



Cloning Your Family Tree on the Internet

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For your convenience active hyperlinks to the sites mentioned in this lecture, unless otherwise specified, are online at zroots.com/links.htm.

Part I: Reasons to Risk Putting Your Tree Online

A. Bait

1. People love to point out your errors but may not be motivated to share information to fill gaps in your tree.
2. Allowing others to change your tree at online sites is a good way to find their errors so you can post an analysis of why they are wrong

B. Collaborate

1. The vastness of the Internet helps genealogists find each other better than any of the older methods for finding collaborators
2. Watch Lists, Discussion groups, and anonymous emails are just some of the online tree tools to aid collaboration.

C. Leave a Legacy

1. What will happen to your work when you die? Will it be thrown in the trash bin? Will it be donated to an obscure historical society and only searchable at their physical location? Will your family fight over the pieces and break up your collection?
2. Leaving an online legacy of your years of genealogical research with not just names, dates, and places, but also sources, images, and analysis (which is now easier than ever to do) preserves what you have done for a huge and ongoing audience. Even if someone changes you tree on FamilySearch, if you have a good analysis attached with your sources and reasoning then someone in the future is likely to read it and roll those bad changes back to the correct format you originally contributed.

- ### D. The problem today is there are so many places online to publish your tree along with your research and/or research interests. You could spend all your time publishing, and never find time to actually do research. Each tree site differs in cost, features, and visibility.

Part II: DCAP You Family Tree?

- A. **DUPLICATION:** Does that site help you decrease the 80% duplication of research effort currently estimated when researchers do not collaborate?
- B. **CONTROL:** Does that site give you control over who edits your tree? Or does it give you (and future generations) a way to roll back to what can be determined to be good data (by simply reading the attached research analysis report—thus making anyone who changes it look like an idiot)?
- C. **ACCURACY:** Does that site help you maintain and add to the accuracy of your family tree? [See **CONTROL** above]
- D. **PRIVACY:** Does that site allow you to control who views and what they view in your online tree?

Part III: Finding Online Tree Sites

- A. Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, MyHeritage.com, and WikiTree.com are some of the best known and largest online tree sites.
- B. Cyndi's List has a list of online trees buried under:
 - 1. Go to Cyndi's List at *www.cyndislist.com*
 - 2. by default you see her main category list
 - 3. scroll down to **Social Networking for Genealogy**
 - 4. Click on **The Collaborative Family Tree**
- C. Uploading a GEDCOM file of your tree (or a portion thereof) to the Pedigree Resource File at FamilySearch has been replaced by GEDCOM submissions to FamilySearch Family Tree.
(Opened to the public on March 8, 2013)

Part IV: High Traffic Sites

- A. Ancestry.com
 - 1. Three Types of Trees at Ancestry (all are free but differ in functionality)
 - a. Private Member Trees (limited in the amount searchers can see)
 - b. Public Member Trees (viewable and searchable plus by clicking on an individual in a tree you can see who owns that tree and anonymously contact the tree owner for additional information)
 - c. One World Trees (are from the old RootsWeb project)
 - 2. With a paid subscription
 - a. Home page shows Recent Member Connect Activity, Recent Tree Activity and About This Tree (number of people in tree, number of photos, View People With Hints, Home Person, and Last Viewed person) plus My Shoebox (showing Record Collection Name, Date

Viewed and Name(s) search for in your search results added to your shoebox storage area for later use.

b. When viewing a tree under the Family Trees tab, notice next to the name of the tree (that you gave it when you started the tree at Ancestry) there is a **Tree Pages** link. Clicking the down arrow next to it opens a drop down menu with the option to “**Share your tree.**” When you invite someone to share your tree at Ancestry, if they have an Ancestry user name (free registration giving limited access), you have the option to assign them **Editor** (can do file editing and has viewing rights), **Contributor** (no editing—viewing rights only—but can add comments, photos, or stories), or **Guest** access (viewing rights and can add comments).

c. If you are a paid subscriber, select a tree you have created at Ancestry (under the Family Trees tab). Click on **Tree pages** link next to the name of the tree (in the top left corner), then choose **Share Your Tree** to email an invitation to someone and invite them to share your Ancestry tree. (Also under **Tree Pages** is a link to **Tree Settings** to export your tree as a GEDCOM file or delete it.)

d. Paid subscribers have more search and communication options via the Family Trees section in the Collections sidebar (located on the right side of the Search page—get to the Search page by double clicking on the Search tab). The free Family History Library Edition of Ancestry.com does **not** include a Family Trees section between Historical Records and Stories & Publications on this sidebar.

3. Sync only via Ancestry’s personal genealogy database program (Family Tree Maker); but you can upload and download (with tree owner’s permission) via GEDCOM; or do manual data entry to start your tree.

B. FamilySearch Family Tree [FS FT]

1. FS FT was made public on 8 March 2013.

2. Entirely free and open for anyone to see and use (yes, anything in any tree can be changed...BUT their user name goes on the change along with the date the change was made and the reason they made the change). Roll back changes to a previous version in a wiki-like fashion.

3. Information was brought in from previous tree projects including the Ancestral File, Pedigree Resource File, and earlier new.familysearch.org entries. There is much duplication and many wrong tree connections, but in this version (FS FT) all changes and additions must include a source/reason why you think the change should be made. Information is imported via a GEDCOM file or manually entered.

4. Currently photos can be attached to individuals in your tree and/or kept in a photo album associated with this site. In the future you may be able to attach scanned images of source documents to individuals.

5. The FamilySearch Source Box and Source Template allow users to capture links to sources within FamilySearch and attach them to individuals on their tree, create a new source entry with links to records

elsewhere on the Internet, or create a source entry for a resource not online. In your **My Source Box**, add an entry to your source list, organize them in folders, or delete a source from your source list. Deleting a source here does **not** remove it from any of the family tree records to which it was added—deletion here only removes that entry from your working My Source Box list.

C. MyHeritage.com (the basic account is free and premium costs but gives you additional features like timelines and a timebook).

1. Use the MyHeritage Family Tree Builder software (a free download) to add to your tree at MyHeritage.com or you add data via GEDCOM, other formats, and manually. The Family Tree Builder software supports thirty-eight languages. Generating maps and a variety of charts to view and print is easy.
2. This tree site does Smart Matching between trees at MyHeritage.com.
3. MyHeritage automatically does Smart Searching at more than one hundred genealogy websites.
4. MyHeritage allows you to add photos, documents, and videos to your family tree. It does automatic face tagging.
5. Make your tree private or public. MyHeritage facilitates adding social media types of information including Education, Work, Favorites, Biography, Web Content, Contact Information, Personal information, and Source Citations. There is even a share your memories section for each individual. An online matching game engages the younger members of your family.
6. Using the Research tab finds an impressive number of matches for my father including records from SSDI, Everton's Pedigree and Family Group Sheet Collection, MyHeritage Family Trees, Newspaper Archive (my dad's obituary), and his father's grave from the FindAGrave site.

D. Mocavo, the genealogy search engine site, has recently added an online tree feature which allows you to keep any number of trees with no limit to the number of ancestors you include. The basic (free) account lets you attach matches you find via Mocavo. The Plus account does auto searches for you. It also allows you to attach a research report to an individual in your tree.

E. WikiTree.com is totally free with six privacy levels and strict editing controls for editing any records. WikiTree does a good job hiding profiles for living people on your tree. Merges are handled individually and must be agreed upon by the owners of both trees.

F. Don't forget there are similar tree projects in websites from other counties. Example: The GENBAS search at genealogy.net is a search based on submitted GEDCOM files similar to searching family trees.