61% research former classmates online before deciding whether to attend a reunion

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Looking up former classmates before a school reunion can change how people feel about attending. New ReverseLookup findings reveal a sharp divide in reunion hesitation depending on how successful people believe their former peers have become.

A school reunion invitation can prompt people to investigate lives they have not followed for years. Search results and online profiles make former classmates visible again, often through carefully selected photographs and accounts of personal achievements. These glimpses offer an opportunity to assess how others have fared before meeting them in person, allowing old perceptions of social standing to influence expectations about the encounter.

A **ReverseLookup** survey of **8,720 adults across the United States, United Kingdom, European Union and Latin America who had been invited to a school reunion within the previous five years for a class they had attended at least ten years earlier** found that **61%** had looked up at least one former classmate online before making their final decision about whether to attend.

For many, the information became a basis for evaluating their own lives. Among respondents who searched, **57%** said what they discovered led them to compare their circumstances with those of former classmates across areas such as career, relationships, finances or lifestyle.

Those comparisons were associated with a substantial difference in willingness to attend. Among respondents who came away believing their former classmates were doing better than they were, **58%** considered skipping the reunion. Among those who felt broadly on par with or ahead of the people they researched, **24%** considered staying away.

The **34-percentage-point gap** suggests that perceived differences in achievement are closely connected to reunion hesitation. The findings capture whether respondents considered avoiding the event, without establishing whether they ultimately attended. They also cannot determine whether the searches themselves increased reluctance or whether people already uneasy about the reunion were more likely to interpret what they found unfavorably.

The interest in former classmates extended beyond people respondents hoped to see. Among those who searched, **44%** looked up at least one person they had little or no intention of speaking to at the reunion. The finding suggests that people from an earlier social circle can remain important points of comparison even when the relationships themselves no longer hold much personal interest.

School reunions create a distinctive setting for these judgments. Participants share a history from a time when social standing was often highly visible, and impressions formed in that environment can remain familiar long after the underlying circumstances have changed. Online searches make

it possible to revisit those impressions using fragments of information about adult lives that have unfolded largely out of view.

The consequences also appeared in how respondents expected to describe themselves. **42%** of those who researched former classmates said they became more selective about what they would share concerning their work, relationships or finances after seeing how others appeared to be doing.

This response suggests that online comparisons can influence the social encounter before it occurs. Participants who anticipate being judged against former classmates' achievements may become more cautious about revealing details of their own circumstances. The reunion becomes an occasion for managing how personal progress will be perceived, with expectations shaped partly by information gathered in private.

Online profiles offer an imperfect basis for those assessments. Visible achievements can appear more definitive than they are, while personal difficulties and the circumstances behind major life decisions may remain inaccessible. Someone comparing their everyday experience with another person's public-facing updates has limited grounds for judging whose life is going better, even when the comparison feels persuasive.

The findings also show that searching could ease the discomfort associated with old social hierarchies. **38%** said discovering that someone they had once felt inferior to no longer appeared clearly more successful made them feel more comfortable about attending. In these cases, new information appeared to challenge an established perception of relative status, making the prospect of meeting again less intimidating.

The opposing reactions reveal how much weight people can place on assumptions about former classmates' adult achievements. Seeing someone as more successful was associated with greater hesitation, while revising an old belief about another person's superiority could make attendance feel easier.

The broader significance lies in how readily online information enters personal decisions about face-to-face relationships. A school reunion offers an opportunity to encounter people as they are, yet the ReverseLookup findings indicate that many invitees begin evaluating those encounters through incomplete digital impressions. For some, those impressions influence whether they feel comfortable entering the room at all.

About ReverseLookup

ReverseLookup is a multi-input verification platform for phone numbers, emails, and images. Built for everyday use, ReverseLookup.com enables users to assess unfamiliar contacts, investigate questionable profiles, and identify potential fraud across key digital channels. It combines reverse search methods with open-source intelligence (OSINT) to offer a direct, accessible way to review digital identities and make informed decisions online.

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