

Using Genealogical Search Engines

UVPAF Users Group

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Genealogical Search Engines

A simple definition of a search engine is that it is proprietary software which gathers and indexes web sites on the Internet or indexes its own sites.

Two major types of search engines are used:

- *Genealogical search engines which are designed to examine genealogical data within a database rather than the entire Internet.*
- *Popular or Internet search engines which are designed to examine the entire Internet for any subject; but not necessarily specific information contained in a genealogical database.*

Internet Directories

Directories on the Internet refer to web sites which arrange information by subject or topic including references to search engines, such as:

- www.Yahoo.com
- www.cyndislist.com

A Directory is a portal to web sites and/or search engines on the Internet.

Locate Genealogical Search Engines by Using a Directory or Search Engine

Use Cyndislist as a directory:

- On first page of www.Cyndislist.com, scroll to search engine, then select genealogy search engines.

Use Google as an Internet search engine:

- At www.Google.com, type:
“genealogical search engines”, or
“genealogy search engine”

Use www.google.com to Locate genealogical search engines by entering:

“genealogical search engines”, or
“genealogy search engine”

Test the Search Engines

The ideal thing to do, which is usually not done at all, but some do it, is to note the “hits” retrieved:

With each search engine selected, look for the same individual or surname.

Determine the number of “hits” or references (web sites) located.

Note the types of references, i.e., names appearing in indexes, documents, personal web sites, etc.

Log the search engines used, by:

- making a table made with your word processing program (use the copy feature), or
- bookmarking the search engine so you can return to it easily.

Note the number of relevant references (hits) so you can determine whether or not you want to come back to the search engine, also the quality of information or site. You can also print the page and make notes on it.

Genealogical Search Engines

*These engines are designed to search specific record collections, not the entire Internet (**arranged alphabetically**):*

www.accessgenealogy.com/
www.ancestralfindings.com/
www.ancestry.com (free at FHC's)
www.cousinconnect.com/
www.familysearch.com
www.genealogy-genealogy.net/genealogy-links.html
www.genealogy.com
www.genealogy.com/links
www.genealogyhomepage.com
www.genealogyregister.com
www.genealogysearch.org
www.genealogysearch.com/portals.htm
www.genealogytoday.com/search/index.html
www.genealogytoolbox.com/
www.geneanet.org/
www.genexchange.org/index.php
www.gensearcher.com/gensearcher.html
www.heritagequestonline.com
www.mytrees.com
www.rand.org/about/contacts/personal/Genea/
www.rat.de/kuijsten/navigator/
www.rootsweb.com
www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/newsearch.htm
www.rootsweb.com/~rwguide/
www.surnamefinder.com
www.surnameweb.org/
www.USGenWeb.org
www.worldgenweb.org/

Other Interesting Miscellaneous Sites:

<http://olivetreegenealogy.com/index.shtml>
www.genealogy.com/bio/index.html
www.cyndislist.com/search.htm#Genealogy

Meta-Search Engines for Genealogy

www.rat.de/kuijsten/navigator/
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/caculman/Multigen.htm>

For a good list of search engines and meta-search engines consult:

<http://cui.unige.ch/meta-index.html>

Examples

Select ancestors which you know something about so you can recognize when you have made a 'hit' on an Internet web site.

Select the name of one or more ancestors to use with the genealogical search engines:

- Matthias Farnsworth, or
- Jeremiah Meacham, or
- Jonathan Oldham Duke, or
- Flick or some other family surname

Access Genealogy – a Free Genealogy Resource

www.accessgenealogy.com

Search is by surname, but can also use given name. Refers to own collections as well as other databases. "New to Genealogy" link refers to RootsWeb.com tutorials.

Other references lead back to Ancestry.com

Contains information from published works published all over the U.S.

Lists a variety of options/links.

Ancestral Findings

www.ancestralfindings.com

Search is essentially by surname.

Many options/links are noted to other record collections, e.g., many links made to RootsWeb.com and Ancestry.com files.

Takes more effort to use than expected since only surnames are entered at first. Links are made to other sites on the Internet, thus this is a portal.

Ancestry

www.ancestry.com

Ancestry is largest and most used Web site for family history.

It is offered free of charge to Family History Centers.

Users can search a multitude of record collections concurrently, i.e., typescript indexes as well as original manuscripts.

Many other family history websites link to Ancestry.com.

Company is under the umbrella of MyFamily.com, Provo, Utah.

CousinConnect

www.CousinConnect.com

Can browse by surname and/or region.

A Place to Post Your Genealogy Queries.

Can post a query on one of your ancestors.

Postings/queries can be extensive.

LDS Church Web Site

www.familysearch.org

Use SEARCH Mode, then Family History Web Sites.

Enter Surname.

Site not maintained very well. Very limited.

Can limit search with record category and location.

Genealogy-geneology.net Databases

www.genealogy-geneology.net/genealogy-links.html

Lists some of the most popular genealogical websites on the Internet for North American research.

Also has international links to WorldGenWeb websites.

Limited, but a good place to find major websites for beginning your research.

Helm's Genealogy Toolbox

www.genealogytoolbox.com/

Provides access to indexed and original documents, such as Bounty Land Warrants, selected census records, etc.

Provides an extensive index of surnames found on the web.

A place and category list is also available for locating websites.

Genealogy.com

www.Genealogy.com

Has a reasonably good "Learning Center".

Is a popular fee/free Web site.

Has a 14 day trial period for free.

Connected with FamilyTreeMaker program.

