

Podcasts: Joining the Revolution

By Janet Brigham

Webmaster, SVC GG

Blink once and you're likely to miss the next big thing on the Internet. Blink twice, and you're likely to feel like Rip Van Winkle when you open your eyes. With that in mind, don't feel bad if the phenomenon of *podcasting* materialized when you weren't looking.

The term itself is confusing, since it seems to be referring to the Apple iPod, a small digital device that plays audio files usually downloaded from the Internet. Although other brands' devices do what the iPod does, the term *iPod* has become somewhat like the term *Kleenex*, in that people use the term to refer not only to a specific product, but to a class of products.

Perhaps because *podcast* rhymes with *broadcast*, the term *pod* was adopted readily to describe audio broadcasts distributed in a compressed file format. Most current computers, both PC (Windows 2000 and XP) and Macintosh (OS X), come with software that plays these audio files.

What exactly is a podcast? It's a compressed audio file that contains audio content that can be downloaded manually or can be delivered automatically to a computer or an audio player such as the iPod. The audio

There's no such thing as missing a podcast, because the file resides on your computer or MP3 player, and you can listen to it whenever it suits you.

content can consist of dialogue, monologue, or scripted presentations. Often, it resembles a radio program.

Although Internet radio has been available on the Web for at least a decade, its slow, awkward delivery was less than ideal. The development and availability of an audio file format called MP3 (MPEG-1 Audio Layer-3) made any type of audio content available with reasonably good fidelity. MP3 has become the primary file format for podcasting.

Finding podcasts that are interesting and useful could take some browsing and searching. Using *podcatcher* or *podcast aggregator* software such as iTunes or iPodder Lemon, you can subscribe to podcasts at no cost, so that new podcasts in a series you've chosen will download automatically to your computer or audio player. The process used for this is similar to that for blogs (see the September 2005 *PastFinder*), in that it uses a RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed.

Podcasting tops email distribution in at least one powerful way: The recipient is in charge. You won't be

spammed by rogue podcasts, since RSS allows you to control the content. Podcasts don't carry viruses or worms. If you decide to discontinue your subscription to a particular podcast feed, you can do so easily.

Another appealing aspect to podcasts is that you can control when you listen to them. Unlike radio broadcasts, the timing is up to you. There's no such thing as missing a podcast, because the file resides on your computer or MP3 player, and you can listen to it whenever it suits you.

Who produces podcasts? Nearly anyone. Because the software for creating a podcast is readily available, and because many computers have audio recording capacity, podcasting is becoming increasingly popular and common. Podcast MP3 files are about 1 MB for approximately two minutes of podcast time. This can result in some huge files that are best accessed with a broadband connection, but even if you have only dial-up Internet access, a podcast aggregator can download podcasts while you are at work, while you are asleep, or any other time you aren't using your computer.

Try Out a Podcast

You probably already have the equipment you'll need to try out a podcast: a computer, an Internet connection, a Web browser, and either speakers or headphones connected to the computer.

To locate podcasts of potential interest, you can access a podcast directory such as iPodder.org, which is a comprehensive directory with numerous categories. Through iTunes free downloadable software (itunes.com) you can search, subscribe to, and download podcasts with a user-friendly interface. Other directories include Podcast Central (www.podcastcentral.com), Podcast.net, Podcast Alley (www.podcastalley.com), and others.

You also can use a free podcast service such as Odeo.com, which will chat you through the process of finding and subscribing to podcasts. You'll need to download Odeo Syncr software (<10 MB). Alternatively, you can download iTunes' software (>32 MB) and use it to access Odeo.

Once you identify podcasts to try, you might want to visit the podcast's Website, which typically provides information about the podcasters and their programs. You usually can click

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on a specific podcast to listen to an archived show. If you have a fairly current operating system on your computer (for example, a PC with a Windows XP operating system), the podcast should play automatically when you click on it on a Website.

