

Where is Your Online Search Going?

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Is the website that you are connecting to legit? Not always. If you get an unfamiliar request with a link, be careful and suspicious.

Dishonest companies set up websites that look like legitimate places to get information on finding a job, joining the military, or getting government benefits. But they might not help you with any of those things. Instead, they'll take your personal information and sell it to other companies. The companies that buy those "leads" then try to pitch you products or services you didn't ask for.

The FTC has [reached a settlement](#) with Career Education Corporation (CEC). According to the FTC, CEC bought leads from companies that set up sites to attract people looking for things like jobs, how to join the military, and Medicaid information. All to collect people's information. The people who responded to those sites then got calls trying to get them to enroll in CEC's post-secondary schools.



If this sounds familiar, it might be because the FTC has sued several of the website operators before, including Sunkey, Edutrek and Gigats. But this time, the case isn't about generating the leads. Instead, it's about the company that should have known those leads weren't legit – and used them anyway. And, says the FTC, CEC also used telemarketers to make aggressive enrollment pitches – often to people on the [Do Not Call Registry](#).

Here are some tips on getting to better – and real – online sources of information for jobs, the military, and government benefits:

- If you find an unfamiliar website that claims to offer what you want, search its name with words like "review," "scam," or "complaint."
- The Department of Labor's [American Job Centers](#) has information about jobs in your state.
- For information on joining the U.S. Armed Forces, [start with this site from the Department of Defense](#).
- Visit [Medicaid.gov](#) for details on this benefit.
- While there are many reliable, non-government sources for online information on government benefits, government sites (with URLs ending in ".gov") are the safest bet.

To learn more about how your information can get shared online, read [how companies get your info](#). And if you've had an experience similar to this case, [report it to the FTC](#).