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FOR THE C.A.S.E. PROGRAM

# FRAUD ALERT!

## **SEARCHING FOR “YOU” ON THE WEB**



Most of us use internet search engines daily to find information about a variety of topics that interest us, but have you ever used the internet to find information about you?

Instead of wondering what personal information is on the internet and available to view by anyone, enter your name in your internet search engine, such as Google or Bing, and find out for yourself.

When searching for you on the web, be sure to use quotations around your name, such as “John Doe”. The quotation marks tell the search engine to find the words exactly within the quotation marks which will help you in your search for yourself on the web. If you don’t use the

quotation marks, your results will include all web entries that contain John and Doe. If you want to narrow down your search further, enter your name in quotation marks and then use the plus sign and another word such as Colorado (“John Doe” + Colorado). The results at the top of the list will refer to those web matches that most closely meet the search criteria you entered. You may be surprised by how much and what type of information is retrieved in your search (you may also be surprised how many other people share your name).

Curious to know what else is out there? Instead of your name, search for your home address or search for your email address. Remember, a lot of information about you is contained in public records, such as real estate/property information, so results of your search don’t necessarily require alarm. It is a good idea, however, to see and read the information that is available for the world to see.

What do you do if you see that too much information is out there on the web or that the information isn’t correct? Make sure when signing up for accounts or services that you read the privacy policy of the company you are doing business with. Many times you can opt out of information sharing or adjust security settings to gain more control over the type of information available for public viewing. You can also contact the webmaster of many sites and request that information about you be removed, corrected or limited. Don’t be fooled, however, getting information off of the web is a lot harder than getting it on.

Once you have completed your search for yourself on the web and are over the surprise about the information you retrieved about yourself (whether you think it is too little or too much), gear up for another search — this time on your kids.

Contact your local police agency if you think you are a victim of a crime.  
To contact the Weld County District Attorney's Office, call (970) 356-4010 ext. 4702.