One genealogy podcast Website you can try out is this: http://genealogyguys.libsyn.com/index.php?post_year=2005&post_month=09, where the Genealogy Guys chat about their latest genealogy trips and interests. (The site is still a bit rough around the edges. No matter what date I clicked, either on a PC or Mac browser, I got the most recent podcast first, followed by the podcast from the selected date.)

There's no need to limit your podcast-

ing to the topic of genealogy or family history. For example, news sites now offer podcasts of news and features. National Public Radio at www.npr.org offers a podcast of favorite material, including the Sunday puzzles, the California Report, Pacific Time, and news summaries. Public radio and television station KQED of San Francisco offers its public affairs program Forum as a subscription podcast. The KQED podcast page also offers explicit instructions for accessing podcast directories, software, and subscriptions (www.kqed.org/rss/about/).

Podcasting is still new enough that the software and Websites can be buggy, and what seems intuitive to developers is at times inscrutable to end-users. You may need to sit back and ponder for a few minutes, what would Steve Jobs do?

In struggling and muttering the first time I used accessed podcasts, I was reminded of the first time I used an IBM word processor, a monstrous machine that covered two

desks and required mysterious codes to accomplish simple tasks. An operator taught me enough to get started, so I stayed after work one night to try it out. What stymied me wasn't remembering the codes or the keystrokes—it was the fact that I couldn't find the ON button. After much searching, I telephoned the operator. She described a red ON/OFF toggle switch on the right side of the machine. I realized I'd seen it several times but hadn't recognized it for what it was: I hadn't known that "I" meant ON and "O" meant OFF.

So don't be discouraged if the podcast software doesn't seem intuitively designed, the downloading isn't smooth or particularly automatic, and the programs aren't necessarily what you expected. You are witnessing the beginning of a potential revolution in information delivery, and revolutions can be messy. If all else fails, find a youngster who has an iPod and humbly ask for help.

Group Giant Gone

Sixteen years ago when the idea of a PAF Users Group was being passed around, there was no question that one of the founding members should be Mary Lou Harline. Mary Lou was widely recognized by everyone who knew her as a master of family history research. Her unflagging service to the Silicon Valley PAF Users Group and the successor organization the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group came to an abrupt end on September 8 when Mary Lou died while on a vacation cruise to Alaska with her husband, Richard.



She was born November 13, 1926, in Schenectady, New York, to Clyde F. and Lyle Coombs, but soon her family moved to California where she spent most of her growing years. Her interest in technology led her to study engineering at the University of California at Berkeley. It was there that she met a young Navy officer, Richard Harline, and after the end of WWII they were married August 23, 1946, in the LDS temple at Salt Lake City, Utah. Mary Lou is known as the first woman from Berkeley to be awarded the Women's Badge from the engineering society Tau Beta Pi. It wasn't until 1982 that the society finally admitted women.

After Richard and Mary Lou were married, they moved to Michigan where she finished her degree in engineering mathematics at the University of Michigan. The family moved back to California where she spent the last 46 years of her life. It is no wonder that with six of her nine children being boys, that she spent many years serving in the Boy Scout organization as well as for numerous community, school, and church opportunities. Even so, her daughter recalls that she was there every year at girl's camp. Her family recalls many fond memories of camping trips that drew them together.

After her children were grown, Mary Lou embarked on a second career to immerse herself in the fast-growing field of computer science. This fascination linked to her interest in family history research to make her a natural as a founding member of the Silicon Valley PAF Users Group. When the group realized that a source documentation standard was critical for good genealogy on a computer, Mary Lou was a key contributor to the team that produced the first *PAF Documentation Guidelines* in 1992. The guidelines were an overnight success with tens of thousands of copies distributed worldwide. Her work with the guidelines committee continued through the latest edition of the *Family History Documentation Guidelines*, a hallmark of the group.

The only time she took a break from serving the group was to serve a mission for the LDS Church to Washington, D.C., and the occasional extended trip to visit and care for grandchildren. Her most recent assignment for the users group was to write the Ask Dr. PAF column in the group's *PastFinder* newsletter, where her talent for explaining the complexities of the PAF program in simple terms was appreciated.

