

Using the Internet for Genealogical Research

By Mary Kathryn Kozy

First steps/before you start:

- Get a genealogy software program
- Create a plan for your research

What can I find on the Internet?

- Original documents
 - ✓ Census (Ancestry, FamilySearch, RootsWeb, HeritageQuest)
 - ✓ Naturalization records (Ancestry, state archives, National Archives)
 - ✓ Ship's lists (EllisIsland.org, Bremen passenger lists, Ancestry, World Vital Records)
 - ✓ Marriage records (Ancestry, RootsWeb, Various state/national archives)
 - ✓ Military records (Ancestry, Fold3, HeritageQuest)
 - ✓ Land records (BLM site, some USGenWeb projects)
- Cemetery records (JOWBR, FindAGrave, USGenWeb)
- Photos (Dead Fred, Ancestor Genealogy Photo Archive, FamilyOldPhotos.com)
- Historical Societies (Google your locality)
- Mailing lists/Message Boards (RootsWeb/Ancestry, GenForum)
- Social Networking (Facebook, Google+, MySpace, Twitter, GenealogyWise)
- Other people's research (PROCEED WITH CAUTION!!!)

What websites should I visit?

Jewish-specific (not all inclusive!)

- JewishGen (www.jewishgen.org)
- Sephardic Genealogy.com (www.sephardicgen.com)
- Avotaynu (www.avotaynu.com)
- Synagogue Scribes (www.synagoguescribes.com)
- Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies – FEEFHS (www.feeffhs.org)
- Center for Jewish History (www.cjh.org)
- Ancestry's Jewish Collection
- JRI-Poland (www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl/)
- Virtual Shtetl (www.sztetl.org.pl/en/)
- Ukraine SIG (www.jewishgen.org/ukraine/)

General interest sites

- Rootsweb (www.rootsweb.com)
- The USGenWeb Project (www.usgenweb.org)
- Cyndi's List (www.cyndislist.com)
- Ancestry (www.ancestry.com)
- Heritage Quest (www.heritagequestonline.com)
- FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org)
- Steve Morse's One-Step site (www.stevemorse.org)
- World Vital Records (worldvitalrecords.com)
- Various archive websites (e.g., www.digitalarchives.wa.gov)
- Library catalog sites (www.kcls.org, www.lib.washington.edu, www.acpl.lib.in.us, www.lva.lib.va.us, www.worldcat.org)
- Family Tree DNA (www.familytreedna.com)

Writing queries:

- Keep it simple, but BE SPECIFIC
- Give the receiver as much information as you have (but not your entire research history)
- Write a good subject line

Some other tips:

- ✓ Remember to be skeptical of others' research and VERIFY!
- ✓ Document where AND when you saw what you find with appropriate source citations
- ✓ Educate yourself using resources on the web:
 - Getting Started (www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/GetStarted.html)
 - Tracing your Jewish ancestors: From the United States to Europe 1850 to 1930 (feefhs.org/guides/Finding_Jewish.pdf)
 - Jewish Genealogy Research Outline (FamilySearch Wiki)
 - A Beginner's Primer in Jewish Genealogy Research (Avotaynu)
 - National Genealogical Society
 - Board for Certification of Genealogists
 - ICAPGen
 - Utah Genealogical Association
 - New England Historic Genealogical Society
 - Progenealogists.com
 - National Institute for Genealogical Studies
 - BYU Independent Study
 - Genealogy.com U
 - Ancestry.com

Blogs/Podcasts

- Blood and Frogs
- JewishGen Blog
- Chaim Freedman Blog
- DearMYRTLE's Genealogy Blog
- ThinkGenealogy
- Genealogy Gems Podcast
- The Genealogy Guys

Do's and Don'ts

Don't

- ... believe everything you read! Be skeptical!
- ... forget your sound research techniques
- ... forget to cite where you found the information
- ... be afraid to write the webmaster/submitter and ask for more information or ask questions
- ... plagiarize someone else's work – give credit where it's due!

Do

- ... use the same methodology you use as if there was no Internet
- ... check sources found on sites on the Internet
- ... analyze what you find in light of what you already know and documents you have
- ... share what you have with others
- ... have fun and enjoy the hunt!