FREE GUIDE · MIKE STRASSBURG IT SERVICES & SUPPORT

Data Removal Services: Worth It?

DeleteMe, Cloaked and others promise to wipe your info off the internet. Here's what's good and what's junk.

THE HONEST ANSWER **They help. None get it all.**

In a Consumer Reports study, paid services removed only **about 1 in 3** listings after four months. The best removed about 2 in 3. Doing it yourself worked best, but takes hours.

WHAT THESE SERVICES DO

People-search sites like Whitepages and Spokeo collect your address, phone number, age and relatives from public records and sell it to anyone.

Removal services send opt-out requests to those sites for you, then keep checking, because **your info often comes back**.

TWO DIFFERENT KINDS

Removal — **DeleteMe, Optery, EasyOptOuts, Incogni.** Take your info off people-search sites.

Masking — **Cloaked.** Gives you fake emails and phone numbers so your real ones don't spread. Cloaked also does removal.

WORTH A LOOK

BEST VALUE
EasyOptOuts
About $20 a year
Tied for best results in Consumer Reports' test, for the lowest price. Basic reports, but it does the job.

TOP RESULTS
Optery
Free scan · paid plans
The other top performer in the test. The free scan shows where you're listed, and paid plans show screenshot proof.

EASIEST
DeleteMe
About $129 a year
Wirecutter's top pick. Set it and forget it, with reports every few months. Family plans available.

FOR SPAM CALLS
Cloaked
About $10+ a month
Mostly gives you fake phone numbers and emails to sign up with, plus removal. Pricier, and reviews are mixed.

JUNK & WATCH-OUTS

- **"Erase you from the internet" promises.** No service can remove public records, news stories or social media.
- **Scary free scans** that list hundreds of "exposures" just to push a pricey plan.
- **One-time or "lifetime" removals.** Your info comes back, so removal has to keep happening.
- **Low scorers in testing.** Confidently and ReputationDefender removed under 10% in Consumer Reports' test.
- **Paying twice.** Your bank, insurance or antivirus may already include removal. Check first.

FREE THINGS THAT WORK

- **Look yourself up first.** Search your name and town in Google to see what's out there.
- **Google "Results about you."** Finds your phone and address in Google and asks to hide them. (It hides them from Google only.)
- **Opt out yourself** on the big sites: Whitepages, Spokeo, BeenVerified, Intelius and Radaris. Repeat twice a year.
- **Permission Slip** by Consumer Reports. A free app that sends delete requests for you.
- **Use a spare email and number** for store sign-ups and contests. A free Google Voice number works well.

My take

Start free.
Turn on Google's "Results about you" and opt out of the big 5 sites.

Want it done for you?
EasyOptOuts for value, or DeleteMe for hands-off.

Sick of spam calls?
Cloaked can help by keeping your real number private.

Based on Consumer Reports' people-search removal study (2024) and Wirecutter's data removal review (2025). Prices change, so check before you buy.

Need help?

Want help cleaning up your info online? I can walk you through it.

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