

SC Computer/Genealogy SIG
Effective Strategies for Searching
Internet Genealogical Databases, Part 1
Thursday, September 12, 2013, 10:00 a.m.

Internet genealogy databases are increasingly offering genealogists more information where they can search for their ancestors. This is an advantage for those of us seeking information about our ancestors from our computers, but sometimes these databases create challenges for a quick and easy way to find the information they hold. Here are some suggestions, with examples, for the top ten strategies (four in Part 1, September; six in Part 2, October) to get the most out of Internet genealogy databases.

Note: The complete PowerPoint syllabus will be distributed in class on Thursday.

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A. First, What Is a Database?

1. Definition
2. Value
3. User Beware
4. Less is More
5. Example: Karen's Surname Database
6. Many Databases to Choose From - The top 100 Genealogy Websites for 2013
7. Databases to Explore

B. Strategy 1: Prepare to Search

1. Before you go online:
 - a. What is the name you are researching AND what are the various spellings?
 - b. What is the location of the person in the various times of his/her life AND during what time period?
 - c. Do you know the name of his/her spouse AND names/dates of children?
2. Some Tools to Get Started
 - a. A Timeline (Chronology)
 - b. A Location List
 - c. Visualize the location?
 - d. An Ancestor Chart
 - e. A Sibling Chart
 - f. Internet Database Research Log
 - g. Census Comparison Chart

C. Strategy 2: What, Specifically Are You Searching for?

1. The information you find varies from database to database. These databases may include:
 - a. Name of an ancestor
 - b. Date and place of vital record: birth, marriage, death
 - c. Names of parents

- d. Names of spouse and children
 - e. Lists of belongings, property, etc.
 - f. Biographical information
 - g. Religious affiliation
 - h. Military information
2. Use your Family Tree Program to help you search the Internet

D. Strategy 3: Use the Help, Tips, and/or Learn

1. Examples of databases with help provided:
 - a. Example 1: Ancestry.com
 - b. Example 2: Fold3 Help
 - c. Example 3: Family Search Learn
 - d. Example 4: RootsWeb

E. Strategy 4: Know the Uniqueness of the Database

1. Know what the database contains—what it includes and what it does not include
2. Check the table of contents
3. Problems of databases
4. Examples of unique databases:
 - a. Example 1: NSDAR
 - b. Example 2: Fold3
 - c. Example 3: Genealogy Bank
 - d. Example 4: Find A Grave