

# Backgrounding like a boss\*

## Part 1: Backgrounding people

\* with apologies to IRE for borrowing the title that it's used for years

**Get ready**

# STICK TO YOUR GOAL

OR YOU'LL GO DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

# What is your purpose?

- Check for questions in their background
- Find sources for interviews
- Build a chronology of their life

Every piece of information you find will help you verify others such as a maiden name, middle initial, birthday.



# One approach to any profile

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- What do they say about themselves?
  - Official bio, resume, CV, social media profiles (esp LinkedIn)
  - Interviews with others
  - Campaign literature for candidates
- What do others say about them?
  - Interviews in media
  - Find and interview people from their past
  - Relatives
- What does the record say?
  - Public records sweep
  - Social media sweep

# Create a system for tracking your research

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- How do you know what you've already done?
  - Spreadsheet log can help
  - Log them in a *start.me* page
- How will you archive what you've found?
  - Print to PDF
  - Hunchly (\$)
  - Evernote - make sure to save as PDF to Evernote
  - Internet Archive
  - Zotero
- How will you know what you have to verify?

# Primary sources

- The official source of a record, such as an original email, letter, court record, mortgage document filed in a county

# Secondary sources

- News articles, books, other peoples' versions of the primary sources. Discuss with your editors whether you can use these in a story, but you can use them as a lead to other documents. (Including the info in Nexis and other databases of news stories)
- Mistakes can be repeated if you're not careful
- Compilations of public records such as Pipl, Accurint, Spokeo

**Question: What are social media posts by your subject?**

# Google dorks

Google Dorks is a search string that leverages advanced search operators to find information that isn't readily available on a particular website.



# THINK LIKE A DOCUMENT

(LOOK FOR WHAT THE DOCUMENT MIGHT SAY, NOT WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW)

# Advanced operators\*

Daniel Russell's authoritative list:  
[bit.ly/AllTheOperators](https://bit.ly/AllTheOperators)

— — —

- *OR, AND, AROUND(n)* - All caps (yes, yell) . I use *AROUND(5)* for phrase, *AROUND(15)* for sentence, *AROUND(40)* for paragraph. YMMV.
- Use quotes for phrases or to require single words
- *intext/allintext/inurl/allinurl/intitle*: Useful for thinking like a document, separating the title and link address from the text. (*allintext/allinurl* must be at the beginning.) Do NOT put a space after the action word.
- Set timing to a period before the person was famous. ("Tools" under the search bar.)
- **site:** operator to search social media. Use *instagram.com* for US only, *instagram.\** for any country.
- Create your own [custom Google search engine](#) for common sources you want to search.
- Create your search in Google, then flip over to News or Images. Their operators are different, but this will circumvent them.
- Consider phrasing your search as a question - Google actually tries to answer them!

\*These change so often that I frankly don't know which ones work and don't! Google is very secretive about how they do their algorithms

"kate gallego" intext:harvard

A profile of Gallego would mention her education. This is a custom Google search engine for Arizona media.

About 45 results (0.29 seconds)

### Can Kate Gallego Fix Phoenix as the New Mayor? | Phoenix New

Phoenix New Times > news > can-kate-gallego-fix-phoenix-as-the-...



Mar 21, 2019 ... **Kate Gallego** – Harvard grad, former City Co policy wonk – was elected mayor of Phoenix on March 12. Ste

### Kate Gallego easily outsmarts rivals in first Phoenix mayor d

The Arizona Republic > story > opinion > op-ed > elviadiaz > 2018/09/18 > k...



Sep 18, 2018 ... Phoenix City Councilwoman **Kate Gallego**. **Ka Harvard** education paid off Monday. She easily outsmarted her first ...

### 3 things to know about Phoenix Mayor-elect Kate Gallego

The Arizona Republic > three-things-know-phoenix-mayor-elect-kate-gallego



Mar 13, 2019 ... **Kate Gallego** handily defeated opponent and colleague ... of Science degree in environmental studies from H University, ...

allintext: widland gallego harvard wharton

About 172 results (0.35 seconds)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate\\_Gallego](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Gallego)

**Kate Gallego - Wikipedia**

Katharine Sarah Gallego (née Widland, born October 21, 1981) is an American politician serving as the 62nd mayor of Phoenix, Arizona since 2019.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/phoenix-wi...>

**Phoenix will elect first mayor with Hispanic surname on Tuesday**

Mar 11, 2019 – Two Democrats, Kate Gallego and Daniel Valenzuela, face off on Tuesday in Phoenix's mayoral election. Valenzuela, if elected, would be the ...

