Computer - aided Genealogy

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Topics

- Building your family tree

  - Off-line tools for your laptop or desktop at home.

  - What's a "gedcom" file ?

  - Building an on-line tree.

- Research websites

- Where to get help and more information

- DNA websites   (if we have time)

Benefits & Warnings

- This hobby is easy to learn, yet has room for growth.

- Limited physical requirements beyond manual dexterity (for typing), and the ability to sit for long periods of time.

- Some results can be achieved quickly.
  Other questions can total mysteries and real mental challenges.

- You may well make some new acquaintances,
  and meet relatives you didn't know you had.

- **<u>Warning:</u>** Computer Genealogy can be addicting,
  and may become a consuming obsession!

Family Trees: Off-line Software

- **For PC's running Windows**   (There are many others, too)

    - Family Tree Maker (ancestry.com) withdrawn 1/1/17
            resurrected by mackiev.com $69
            connects to Ancestry & FamilySearch

    - Legacy   Free or $29 "Deluxe" from legacyfamilytree.com

    - Roots Magic Free or $29   from rootsmagic.com

    - PAF   Free!   download from parawansoftware.com

- **For Macs**

    - Reunion $99   connects to FamilySearch
                    download from leisterpro.com

What Can You do Off-line?

- Build one or multiple family trees

- Enter information about ancestors, cousins, spouses …

- Record sources for information

- Create gedcom files to share via email, CD, or Cloud

- Print endless trees, charts, and reports

Your "gedcom" file

- **gedcom** is a file standard for storing and transmitting your family tree - in all it's glorious detail.

- Genealogists can pass information to one another by emailing their family tree in gedcom format.

- Many online systems will accept an off-line gedcom as input to build your online tree auto-magically.

- Many will also produce a gedcom from your on-line tree and download it to your PC.

- Off-line family tree software will also accept or generate gedcoms .

- **Keep a copy** of your gedcom off-line, on your home computer.

Family Trees: Online Services

- **Why would I want an online tree?**

  - To show or share trees & information with others easily

  - Post photos and stories

  - To get **hints** from the service, if using a combined service.

  - Easy to post research results to the tree if using a combined service

  - Easily compare your tree to others, find missing or unknown relatives

- **What an online tree isn't**

  - Not the best place to store your information (recovery)

  - Not useful for printing reports

Family Trees: Online Services

❖ ancestry.com (free "guest" ID if invited by a subscriber)
    or combined with paid "research" membership

❖ FamilySearch.org (free) provided & supported by LDS
    research facilities are also free.

❖ MyHeritage.com recent partnership with 23-and-me
    free off-line tool, free beginner tree,
    or combined with paid "research" membership

What Kind of Data Do They Have?

❖ Federal & state census records back to 1800 or earlier

❖ Immigration & travel records

❖ Birth, death, marriage records from many sources

❖ Social Security records

❖ Military records

❖ Information from other researcher's trees

❖ Some sites also have foreign records

Picking an On-line Service

❖ What features does the site provide?

❖ Is it easy to learn and use?

❖ What does it cost?

❖ Can I "synch" my local tree with my online tree?

❖ Can I share my tree with non-members? (eg family members)

❖ Does it include access to research resources?

❖ Does it correlate my DNA matches with my tree?

❖ How many other people are using it (in their database?)

One Problem with On-line Trees

- It's easy to copy information from other people's trees into your on-line tree.

- However, a lot of trees contain errors, and unsupported data that's either wrong or conjecture.

  - A lot of trees go back to Charlemagne, King David, and some even Adam & Eve.

- One wrong tree can be copied by hundreds of people, adding some "weight" to the error.

- Be careful to demand good sources in your own tree. If you copy something "dubious", mark it as "speculative" for later validation.

Genealogy Research Websites

❖ Ancestry.com Extensive records & trees ($189 - $389/yr)

❖ FamilySearch.org Extensive records & trees (FREE!)

❖ FindaGrave.com   Burials   (FREE!)

❖ MyHeritage.com   Extensive records
                                (Free / $75 / $120 / year)

❖ fold3.com   Military Records   ($80 / year)

❖ libertyellisfoundation.org Ellis Island records (FREE)

Pleasanton Library Research Access

❖ FREE access using Pleasanton Library PC's to:

   ❖ Ancestry   (for research, but for not building a tree)

   ❖ Heritage Quest (also available from your home)

   ❖ Fold3

   ❖ New England Historical Genealogy Society

Getting Help

- LAGS (Livermore-Amador Valley Genealogy Society

  - Pleasanton Library: Docent on Wednesdays from 10am to 1pm

    - Drop in, or make an appointment: docents.chair@L-AGS.org

  - Monthly Meetings: See website for calendar

  - Website: l-ags.org   (has links to **many** useful websites)

- LDS Family History Center in Oakland

  - Computers, printers, docents, books & microfiche   FREE!

  - 4766 Lincoln Avenue - Oakland, California

- cyndislist.com   A huge index of online sites and offline resources

And More Help

❖ Help with FamilySearch and computer-genealogy in general

❖ Google search (or duck-duck search) for:

  ❖ riverton familysearch library handouts (url is too long)

❖ This site has a LOT of information for beginners or advanced genealogists.

  ❖ Guides to some of the PC software packages

  ❖ Guides to some of the on-line tree & research sites.

❖ Riverton Library Handouts

DNA and Genealogy

❖ Three types of DNA tests

  ❖ Y-DNA traces the paternal line, easily 10 generations. Uses only the male Y chromosome.
       Only for men, traces father's father's father's …

  ❖ Mitochondrial DNA (mt-DNA) traces the maternal line back 25 generations or more. Uses special mitochondrial DNA.
       Men and women, traces mother's mother's …

  ❖ Autosomal DNA identifies relatives on all lines, back 3-5 generations, occasionally more.
       Men and women, traces pieces of all 23 genes.

How can you use the tests?

- Y-DNA - identify likely remote male surname ancestors. Support or disprove surname line of your tree.

- Autosomal DNA - find cousins out the 3rd-5th. Learn possible information from matches' trees about known or newly discovered ancestors. Identify birth parents in cases of adoption.

- Mt-DNA - not a lot. Useful in resolving gender of possible birth parents

DNA Websites

❖ <u>ancestry.com</u>:   autosomal DNA - $99 one time charge

❖ <u>FamilyTreeDNA.com</u>: autosomal DNA - $79
                                    y-DNA, 37 markers - $149 or $169
                                    mitochondrial DNA   - $79

❖ <u>23andMe.com</u>   3 kinds of DNA   - $99
                         above + "Health" - $199

All tests are a one time charge. No membership fees.

Comparing DNA Services

❖ All 3 autosomal test providers give your ethnicity breakout, and general migration information

❖ **FamilyTreeDNA** y-DNA includes y-DNA matches from their database, and surname projects. Similar for Mt-DNA matches. Weak on family trees for analyzing autosomal DNA matches.

❖ **Ancestry** is all about family trees, and provides the strongest genealogy-related matching results and tools for autosomal DNA.

❖ **23andMe** has mixed history with "health" projections, and weak customer service. They are forming an alliance with **MyHeritage** for more competitive family tree services. Needs some work.