

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

General interest sites

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