

# What Do Public Records Say About You?

## Managing Your Personal Information

(NAPSA)—Learning how much of your personal information is available to the general public may help you protect yourself.

People are often surprised to find out how much of their information is public record and has been readily available both on- and offline for decades.

### How does information become public record?

Information such as your name, age, address, phone number and more is available through public records including mortgages, property records, deeds, civil or criminal records and professional licenses.

These records are public by law as a public safety/transparency measure. Also, when you sign up for a giveaway or promotion, you are often exchanging your information with a company. You may reap a reward, such as a prize or discounted service, while the company benefits from the ability to transact on your information.

### What should consumers do?

“Do self-research, including online self-background checks, online searches, and social networking research to identify where information about you exists,” said Ed Petersen, executive vice president at Intelius, a leading provider of personal safety and information services that also educates consumers about public information. “Being aware of what information is out there and how it gets there empowers and prepares you to be proactive about discrepancies in situations where they might arise, such as a date, job inter-



**When you sign up for a giveaway or promotion, you may exchange the reward or discounted price for your privacy.**

---

view, or other social or professional situation.”

### What about consumers with special privacy needs?

While public information generally allows consumers to research the people in their world for personal safety reasons and encourages social and political transparency, there are consumers with special safety issues who may prefer their information suppressed.

Consumers with issues such as domestic violence or stalkers can temporarily “opt out” from Internet services such as Intelius.

The most effective way for those with such a concern to suppress public information, however, is to contact the custodians of this info, such as the county land records office. This may require a court order, but ensures that information is not available from the public records custodian, Intelius or other providers.