<https://www.phoenixmag.com/2018/05/01/kate-exp...>

**Kate Expectations - PHOENIX magazine**

May 1, 2018 – No longer one-half of a political power couple, Councilwoman **Kate Gallego** is riding solo and running for mayor of Phoenix.

<https://www.jta.org/2020/07/30/politics/kate-galle...>

**The pandemic put Kate Gallego, Phoenix's Jewish mayor, in ...**

Jul 30, 2020 – WASHINGTON (JTA) – When **Kate Gallego** was growing up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, she dreamed of moving to the big city and making an impact.

("kate gallego" AROUND(10) (flip-flop OR reverse OR promise))

## Phoenix earns perfect score on LGBTQ inclusion for 8th year ...

Dec 4, 2020 — Earning a perfect score of 100 for the eighth year in a row highlights the fulfillment of our promise to be a city that works for everyone," ...

<https://www.12news.com> > article > news > 100-rally-at...

## than 100 people at pro-police rally held at Phoenix ...

Jun 26, 2019 — About 100 people gathered for a rally in response to excessive force allegations against Phoenix police officers in a now-viral incident.

<https://secure.actblue.com> > angieguerrerofightsback

## Happy Birthday! — Donate via ActBlue

I met Tatiana Matta and Brenda Siegel last November session. I heard their stories and their concerns about You've visited this page 4 times. Last visit: 9/11/22

Search  
serendipity!

Look for words that will suggest the content you're seeking. I have no idea why the results are different!

"kate gallego" (flip-flop OR reverse OR promise))

All

Images

News

Shopping

Videos

More

Tools

About 9 results (0.41 seconds)

<https://www.azcentral.com> > op-ed > elviadiaz > 2021/10/07

## Mayor Gallego turned her back on construction workers but ...

Oct 7, 2021 — Opinion: Mayor **Kate Gallego**, who billed herself as workers' champion, turned her back on them, siding with business leaders instead.

You've visited this page 2 times. Last visit: 9/11/22



kate gallego "image may contain an adult and child"



Q All

Images

News

Shopping

Videos

More

Tools



Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego is also a ...  
raisingarizonakids.com



RAK Magazine May 20...  
issuu.com



Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego is also a ...  
raisingarizonakids.com



More About Me | Kate Gallego  
kategallego.com



Office of Pho  
phoenix.gov



**City of Phoenix**  
Office of Mayor Kate Gallego

**Statement from the Office of Mayor Kate Gallego Regarding her Mother's Pa**

Mayor Kate Gallego's mother, Julie, died today after a long battle with cancer.

Julie worked for many years as an attorney in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is survived by her husband, two adult children, and her grandson.

The Mayor and her family are deeply saddened and ask for privacy during this difficult time.

08

With thanks to Henk van Ess for suggesting this approach

# Building a social media profile

# Look for

- Past public statements and images to compare with current
- Friends and supporters / critics
- Interests
- Alternative contact routes (DM, etc.)



# Getting started

- **Pipl** search has a lot of the social media handles
- LinkedIn will give you what they want the world to know.
- Once you know the username on one site, it's often the same on others. It may be the email address at Google as well.
- Dig deep into their history for photos, birthday wishes, anniversaries, etc.
- Use some Google Dorks: "I saw", "was that a gunshot?"
- Search different sites based on age or audience (TikTok vs. Instagram; Twitter vs. Truth Social; Reddit vs. Twitch)
- Venmo, Amazon Wish List, GoFundMe, etc. might have public profiles. (Not as often anymore, but they're still around sometimes)





# Report: Illinois Rep. Schock billed private planes, concerts

By Jack Gillum and Stephen Braun

Associated Press



FEBRUARY 23, 2015 4:33 PM



Rep. Aaron Schock, R-Ill., spent taxpayer and campaign funds on private jets and other luxuries, a new report says. The AP tracked Schock's reliance on the aircraft partly through the congressman's penchant for uploading pictures and videos of himself to his Instagram account. The AP extracted location data associated with each image and then correlated it with flight records showing airport stopovers and expenses later billed for air travel against Schock's office and campaign records. SETH PERLMAN AP



Only have a minute? Listen instead

Powered by [Trinity Audio](#)

than \$40,000 on donors' private planes since mid-2011.