A funeral service was held in Orem, Utah, September 13. She was interred at a family site in Utah. A memorial service was held in Cupertino, September 17. The family suggested that contributions may be made in her name to the LDS Church's Perpetual Education Fund (<http://www.lds.org/ldsfoundation/pef/welcome/0,7133,3403-1-10,00.html>) Mary Lou is survived by her husband and seven of her nine children, plus 35 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

Software of Interest: ThinkFree Online, Legacy 6

ThinkFree Online

ThinkFree is an office suite of programs which include a word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation package. The program can read and write files in the Microsoft Office formats: .DOC, .XLS, and .PPT files (Word, Excel and PowerPoint), plus several other formats. ThinkFree is available for Windows, Macintosh, and Linux systems, unlike Microsoft Office. ThinkFree sells for \$49.95, much much less than Microsoft Office. Unfortunately for ThinkFree, OpenOffice.org has a similar program available at no charge.

Now you can use ThinkFree at no cost by connecting to their Web site, log on, and create word processing documents, spreadsheets, and presentations online. The software is stored on the ThinkFree servers and downloaded to your computer as needed. The documents that you create are stored on your hard drive, but you can opt to save the documents on the ThinkFree servers. You can also use the ThinkFree Web-based service and store documents on your blog.

The most amazing thing about the service is that it is free. Another advantage of ThinkFree is the Java language in which it is written which easily downloads from a Web site and executes in your computer. Java applets are programs which are free of viruses. The downloads are slow, but the program remains in a cache on the hard disk, and additional sessions are much faster.

A few of Word's advanced features are not found in ThinkFree, but most of the features are present. ThinkFree has spell check, many formatting options, WordArt, graphs, pictures, a large font selection, tables of content, and more. Files can be saved as DOC files, RTF files, ASCII text files, Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) files, and PDF (Adobe's Portable Document Format) files which Microsoft Word does not do. ThinkFree does not work with Microsoft Internet Explorer, but works only with the Firefox Web browser which must be used to operate the online version of the program.

To use the ThinkFree Web version of the software, you must open a free account. This allows you up to 30 megabytes of data storage on the ThinkFree servers. Should you need more storage, you can transfer files to your own hard drive. You can access your account from any computer with Internet access, which is nice if you need a wordprocessor and the folks that you are visiting do not have Word or any other high-performance equivalent. You can also create documents from a Macintosh or Linux computer should that be the only available machine.

For more information or to create your free account to use ThinkFree Online, go to: www.thinkfree.com.

Legacy 6

Millennia Corporation released version 6 of Legacy in September after 21 months of work since the previous release. New features in version 6 include:

Research Guidance - A four step process helps locate records

which may have the information needed about your ancestors:

1. Review the ancestor's timeline to be sure all that you know about an ancestor is recorded.
2. Legacy suggests preliminary survey sources to find research in progress or published research .
3. After selecting goals, Legacy lists prioritized suggestions to accomplish them.
4. Legacy creates a To-Do List.

Publishing Center - You can select one or more reports and combine them into a book report. The information the reports are indexed and sourced together and a master Table of Contents is generated. A Title page, Preface page, Dedication page, Copyright Notice page, Introduction, and Abbreviations page can be added to the beginning of the book.

Legacy Home - The Home tab on the main screen of Legacy brings important information about your family file. It includes daily genealogy and Legacy News, To-Do item reminders, birthday and anniversary reminders, statistics about your family file, links to update Legacy, technical support links and more. A built-in browser provides Internet access without leaving Legacy.

Timelines - You can select historical timeline files containing events from selected localities, and add them to the Chronology View and reports as background information. Timeline files can be created and edited by the user.

DNA - You can record DNA marker test results from several different companies.

Forms Center - New forms can be added. The new forms will probably be online in packets for those who wish to download them.

