

EXCALIBUR

News & Updates from Merlin Information Services

Winter 2008

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The Right-Brained Skiptracer by Mike Does, President

Veteran skiptracers, those who learned their craft in the days of printed cross-directories and Selectric typewriters, have a decided advantage over those who learned with computers and easily accessible, low-cost databases.

Skiptracing involves both left-brained and right-brained activity. The left brain uses logic, facts, and details to reach conclusions. The right brain uses feelings and intuition. Skiptracers who learned before having access to online data tend to be "right brained" because they learned to locate people by using intuition and by sharpening their listening and relationship skills. Their primary skiptracing tool was the telephone, so they knew how to ask questions and then listen carefully, not only to what was being said, but to how it was being said, and sometimes to what was *not* said. They listened at least twice as much they talked. ([continued](#))



Product Focus: Comprehensive Reports

Merlin's Comprehensive Reports provide a cost-effective alternative to searching numerous databases. A Comprehensive Report accesses multiple data sources, resulting in more thorough and detailed information than a traditional search.

Investigator Background Report \$3.50

Contains the most likely current address for the subject, possible relatives and neighbors, possible bankruptcies, judgments, and tax liens, address history for the subject, watercraft registrations, FAA certificates, and an option to add a criminal record search.

Complete Report \$7.50

Contains extensive results, including everything found in the Investigator Background Report plus property and deed transfers, corporations and other possible business affiliations, UCC filings, professional licenses, court filings, and much more.

Comprehensive Reports are available in the People section of the Main Search Menu or directly from your Link to America or Link to America Pro Results List. Your Report will be returned within minutes and can be saved to your computer for future reference.

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Training Opportunities

Merlin seminars are developed and taught by Private Investigator and Merlin founder, Mike Does. Take advantage of Mike's many years of experience in investigations, plus his expertise in database management and research, and you're sure to improve your research and investigative skills.

Effective Use of Public Record for Skiptracing

Learn the big secret of skiptracing, search strategies for dealing with truncated SSNs, the best way to

verify a current address, and more!

NEW! Advanced Skiptracing Workshop

Participants are given the unique opportunity to submit a skiptrace job to Mike Does and learn how he uses intuition, logic, and databases to locate a subject. See how to interpret clues based on years of experience and watch as Mike "solves the case" during this online interactive workshop.

For more information or to sign up, please contact Merlin Sales at 800-367-6646.

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Tips to Better Searching

Search smarter and get better results!

- **Less Is More**

Not getting the search results you expected? Try entering less information. The less information you enter, the more information is returned. Not all records contain all information. For example, do not include a date of birth or middle initial in your search criteria.

- **SSN Is Enough!**

If you have a Social Security number for your subject, run the search by SSN only. Do not enter information in any other field when searching by SSN.

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Meet A Few Members of the Sales Team!



[Leanne Roberts](#)
Regional Sales Manager

Leanne oversees the Western Region Sales Team. She is responsible for new client sales for California, Alaska, and Hawaii. Leanne has been with Merlin since 2006 and has over 25 years of sales experience.

Merlin CEO Keith Brown recently received a phone call from one of Leanne's customers, who was particularly pleased with the level of service he had received. He wanted to share the experience and let us know what a pleasure it is to work with Leanne. If you ask Leanne what she enjoys most, she'll tell you "helping our customers." She's doing a great job!



[Matthew Zak](#)
Account Sales Representative

Matt assists customers with training and product knowledge, introduces new products to existing customers, and identifies ways to save customers money with subscriptions or other services.

Matt has been a valued member of the Merlin team for 2-1/2 years. When it comes to his customers, he really enjoys discussing and evaluating search trends and determining the most cost-effective solutions.

In his spare time, Matt enjoys participating in the many outdoor activities available in Northwest Montana, and playing basketball on Merlin's 3 on 3 team, The Merlin Wizards.

[Melanie Hayek](#)
Customer Service Representative



Melanie provides excellent service to Merlin's customers and if you've spoken to her on the phone, you know she does just that! She helps customers use Merlin products correctly, offers useful searching tips, and supports Merlin's batching services. Melanie has been with Merlin for 5 years.

