer Data for Marketing Purposes."*

Specifically the Senate looked at:

- **What data about consumers does the data broker industry collect?**

- **How specific is this data?**

- **How does the data broker industry obtain consumer data?**

- **Who buys this data and how is it used?**

Targets of the committee's probe—Equifax Inc., Epsilon, Acxiom Corp., Experian Plc, TransUnion LLC, Reed Elsevier NV, Spokeo, Datalogix and Rapleaf—were asked to respond to questions about the consumer information they collect, how it's obtained, and who can purchase and use it.

The Senate committee's report peels back the layers of the data broker industry and highlights where it views current laws as being inadequate.

The Senate found that:

- Data brokers collect a huge volume of detailed information on hundreds of millions of consumers.

- Data brokers sell products that identify financially vulnerable consumers.

- Data broker products provide information about consumer offline behavior to tailor online outreach by marketers.

- Data brokers operate behind a veil of secrecy

The committee's report concluded with a call for **continued "vigorous" oversight** of the industry. The director of the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection, and Senate committee witness, revealed the FTC will release its own report on the data broker industry in 2014.

BellesLink.com

More Scrutiny of Data Brokers

Based on the Senate committee's report and the FTC's growing interest, we can say with confidence there is going to be more and more scrutiny of the data broker industry. Potentially, this will mean new laws and regulations pertaining to consumer information that will impact skip tracing operations in the not-so-distant future.

Though the arrival of new regulations may depend on which party, Democrats or Republicans, controls the U.S. Congress, scandals involving the N.S.A., Edward Snowden and retail data breaches have made **personal digital privacy a bi-partisan issue** that isn't going away.

Skip tracers should prepare for theses possible changes now. With increased scrutiny from law makers and regulators, innovation in the data broker industry will be slowed. That next great database you've been waiting for won't be coming anytime soon.

Read the Full Senate Committee Report
[A Review of the Data Broker Industry: Collection, Use, and Sale of Consumer Data for Marketing Purposes.](#)

BellesLink.com

Potential Impacts To Skip Tracers

If implemented, new laws and regulations may place game changing restrictions on database information. It will still be available, but possibly much harder to obtain. There are likely to be regulations regarding how long you can store the information and tightened controls over access.

If your skip tracing success relies primarily on database information, instead of communications with skips and targets, you could see big impacts on your business. These changes would make skip tracing more difficult and more time consuming due to:

1. Regulated access to database sources**—you may not qualify**

2. Increasing compliance requirements**—you may not be prepared**

3. Importance of communications, not just data, for finding skips**—you may not have the skills**

Compliance Is No Longer Optional

The CFPB has already shown it's inclined to issue harsh penalties, making non-compliance with current and potential regulations increasingly risky. Compliance will no longer be optional, it will be the cost of doing business for every skip tracing operation.

Skip Tracing Compliance Resources - From the BellesLink Blog

Database People Search: What's it Costing You?

Spoofing and the Truth in Caller ID Act of 2009. What you need to know.

A Cell Phone Ping: What's The Law and What's The Lie?

What Will You Do When the Lender Calls?

Successful Skip Tracing Despite Regulation

If the next great database isn't coming and CFPB compliance is becoming mandatory, how are you going to go about finding your skips and making a profit?

If you're looking for a simple answer, a magic button, it doesn't exist. The way your business will survive, and thrive, in a new era of data broker regulation is by increasing the efficiency of your skip tracing and building compliance into your operations.

Here are some suggestions for improving your operations in four key areas.

1   Make Your Skip Tracing Fully Compliant.

The tools you use for skip tracing and case management are the first things you should review when building or subscribing to a fully-compliant system for your business.

When evaluating compliance in your operations, here are the essential elements you need:

1. Saving database searches to the case.

2. Recording all inbound and outbound calls.

3. Saving email and text communications to the case.

4. Auditing of call recordings by your client.

5. Automatic deletion of expired case files and data.

6. Expert training and support that offers skip tracers effective, compliant techniques.

As your clients follow the lead of regulators and take an increasing interest in compliance, having these elements in place will become a competitive advantage for your business.

Resource: [Compliance in Skip Tracing](#)

2   Start Improving Your Efficiency.

More efficient systems eliminate wasted time and create more time for skip tracing. The two biggest time killers are: **1)** gathering information and **2)** verifying information.