Potential Problems List - A list of all the problems found is presented in a grid and is retained from session to session. The affected individuals can be edited and the problem corrected or the problem can be excluded from future checking.

Global US County Verification - US counties in the database are verified to be in existence at the time of the event.

Location Prepositions - There is a field for the location preposition. This default is "in" but other prepositions like "near," "around," "outside," "northwest," and so forth may be used. These prepositions are then used when building report sentences.

Sources - Source citations can connect to statements such as: "This individual never married," "This couple didn't marry," "This couple didn't have children," and to "To Do" Items

Note Fields - Font styles buttons select bold, underline, italicize, and superscript for parts of the notes. The changes show in the notes instead of the printer codes as before.

For more information or to order the update, go to: www.LegacyFamilyTree.com

Finding Acceptable Sources

By Allin Kingsbury

Imagine a genealogist finding hundreds of names on the Internet and adding them to his database. The source that the genealogist cites is the URL of the Web site where the data was found. He is pleased with the productivity of his "research." You may ask, "Did the genealogist do a good job?"

There are a number of problems in this scenario that need to be resolved. First, assume the Web site does not indicate the original sources of the data. Much of the genealogical data on the Internet lacks sources. Our genealogist made no effort to determine that the data was accurate and did not attempt to learn the sources of the data before accepting the data as valid. It is likely that our genealogist is repackaging junk genealogy and circulating it to others. Because the Internet data was neatly formatted in professional-looking type, it looked correct. Secondly, citing an Internet address as a source may turn out to be a wild goose chase. The data may be moved or the site may shut down before a good genealogist can get around to checking on the validity of the data.

I had an experience similar to this scenario a few weeks ago when I found an ancestor on a Web site that included many generations of family members. I had worked on the family for many years and had been unable to determine who the parents were. Before I added the names to my database, I looked at the data to see if it made sense. The individuals who were stated to be parents of my ancestor were from wealthy and prominent Swiss families. This was consistent with what I had learned. They had joined the Mennonites and come to America to escape the viscous religious persecution they experienced in Switzerland. My ancestor was Catholic. For the son of a Mennonite who had escaped the religious persecution of Europe to have a son become a Catholic in America would be considered akin to treason, yet the son (most likely not my ancestor) was named in the father's will as though he had caused no problem for the family. This did not make sense to me. Also, according to the birth dates, which were accurately documented for the family, the father was age 14 when his son (my ancestor) was born. This may have happened among uneducated poor families, but it would have been considered a disgrace in a prominent family of Switzerland. I chose not to add the names to my database.

The Need for Good Sources

Most researchers assume that if they have a source for a date and place, they have completed the research on this item. However, the source may not have sufficient information to prove that the date and place belong to the individual in your database. Individuals with the same name, especially if it is Smith, are common. You need a source of information to prove the relationship to a family. A document such as a birth certificate or christening record which lists the names of the parents will prove the relationship. A death certificate verifies that the individual is the person in your family if the birth date matches other sources that you have or if it lists the next of kin that you can identify as a family member. Another person's research, printed as a genealogy will not necessarily prove a relationship. That person may have made a

mistake and linked the wrong individual to a family.

A friend told me of a problem in his research. He had found an ancestor in a New England town along with another family nearby where both parents had the exact same names as his ancestor and spouse. He was able to separate the families with some difficulty, only because the two families attended different churches and had named most of their children with different names than used for children in the other family.

I had similar problem where my ancestor and another family with the same husband's name and same given name for the wives had their children christened in the same three adjacent parishes during the same twenty-year period. The church records listed the full name of the father and the given name of the mother. I had to look at all the records available to separate the two families. I only realized that there were only two families when I saw the christenings were too close together and that there were too many children and too many with the same given names.

It is when you are gathering information about an individual and find someone with the same name living close by that you need to look at primary sources which are free from interpretations, speculations and guesses in order to differentiate the two individuals.