The AP tracked Schock's reliance on the aircraft partly through the congressman's penchant for uploading pictures and videos of himself to his Instagram account. The AP extracted location data associated with each image and then correlated it with flight records showing airport stopovers and expenses later billed for air travel against Schock's office and campaign records.



Search: phoenix mayor



Home



My Network



Jobs



Messaging



Notifications

People

City of Phoenix 1

Connections

Locations

Current company

All filters

151 results



Sarah, see the 2K+ decision makers from your search for "phoenix mayor"

Try Sales Navigator for free

Pro



Darbi Gottlieb · 3rd+

Director of Policy  
Phoenix, AZ

Past: Assistant to the Mayor at City of Phoenix

Connect

On  
Li



Christina Leonard, Jose Zamora, and 4 other shared connections



Lisa Fernandez · 2nd

Executive - Okland Construction  
Phoenix, AZ

Past: Chief Of Staff - Office of the Mayor Kate Gallego at City of Phoenix

Connect

Phoenix, AZ

Past: Deputy Chief of Staff to Phoenix Mayor at City of Phoenix



Chris Fiscus is a shared connection

Free LinkedIn has limited search ability - if you have access to the paid version, you can be much more precise.

But even here, you can get PAST employees in the mayor's office.

# Google search to ActBlue:

secure.actblue.com/donate/angieguerreroofightsback

## Happy Birthday!

Here's a list of people that are fighting for me and people like me. I'm still trying to figure out how I can be one of these people, so until I get that straightened out and start asking you for money on my own behalf - send what you've got to these folks. They deserve it, and here's why I know that:

I met Tatiana Matta and Brenda Siegel last November in Minneapolis at a Vote, Run Lead training session. I heard their stories and their concerns about running and I saw their clipboards and to-do lists, and I was equal parts

I went to college with Kate Gallego and Eric Lesser, and I promise there are no Kavanaugh moments in their pasts. They're great humans.

## Choose an amount to split:

5 RECIPIENTS

Your contribution will be split evenly between **Brenda Siegel, Catalina Cruz - Debt Recovery 2020**, and 3 other groups.

[Customize amounts](#)

\$25

\$100

\$250

\$1,000

\$



Search



**Angie Guerrero** (She/Her) · 3rd  
Vice President of Capital Solutions at Civic Builders  
New York, New York, United States · [Contact info](#)

500+ connections

[Message](#)

[More](#)



Civic Builders



New York University, Stern  
School of Business

## About

I am a results-oriented, quantitatively grounded professional who ultimately thrives on being responsible for execution and growth of those around me, and finding new ways to



## Harvard University

AB, Government  
2002 - 2006

Activities and societies: Club Leadership: Crimson Key Society - Information Center Tour Coordinator (2003-04); Harvard College Democrats - Treasurer (2003-04), Internships Director (2004-04) ...see more

Use clues you know to zero in on the right person - companies they've worked for, when and where they went to school, etc.



kategallegoaz · Follow



kategallegoaz We're working neighborhood by neighborhood, and today Jean & Dean Scheinert opened up their beautiful home in N. Central Phoenix for a #PhxMayor Meet and Greet. I have a record of supporting appropriate development while preserving the character of Phoenix neighborhoods — and I will continue to do so as your next mayor.

Edited · 184w



48 likes

MARCH 3, 2019

# News archive services

(\$\$, or through ASU library)

Paid news archive services let you read and save stories without a paywall.

- **NexisUNI:** Almost useless except for TV transcripts and NYT
- **Proquest:** WSJ, AZ Republic, LATimes. Not much else current.
- **Access World News:** Very small news outlets.

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\* Freelancers can get the REAL LexisNexis for \$26/month through [Expert Access](#). It has the same news sources as a newsroom would have, but lacks the public records and court indices.

(kate gallego AND mayor) AND wc(>1000)

60 results

Show results outside my library's subscription.

