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The phone directory has been around for decades in most countries in the world. It is a printed record of names and phone numbers of people using the phone service. The directory is divided into two sections, the white pages and the yellow pages. While the yellow pages contain contacts of businesses, the white ones are individuals' contact details. The big and bulky directory is updated every year during which time new names and contacts are added, those that are no longer in use are removed, while others have their details changed.

While telephone companies have continued to print directories year after year, the introduction of cell phones has led to fewer people using the directories. The phone companies distribute the directories to the users for free. Companies pay to advertise in the yellow pages, which is where most of the revenue that is used to print the directories comes from. Unlike in the past, most of the directories printed today have more yellow pages than white ones.

While businesses will want as many people as possible to be able to get their contacts, the same cannot be said of individuals. Most people are not interested in having their private numbers available to the public. Today, unless someone gives you his or her private phone number, it is not so easy to get it. Many people today rely more on cell phones than landlines. The convenience of being able to save all the numbers you need in your phone has meant that using the directories is a rare occurrence.

The use of the directory has not been left behind by technology. Today, people are able to access online white pages. Instead of flipping through the pages of the bulky directory, you can simply type in the name of the person you are looking for and you can get the number with ease. Like with the physical directory, the online pages will also reveal a long list of similar names depending on how common the name you have entered is.

When using the online white pages, you should narrow your search by entering additional information such as the location or area code of the person you are looking for. There is an online directory for each state. The service will give you not just the number, but also the precise location in the form of a map. If you are trying to locate someone, you have not seen in a long time, you can find out the neighborhood and address where the person lives.

The online directory is more convenient than the traditional one. Not only is it easier to use, it is also more environmentally friendly. Hundreds of trees have to be cut to create the traditional directories, which in many cases are not used much. While it is not possible to carry the bulky directory with you, as long as you have a laptop or a phone with Internet access, you can get the information you need any time. To use the online service, you have to know the full name of the person you are searching for.

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