Primary sources

Most genealogical sources are either primary sources or secondary sources. A primary source is defined as a source recorded at the time of an event. It is assumed that the person doing the recording has knowledge of the facts being recorded or is getting the facts from someone who has knowledge of the facts. Examples of primary sources include:

- birth marriage and death certificates (vital records)
- christening, marriage, and burial records made by church officials
- burial records kept by a cemetery
- census records (assuming the census taker had a reliable informant)
- family Bibles (assuming births, marriages and deaths were recorded at time of event)
- pension records
- divorce proceedings
- mortuary records (assuming the informant was accurate)

These sources provide dates and places for births, marriages, divorces and deaths. They are considered official records by the organization that recorded the information. This is even true for family Bibles. The person who made the effort to record the information for the family considered it an important duty that should be done accurately.

Pension records are a primary source for the commencement of the pension and the termination (death). If the pension was paid

to the spouse after the decease of the pensioner, we have a primary source for her death date. Pension applications usually required proof of marriage as well as information about children, military service and places of residence. Because this information had penalties for perjury and usually required certification of accuracy by reputable witnesses, the information is reliable. Often, marriage certificates and pages from the family Bible (primary sources) would be submitted with the application as proof.

Other primary sources which do not normally contain birth marriage and death dates, but are useful in estimating these dates and surmising where they occurred, include:

- land records
- probate records
- tax records
- court records, especially those dealing with inheritance and guardianship
- military records
- civil court records

These records are useful in establishing when a person was known to be living or known to be deceased. The date of a probate record can be used to estimate that the deceased died within the preceding year. Tax records and land records are useful in establishing residence of the parents which would be the birthplace of a child born during the residency. Today, a mother will usually travel to a hospital to give birth, but to give birth anywhere outside the home was extremely uncommon in the 19th century and earlier.

Early civil court records often name individuals as witnesses or as participants in litigation. The occurrences of these names officially prove that the individual was living on the date that he appeared in court, but may or may not provide evidence of place of residency.

Secondary Sources

A secondary source is a document that is based on research, remembered personal knowledge, or knowledge related by other individuals relating to events that have occurred earlier. In many secondary sources, the original source of the information is not recorded and remains a mystery. If discrepancies in dates or places are found, the decision regarding which information is correct can be difficult. Genealogists have established rules which work well in resolving conflicting data. The most-used rule says that a primary source is better than a secondary source. Resolution of data from two secondary sources is best resolved by finding a primary source. If there is conflicting data from two primary sources, the source closest to the actual event should prevail, but the discrepancy should be mentioned in the notes of your database. You may find other sources that tip the balance in favor of the other date. Fortunately, some conflicting data is not off more than a few days or a few miles. (I find this is often not true – people can be reported in a record to have been born in states far distant from their actual birth place and birth dates can be off by many years. Also I would include some examples of common secondary information found on primary source documents such as the birth information on a death certificate, entries in family Bibles since some may be primary and some secondary. There are two other categories of evidence that could be mentioned: direct evidence that di-

rectly answers the question about an individual such as birth date, birth place, etc and indirect evidence such as age in a census, at marriage or at death from which a birth date can be calculated or estimated.)

Some primary sources contain information that should be categorized as a secondary source. For example, a death certificate based on information supplied by a neighbor would be a secondary source for birth date and place of birth. A family bible with information from an elderly grandmother's memory about earlier generations of the family would be a secondary source for those dates. Information that is recent when recorded and which was witnessed or known by the author of the source is a primary source. Otherwise the data should be treated as from a secondary source, even though the document is on the list of primary sources.

