

Online Tools: Finding and Preserving Online Evidence

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The following list of resources was created for a presentation regarding online defamation to the Vancouver Association of Law Librarians. Readers can access these tools to search for and preserve online postings. We have found them helpful in matters involving allegations of online defamation and breach of privacy.

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WINHTRACK:

This program allows you to download an entire website, including links and sub-domains. It is an excellent tool if you want to preserve a website *exactly as it looked at a point in time*. The interface is somewhat technical, with a number of options for preserving images, flash content and linked content. HTRACK is a freeware download.

SCREENSHOT TOOLS:

These allow you take a snapshot of how a webpage looks on your screen. Many also allow you to crop the image, blur names/faces, and otherwise make notations.

- [Awesome Screenshot](#) – (Firefox, Chrome)
- [Screenshot \(By Google\)](#) – (Chrome)
- [Fireshot for Internet Explorer](#) – (Internet Explorer)

SOCIAL MEDIA SEARCHES

These websites allow you to search for specific terms, including names and phrases, in Facebook and Twitter. Twitter's standard "search" function only allows you to search back 10 days. In Facebook, even if people set their profile to "private", any posts they make to "public" walls or profiles are visible.

- [OpenBook](#), [Gabberface](#) – facebook search tools
- [Snapbird](#), [Monitter](#) – Twitter search tools
- [Spokeo](#) –searches multiple white-page listings, social media sites, etc. (subscription required)

COURT APPLICATIONS

1. Can obtain information about identity

There is a form of application known as a "Norwich Pharmacal" application. It allows lawyers to get a court order compelling internet service providers, website domain hosts or email providers to disclose any identifying information in their possession.

Although many of these companies are based outside of Canada (Google, Microsoft, Go Daddy), they will comply with Canadian court orders in most cases.

2. Can obtain hard drive and metadata

A difficult order to obtain, it can be used to seize a hard drive, digital camera or cell phone, which can then be examined forensically. A model "Anton Piller Order", which much be used for all such applications is available on the BC Courthouse Library [website](#).

3. Can shut down defamatory websites or accounts

Courts can order that a defamatory website be taken down or de-indexed.