Melanie grew up on a farm in Montana, to which she attributes her love of nature. She enjoys camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, photography, and spending time with family.



Jamie Spaulding
Sales/Customer Support Representative

If you've ever called Merlin, chances are you've spoken to Jamie. Everyone knows Jamie for her friendly demeanor, outgoing personality, and general helpfulness. If you have a question she can help! Jamie is very knowledgeable about the most effective ways to search Merlin databases to return the best results, and really enjoys helping with locates. She has built lasting relationships with many of our customers and enjoys hearing about their families, hobbies, and jobs. "Everyone has a story," says Jamie.

Jamie is proud mom to a 5-year-old daughter, who keeps her busy. In her spare time, she enjoys visiting nearby Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks and dreams of traveling to as many national parks as she can.

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Upcoming Trade Shows and Conferences

Merlin will be at the following trade shows and conferences. Please stop by our booth and meet the Merlin team!

February 16-18, 2008

TALI (TX Association of Licensed Investigators) Mid-Winter Conference
San Antonio, TX

March 19-21, 2008

NCFIA (Northern CA Fraud Investigators Association) Conference
Monterey, CA

April 3-5, 2008

PAWLI (Professional Association of Wisconsin Licensed Investigators) Conference
Wisconsin Dells, WI

April 14-16, 2008

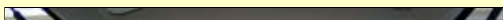
Society for H.R. Management: Staffing and Management Conference and Expo
Nashville, TN

April 30 - May 3, 2008

NCISS Big Apple Conference
New York City

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Merlin's Community of Giving



The Merlin elves kept busy this past holiday season working their magic to support neighbors in need.

In November, Merlin employees donated over 700 pounds of food to the Veteran's Food Pantry of Kalispell, Montana. The donations helped make up holiday food baskets for 80 Veteran's families. The need for assistance is great. In 2006, almost 2,800 people benefited from the services and supplies from this local pantry.

In December, employees helped out Santa by purchasing gifts for area foster children who are under the care of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) for Kids. The gifts were wrapped, brought to the Merlin office and placed under the Christmas tree for Santa to deliver. Thanks to Merlin employees, the specific wishes of many foster children were met on Christmas morning.

Also, in lieu of holiday greeting cards this past year, Merlin continued its tradition by making a donation to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

Look for more stories about Merlin giving back to their community in future issues of this newsletter!

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The Right-Brained Skiptracer, continued

Here's an example of the importance of listening more than talking. Let's say you're looking for somebody named Laurie Herrera and you have a possible phone number for her. Your cross-directory indicates a Ben and Laura Harvey at this phone number at 1355 Elmhurst St., Oakland, CA. Could Laura Harvey be the subject Laurie Herrera? Could be, but how do you make this determination? I would call the number and ask whoever answers, "Is this the Laurie Herrera residence at 1335 Elmhurst St?" Two things to note: 1) I asked for Laurie Herrera, the person I am looking for. I know she is listed as Laura Harvey but I want to hear the reaction when I ask for Laurie Herrera. 2) I mixed up the address a bit. Normally, people will automatically reply, "It's 1355 not 1335, who are you?" I listen carefully to see how long it takes for a response to my asking for Laurie Herrera. If the immediate answer is "Never heard of her" and they hang up, I really don't know if Laurie Herrera is there. If the person takes any time at all to answer the question, I have a pretty good reason to believe I may have found her. They certainly know if Laurie Herrera is there and should not have to think about it for very long. So, it's *how long it takes to answer the question* that gives me the best clue, not necessarily the answer itself.

Many of today's skiptracers have become almost completely left-brained. They rely on computers to find people. While good skiptracers must learn how to run an effective database search, to be great skiptracers, they should hone their listening skills and exercise both sides of the skiptracing brain. If we ever lose access to the powerful databases we use today, the left-brained skiptracer is going to be in trouble. The old-timers will just pick up where they left off 20 years ago.

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Your opinion is important to us! If you have comments or questions about this newsletter, please send them to newsletter@merlindata.com.

[Click here to establish a Merlin Online account](#)