Commonly used secondary sources for genealogy include:

- Manuscripts detailing family relationships
- Published family histories
- Biographies
- Local histories which include family history
- Obituaries
- Headstone inscriptions
- Marriage, birth and death announcements in newspapers
- Letters with family history information
- Internet family history sites
- Transcriptions of primary source information

These secondary sources are only as good as the information used in their creation. They vary from accuracy equivalent to a primary source to pure fiction. The fiction is occasionally created through fraud, but more often it comes from sloppy research, guesses or forgetfulness. Many secondary sources offer no clues as to where the information originated

Sources which prove relationship are the key to accurate family history. There are many examples where a genealogist has substituted another individual with the same name and proceeded with the research. Some have even found many generations of ancestors of the wrong parents and published their research, probably ignorant of their error .

Sources which prove relationship include:

- Birth and christening documents which have the names of parents
- Documents which match birthdates in a family Bible
- Documents which match the places of residence of an individual
- Documents which match the name of the spouse
- Probate records which name the spouse, children, grandchildren and other relatives
- Family Bibles which state relationships
- Land records which document the inheritance of property to by other members of a family

In order to establish relationship, you need to find documents that

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indicate that all your sources are about the same individual. Each individual has unique identifiers such as birth date, exact residency, occupation, and names of relatives. If you rely on the place of residency to be sure documents apply to the same individual, accuracy depends upon the uniqueness of the place. A small town is much

better than a large city, unless you have a street address which is most unique. If you have a person linked to a single piece of property, you have done well. If you have the person linked to a place like Boston, then you must be sure that you have not merged two individuals with the same name.

To be continued in the next issue.

Stranger Than Fiction: Vidstone, Tombstone Hero or Scoundrel?

Vidstone

Vidstone, the latest technology for the recently departed will be featured at the annual funeral directors convention this year. A flat screen monitor embedded in the headstone will play an 8-minute video of the life of the deceased when a visitor pushes the start button. The unit is solar powered and comes with a choice of screen sizes from seven to twenty-two inches. To preserve the quiet reverence of the cemetery, there is no speaker. However, there is a headphone hack, just in case the visitor remembered to bring headphones. The next time you are making funeral arrangements, you may be asked if you loved the deceased enough to include the deluxe model Vidstone. And the mortuary may have a studio and editing room in the basement where you can have a

professionally edited video produced.

Tombstone Hero or Scoundrel?

For three years, Gene Platt worked on his self-appointed project as he cleaned tombstones, removing fungus and lichen. He then applied several coats of white-pigmented sealer to the Georgia marble tombstones. Then he worked on the worn lettering using drills and grinding tools. Finally he painted the letters and numbers with gold paint. The old headstones looked like new after Mr. Platt was finished. He spent thousands of hours and many dollars of his own money carrying out the project.

Mr. Platt wanted his work to be followed nationwide. He did receive recognition in the form of commendations from cemetery officials. Representative Loretta Sanchez (D-Santa Ana), the Santa Ana Histori-

cal Preservation Society and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War all commended his project.

It was not until later that the experts expressed their horror at the potential damage caused by Mr. Platt. The Georgia marble used on many of the stones had no way of releasing moisture after the sealer was applied, accelerating deterioration of the stone. They said black lithochrome paint should have been used instead of the gold. Also working by himself, Mr. Platt could have changed a 3 to an 8 or guessed at some of the letters in the worn inscription, and changed a name or date. A grave-stone inscription is like a historical document. An archivist would not tolerate a well-meaning genealogist taking out his pen and enhancing faded writing on a will or parish record.

News For Genealogists: Slave Life, NEHGS Halts Lending Library, Record Destruction Prompts Action

Slave Life

Marguerite Ross Howell spent a lot of research time looking at old court petitions. The documents contain many personal details such as their occupation, diseases that they suffered, and more, which change the names to real people. As she read new documents, she would think to herself that the information could help someone trace their African-American family tree.

Her work will help those family historians who need the data when a project she and her former professor at UNCG have started is finally completed. The two are compiling 14 years of notes taken by Marguerite covering the years 1776 to 1867. The data is a compilation of 17,487 legislative and court documents from about 200 county court houses in the District of Columbia and 15 former slave states. The court petitions were filed by slave owners, slaves and free blacks. The project is called Schweninger's Race and Slavery Petitions Project 1776-1867, named for Professor Loren Schweninger, Marguerite's former professor.

