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# Finding bond information isn't hard if you know where to look

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Ask Matt Matt Krantz

Q: Is there a way for investors to research how many bonds General Motors (GM) has outstanding and what they are worth?

A: Tracking stocks is pretty easy. If you have the name of a company or a ticker symbol, you can get just about anything you'd want to know about the shares and the company from websites like the Money section of USA TODAY.

Information on bonds isn't quite as accessible. But you will know where to look by the time you finish this column. As you suggest, we'll use General Motors bonds as an example.

First, you must know that bonds don't trade on exchanges, as stocks do. Bonds are privately traded between buyers and sellers. That means there isn't a central marketplace. But regulations require bond traders to report their buying and selling to the Trace system, which is operated by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or FINRA.

The Trace system is an electronic database that lets you look up all corporate bonds changing hands and at what price. Here's how to use Trace to see what kind of GM bonds are available:

1. Go to the Trace website, [finra.org/investors](http://finra.org/investors), then click on the Market Data tab, then Bonds. In the search box, click on Advanced Bond Search.
2. Identify the bond type. Click the "Corporate" option next to where it says Bond Type.
3. Type in the bond issuer's name. The issuer of the bond is the name of the company that sold the bonds, which for this example is General Motors. Type General Motors into the

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Search blank. Make sure the Issuer Name option is selected, as it is the default.

4. Tweak other variables. The Trace system allows you to filter the search results to help you find specific bonds. But since you just want a list of all GM bonds, you don't need this feature now. Just click the Show Results button located near the top right-hand corner of the screen.

The search shows you GM currently has four bonds that are trading and tracked by Trace. There are three that were issued by GM's finance unit, each called General Motors Financial Co. They have a September 2011 maturity, a September 2013 maturity and a July 2015 maturity. Yields on these range from 1.22% to 5.3%. You'll also find the prices of the bonds.

The fourth GM bond issue is connected with the old GM, which is now called Motors Liquidation. It's the General Motors bond that matures in April 2041. These bonds appear to be deeply distressed, as they trade for less than \$9 each, not the typical \$100 value. And they are not rated.

You can get more information on that bond by clicking on the name.

*Matt Krantz is a financial markets reporter at USA TODAY and author of Investing Online for Dummies and Fundamental Analysis for Dummies. He answers a different reader question every weekday in his Ask Matt column at [money.usatoday.com](http://money.usatoday.com). To submit a question, e-mail Matt at [mkrantz@usatoday.com](mailto:mkrantz@usatoday.com). Follow Matt on Twitter at: [twitter.com/mattkrantz](http://twitter.com/mattkrantz)*

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