If you can be more efficient at both, you're going to be way ahead. Here's how:

- **Eliminate copying & pasting** of search information from a browser into your case management tool. Automate this process and save a ton of time everyday.

- **Stop calling wrong numbers.** Dialing mistakes are a huge waste of time. Use automated or browser-based calling to remove the chance of human error.

- **Make and receive calls faster.** Use browser-based calling instead of a desk or cell phones. Easier dialing and visual call management saves at least 20 seconds per call.

Resource: [Phone Calling Tips for Skip Tracing and Investigations](#)

3   Use A Time Saving Skip Tracing System.

To be be compliant and more efficient you need to consider the tools you use. Most operations "Frankenstein" something together to cover all the bases. Typically this includes databases from 2-3 vendors, a virtual phone number from Google™, email through GMail™ and a burner phone for inbound calls and texts. This might get the job done, but manually saving information from these stand-alone sources is a time-killer. Also, achieving full compliance with an assembled system is next to impossible.

Whether you build your own system or subscribe to one, here are the essential components you need:

1. A unified case manager that automatically saves your searches, communications, and data in one place. Thorough case management is the foundation of compliance.

2. Integrated database searches that are automatically saved to a case.

BellesLink.com

3. Browser-based calling with click-to-answer/click-to-dial and automatic call recording. You will save time on calls, eliminate wrong numbers, and support compliance.

4. Virtual numbers and email addresses that can be assigned to a case with all inbound and outbound communications saved.

5. Security and data-management for your case files.

If skip tracing is going to take more time, then you need to look at where you can get some back. Moving away from a cobbled-together set of tools towards an integrated system may offer the biggest area of improvement. Choosing the right system can easily save one skip tracer 2 hours per day.

4   Cut Your Skip Tracing Costs.

If there are new regulations and compliance requirements, your clients will realize that skip tracing isn't as simple as pushing a button and they will be willing to pay fairly for the work you do. Until then, you need to cut costs where you can.

Here's how:

1. **Cut telephone costs.** Whether you use landlines or mobile phones, these costs put a big dent in your profits. New browser-based calling tools, made specifically for skip tracing, can eliminate nearly all of your telephone hard costs while boosting compliance. These systems, such as BellesLink, offer both inbound and outbound calling for a fixed monthly price instead of the variable price you're paying now. Better yet, browser-based calling can easily scale up without new equipment.

2. **Cut database costs.** Most operations use pay-per-search databases, but less expensive options are available. Systems such as BellesLink include unlimited database searches across the nine search types skip tracers use most. Though one database provider may not always be enough, using an unlimited service for 70%–80% of your searches reduces your database costs significantly.
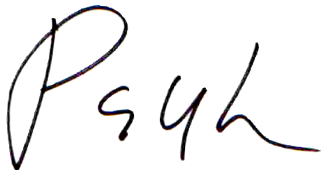
Resource: How to Cut Your Skip Tracing Costs

Take an objective look at your skip tracing techniques and tools.

If today your skip tracing success is directly tied to database information, consider taking a look at your operations. The signs point to increased regulation of the data broker industry in the not-too-distant future. If you are relying primarily on database information for skip tracing, you need to look ahead.

There is no magic skip tracing button. Stop searching for a simple solution and focus your efforts on efficiency, lower operating costs and getting better responses with your communications. If you do, you will not only save time and money, you'll find more skips faster.

If you'd like to get the latest information on skip tracing best practices, read and subscribe to the **BellesLink blog.** If you're interested in learning how BellesLink can reduce costs and build compliance for your business, give us a call at 970.328.0400 or **request a demo.**

Thanks, we look forward to hearing from you.

Paul Kulas
Head Belle Ringer
Linkedin
970.328.0400

BellesLink.com

Close More Cases. Maintain Compliance.

BellesLink is fully compliant, cloud-based software designed exclusively for Skip Tracing and Investigations. Use BellesLink to connect with skips, subjects and targets, to verify and gather information, save time and money.

Want to know more?

Request a BellesLink Demo Today

Visit BellesLink.com/demo

Connect with BellesLink. New Skip Tracing Articles Every Month.

Learn Skip Tracing Blog | Linkedin | Twitter

BellesLink.com