NEHGS Halts Lending Library

The New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) has a lending library with more than 30,000 titles from which members can borrow copies for a fee. Many individuals have joined the society just to use this service. The service will stop in the spring of 2006. The NEHGS staff will assist members in finding books

elsewhere that were formerly available from the lending library.

To offset the loss of the lending library, NEHGS is adding new member services including access to HeritageQuest Online, a subscription genealogy service, and downloadable lectures.

Record Destruction Prompts Action

A boom in mining in White County, Arkansas has brought a crowd of researchers to the county courthouse looking for the owners of mineral rights. According to the court clerk, the group has shown no respect for the record books containing probate records and tax records dating back more than one hundred years. She witnessed the people using the books as ladders, standing on piles of books to reach high shelves. They are interfering with the work of courthouse employees and with occasional genealogists who stop by the courthouse in Searcy on their vacations to look up family records. The court has stirred up some controversy by putting restrictions on the use of the records.

Geoff Rasmussen Coming in November

Geoff Rasmussen, author of Legacy, a popular genealogy program, will speak at the November meeting. He will briefly introduce Legacy, and then conduct a class about the features and capabilities of the Legacy program.

LDS Microfilm Data to Go Online

By Allin Kingsbury

Imagine: The world's finest, largest collection of genealogy information is housed in a mountain vault in Utah. Only part of the 2 million films is available to the public. Even then, it's available only to those who can visit the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, or who are willing to wait while an ordered microfilm works its way to a Family History Center somewhere in the world. When it does arrive, the patron can view it only on a microfilm viewer at the local center. Often, the records aren't indexed, so the searching involves many tedious, eye-tiring hours of scrolling from image to image. That's the situation today.

Now imagine this: A million volunteers around the world use a new online software program to access and index those 2 million microfilms. Meantime, the films are digitized. The digitized films and the corresponding indexes are then made available on the Internet, so that anyone anywhere in the world can access them at no cost via a Web browser.

This may sound like a dream, but it's on the verge of becoming reality. The first glimpse of plans to engage a vast volunteer crew to index films that will be digitized was made public at the meeting in Salt Lake City of the Federation of Genealogical Societies in September, and confirmed by Alan Mann at the SVC GG October meeting.

The new plans build on decades of work. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has provided significant support for family history, beginning early in the church, even before Brigham Young moved church members to Salt Lake City in the 1840s and 1850s. Over the years, more than 2 million rolls of microfilm of family history records have been collected from around the world and have been archived in a vault cut into the granite walls of Little Cottonwood Canyon in Utah. When the vault was built in 1960, the LDS Church already had a huge collection of microfilm. Today, Church-sponsored camera crews scattered around the world are filming additional records.

Most of the records are open to the public. Some agencies have placed restrictions on access to specific films because of privacy and copyright issues. Films without restricted access are cir-

culated for a small fee through the many Family History Centers throughout the world. Anyone, regardless of religious affiliation, can order these films and use the other resources found in the Family History Centers.

The recently announced plans for an ambitious project to digitize the films for access on the Internet will involve volunteer groups in compiling searchable indexes to information on the film. The LDS Church is recruiting volunteers, particularly volunteers from genealogical organizations, to extract the names of individuals and other information from the film. The extraction process will work much like that used for earlier projects such as the 1880 U.S. Census and the 1881 British Isles Census which were published on CD-ROM. The Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group will make arrangements for a group project to involve its hundreds of members.

Many of the microfilms have several thousand pages of information, and many are in languages other than English. The project has started on a limited scale and was demonstrated at FGS on networked computers. Before a film can be indexed, its copyright and other usage restrictions must be cleared, and in many cases renegotiated.

Each set of data records will be extracted by two individuals who have no contact with each other. The data from the two extractors then will be compared. Where the two sets of extracted data agree, the extraction will be accepted as correct. Any differences between the data will be checked by a third person who determines the correct extraction of the data.