Has extensive pedigree collection in World Family Tree program.

Use the "Site Index" or "Site Map" to quickly learn about the available options. The Family Finder Search option is very valuable with 300,000 sites visited for family history. (www.genealogy.com/iffatop.html)

Helpful Websites from Genealogy.com

www.genealogy.com/links :

Over 50k websites are listed for:

- Beginners
- Subject directories: people, places, geographic, how-to helps, books and magazines.
- Supplies and Services

The Genealogy Home Page

www.genealogyhomepage.com

A "What's New" irregular cumulative list is kept.

A "What's Really New in Genealogy Home Pages" is kept daily

An excellent way to keep abreast of the latest and greatest websites available for research.

The Genealogy Register www.genealogyregister.com

Refers to cemetery lists, city directories, message boards and has a surname search capability. Many search boxes refer to ancestry.com. Can scan documents in PDF format.

Genealogy Search at:

www.genealogysearch.org

Not a search engine per se, but refers you to genealogical websites that have search engines. They claim: "Everything you need for genealogical research online", (not quite).

GenealogySearch

www.genealogysearch.com/portals.htm

This is not a search engine per se, but lists the most commonly used genealogical websites which have search engines.

This is a gateway from which you can search a large number of genealogical websites independently.

GenealogyToday

www.genealogytoday.com/search/index.html

Contains sections on:

- Getting Started
- Family History
- Research Tools
- Advanced Topics
- Essentials
- Other Stuff

Provides many good references to collections, particularly by using a surname approach.

A good place for a beginner and advanced Internet researcher.

GeneaNet – Genealogical Database Network

www.geneanet.org/

Free and Fee based Web site.

Searches external websites where the surname and location appears.

Many, many links are provided to search further.

GenExchange-Genealogy Exchange and Surname Registry

www.genexchange.org/index.php

A place to go to find information on specific individuals as well as exchange your information.

Is a non-commercial Web site where extracted information can be placed to share with others.

Much like the USGenWeb program.

A little cumbersome to use, but stay with it.

GenSearcher

www.gensearcher.com/gensearcher.html

An "All-in-One Genealogy Search Page"

One-stop, on-line research with over a hundred genealogy search engines, surnames databases and indexes from the best resources on the Internet.

A huge list of databases with accompanying search engines listed on the sidebar on left side of home page. This Web site will keep you busy for a long time!!

HeritageQuest Online

www.heritagequestonline.com

Fee based, although some FHC's have access to it. An excellent source for searching U.S. census records, family histories, local histories, PERSI, and Revolutionary War records.

Available to anyone at the BYU Library. BYU students and faculty can use it from home.

A strong competitor to Ancestry.com files.

Don't overlook this powerful source.

MyTrees

www.mytrees.com

A Kindred Konnections Web Site

One of the largest lineage linked (pedigree) databases on the Internet.

A fee-based Web site, but you can access it free if you contribute to the database with you own data and by participating in extraction projects.

One of the better websites for family genealogies

Rand Genealogy Club

www.rand.org/about/contacts/personal/Genea/

A very clean Web site and easy to use; more of a directory.

Provides access to many genealogy websites, therefore is more of a directory to some genealogy search engines.

Another good Web site to begin your research.

Surname Navigator

www.rat.de/kuijsten/navigator/

More of a meta-search engine. Will search multiple databases concurrently for your surname of interest, or just one database of your choice.

Good for names with unusual spellings.

Very powerful.

RootsWeb

www.rootsweb.com

Oldest and largest free genealogy site, now supported by Ancestry.com.

Contains built-in search engines to many of its files and will search other genealogical databases on the Internet.

A good place to start, but can be a little overwhelming.

Be sure to look at the "Getting Started" pages.

USGenWeb Archives National Search Engine

www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/newsearch.htm

A search engine for all the names indexed in each the USGenWeb projects within a state. A state must be

selected.
You can enter full name or just surname.

RootsWeb Educational Program

www.rootsweb.com/~rwguide/

An educational directory which provides details for searching various types of records.
Provides valuable links to other websites which have search engines.
An excellent place to round out your basic knowledge of collections of records for genealogical research.
A good place to begin genealogical research.

Surname Finder

www.surnamefinder.com

Free genealogy surnames search.
Like a meta-search engine in that it will let you know which websites contain your surname of interest.

Surname Web

www.surnameweb.org/

Behaves much like Surname Finder.
Will let you know which databases contain your surname.
Provides links to free and fee based databases.
Refers heavily to Ancestry.com databases.

USGenWeb

www.USGenWeb.org

Links are provided to each state.
Each state has search engines (of a sort) to search the databases created within the state.
The archives of indexed information for each state can be found at:
www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/newsearch.htm

World GenWeb Project

www.worldgenweb.org/

This entire project is in its infancy.
It is a volunteer program involving indexing genealogical data from records worldwide and making them available on the Internet.
Volunteers are desperately needed.
Little information available for some countries.

MultiGen (Meta Search Engine)

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/caculman/Multigen.htm>

This meta search engine will search 10 websites at once:

- Ancestry.com
- Ellis Island Database
- Family Tree Maker
- Gendex
- Genealogy.com
- JewisGen Family Finder
- Kindred Konnections
- LDS FamilySearch

- Roots Surname List
- Root's Web WorldConnect Project

Conclusion

Become thoroughly familiar with a few good websites.
Check back on websites from time to time to determine if new information has been added.
Proceed slowly and patiently with specific objectives in mind.
Learn from others.
Seek the spirit for direction.

Notes