

## Cell Phone Directory - Fact or Fiction?

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By now, almost everyone has heard of the much publicized National Cell Phone Directory. Much-touted as a convenient 411 directory-style service to reverse lookup cell phone numbers, support for this initiative from has faded to the point where it is highly unlikely to ever be launched. Privacy advocates, consumer groups and the major cellular providers like Verizon, Sprint, Cingular & Nextel have all lobbied hard to prevent realization of this initiative.

### HOW CELL PHONE NUMBERS ARE TRACED

For law enforcement organizations, a simple call to the cell phone provider is all it usually takes to get the owner's name and address for any cell phone number. For everyone else, the usual route is to contact one of the many private investigator's and information broker's who provide such services like those listed at [www.datahawk.com](http://www.datahawk.com). As with any non-public data, there will always be some way for investigators to access it. Typical methods include:

1. Checking a person's credit header information. Many people mistakenly will list their "private" cell phone number on credit applications, which quickly end up in reverse-searchable databases.
2. Calling the cell phone number and attempting to convince the owner that they need to provide some form of "confirmation" that they own the account.
3. Contacting the cellular provider and attempting to elicit the account holder's information directly.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO KEEP YOUR CELL PHONE NUMBER PRIVATE AND SECURE

1. Never give out your cell phone number in combination with your name and address. Most cell numbers make their way into public databases when you apply for loans, ordering something online, or any other transaction that will associate your name together with your cell phone number. And despite any assurances that your information won't be sold, traded, or simply given away, don't believe it.
2. Contact your cellular service provider's security department for additional safeguards that can be placed on your account to prevent most unauthorized inquiries. These services are free, and add an extra layer of protection for your account information.
3. Never use a street address when you activate your cellular service. At a minimum always use a P.O. Box or Postal Forwarding service for your address on the account.
4. If all else fails, use a pre-paid account for your cellular service. If the cellular provider insists that you provide a name or address, simply make one up.

Other helpful information regarding this topic can be found at: [www.datahawk.com](http://www.datahawk.com)

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