Sorted by  
Relevance

Limit to  
 Full text  
 Peer reviewed

Publication date  
2018 - 2022 (years)

- Select 1-60
- 1 Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego and Mayor Gallego's seat. Base...  
Baxter, Erasmus. Ph...  
Blog, Podcast, or Website
- 2 City of Phoenix W...  
Schwenk, Katya. Ph...  
Blog, Podcast, or Website

Access World News | All Databases ASU Library

New Search A-Z Source List Session Folder

NewsBank "kate gallego" Lead/First Paragraph Search

AND Enter a date or date range Date(s) + - Clear All

Basic Search

Newspaper x Clear Filters

61 Results | Save Search | Create Alert

Select Articles 1 - 20

- Phoenix, MCCCDC partner to kick-start workforce development  
August 16, 2022 | Peoria Times (Glendale, AZ) | Peoria Times Staff  
... Mayor **Kate Gallego** and Dr. Steven R. Gonzales, interim chancellor ...  
Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego and Dr. Steven R. Gonzales, interim chancellor of the Maricopa Community Colleges, have announced a new partnership called Route to Relief. The new program, supported by the city's federal pandemic relief dollars, provides free tuition, monthly stipends and employment assistance in eligible programs across the 10  
[Preview](#)
- City, MCCCDC partner to kick-start work-  
... Mayor **Kate Gallego** and Dr. Steven R. Gonzales, interim chancellor ...

Sort by  
Best Match  
Newest  
Oldest

Date selector  
2013 - 2022 (Years)

Searching All

hlead("kate gallego") and hlead(COVID or coronavirus) AND atleast3(trump) and atleast3(testing)

All Fields ▾

AND ▾

Enter your search term

All Fields ▾

Date Range

All available dates ▾

Source

All News Transcripts ✕

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More

NexisUni still has news transcripts - one of the only place to find them. This example shows how precise the search can be if you use their advanced operators



# Public records sites

**STAY VIGILANT**

**AND DON'T REPEAT THE ERRORS**

Kate Gallego

Print

## Kate Widland Gallego



Female, Speaks English

41 years old

From Arizona, North Carolina and New Mexico

### Emails

- |                          |          |                            |          |
|--------------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| kate.gallego@phoenix.gov | Work     | katewgallego@gmail.com     | Personal |
| kwidland@gmail.com       | Personal | kwidland@hotmail.com       | Personal |
| jltc1@comcast.net        | Personal | twidland@att.net           | Personal |
| kwidland@aol.com         | Personal | widland@post.harvard.edu   |          |
| kate.widland@srpnet.com  |          | kate.gallego@srpnet.com    |          |
| jwidland@cs.com          | Personal | kgallego@wharton.upenn.edu |          |

### Phones



# Pipl report example

Your DMF Permissible Use : No Permissible Purpose

## Comprehensive Report




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Date: 09/13/22

### Report processed by:

Arizona State University Cronkite School of Journalism  
555 N CENTRAL AVE STE 302  
PHOENIX, AZ 85004  
602-496-5555 Main Phone  
602-496-7041 Fax

### Report Legend:

-  - Shared Address
-  - Deceased
-  - Probable Current Address

# Accurint report example

### Subject Information

#### (Best Information for Subject)

Name: [KATHARINE W GALLEGRO](#)

Date of Birth: **1981**

Age: **41**

LexID: [002706976206](#)

SSN: [xxx-xx-xxxx](#) issued in **New Mexico** between **1/1/1981** and **12/31/1982**

[View All SSN Sources](#)

### AKAs

#### (Names Associated with Subject)

[KATHARINE W GALLEGRO](#)   
Age: **41** SSN: [xxx-xx-xxxx](#)

[KATHARINE W GALLEGRO](#)

SSN: [xxx-xx-xxxx](#)

[KATHARINE WIDLAND GALLEGRO](#)

SSN: [xxx-xx-xxxx](#)

[KATHARINE S GALLEGRO](#)

SSN: [xxx-xx-xxxx](#)

[KATHARINE SARAH GALLEGRO](#)

SSN: [xxx-xx-xxxx](#)

[KATHARINE GALLEGRO](#)

### Indicators

Bankruptcy: **No**

Property: **Yes**

Corporate Affiliations: **Yes**

# Other records sites

Most will have to be checked in every locality  
- some are not online

- Court sweeps: Criminal, civil and family
- Property assessors' office and deeds, mortgages and personal tax liens
- Voter registration and voting history
- Non-profit boards
- Professional and business licenses
- Campaign contributions and lobbying
- Airplane and boat registrations
- Corporate registries, UCC, tax liens (state level)



\* Accurint report will have checked the easy ones.

Sarah Cohen / November 2022

[sarah.h.cohen@asu.edu](mailto:sarah.h.cohen@asu.edu)

Example research log: <https://bit.ly/log-gallego> (ASU only)

This presentation:

<https://bit.ly/backgrounding-deck>



Tip sheet:

<https://bit.ly/cronkite-background-people>