When the data extraction for a given set of records is completed, the indexed data will be linked with scanned images of the data, which can be viewed over the Web by clicking on the item of interest in the index. It will be much like the census data on Ancestry.com and Genealogy.com, which are indexed and linked to the images of the actual census returns. Because of the massive volume of information involved, the LDS site promises to be more comprehensive than any other genealogy sites currently on the Internet. There is no doubt that this will be the most ambitious genealogy project ever done.

Spider Webs: Genealogy Podcast, Google Blog Search

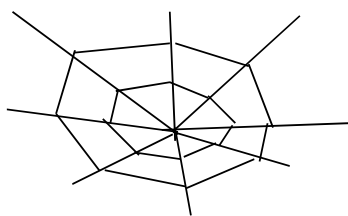
Genealogy Podcast

The Genealogy Guys Podcast has been introduced by George Morgan and Drew Smith. Both are authors and lecturers. They will have a new 30-minute lecture each week on their Web site. The lecture can be heard from a computer, an iPod or any MP3 player. Go to"

<http://genealogyguys.com/>

Google Blog Search

Google is expanding the features on their Web sites. A recent addition is a



search engine for blogs. A blog is a Web log, or a journal that is frequently updated. Many newspapers and organizations have news blogs. Some individuals have posted personal

blogs on the Web to publish their thoughts and opinions. You can find blogs on almost any topic that you can name. One way to find them is with the Google Blog search engine. Like most machine generated search indexes, Google Blog will give you a significant number of irrelevant sites that have the right key words. However, the data is timely. News articles usually find their way onto the index the day they are posted on the Internet. Try the site at: www.google.com/blogsearch

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Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

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Please send inquiries, address changes, new memberships, and membership renewals to:
SV-CGG, P.O. Box 23670, San Jose, CA 95153-3670 or Leslyk@earthlink.net

SV-CGG meets monthly, except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building, 875 Quince Avenue, Santa Clara, CA. We offer classes and sponsor guest speakers at meetings to help family historians with computer technology and research techniques. Membership dues are US\$15 per year (US\$20 for Canada and US\$25 for other international). Members are offered classes at meetings, mentor help, *Silicon Valley PastFinder* (a monthly newsletter published each month there is a meeting).

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Articles contributed by readers are welcome. Articles may be submitted as a text file on PC-compatible disk, CD-ROM, or as an e-mail attachment. The editors reserve the right to accept, reject, and edit articles. Articles are not returned.

The following can be ordered from www.FamilySearch.org or at 1-800-537 5950:

Personal Ancestral File 2.3.1 Macintosh (diskette or CD version)	US\$6
Personal Ancestral File 4.04	US\$6
Personal Ancestral File 5.2.18 and 4 (Windows), PAF 3, and 2.31 (DOS), lessons and user guide, Personal Ancestral File Companion 5.2 Windows (2 CDs)	US\$8.25
Personal Ancestral File 4.04.18 and 5.2.18, PAF Companion (evaluation) or PAF User's Guide (English, Spanish, French, German, or Portuguese) downloaded at: www.FamilySearch.org	free

The following can be ordered from www.svcomputergenealogy.org or the group address (see above):

Newsletter back issues if available, per issue	US\$1 (order by mail or purchase at meetings)
Videos of classes; syllabus copies	See Web site for titles, prices
<i>Family History Documentation Guidelines</i>	US\$12.50 per book, includes postage; bulk discounts
Stuck-on Sources Post-It note pads	Available at meetings and on Web site
Flash Drives with SVCGG logo and loaded with 9000 Internet genealogy sites	Available at cost on Web site and at meetings

CLASSES FOR 12 NOV. 2005

General Classes	Software Classes
Mapping Your Way Through the Past	<i>Reunion</i> on a Macintosh
Digital Photography part 2	PAF and PCs for Beginners
	Advanced Focus/Filter in PAF
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The former Silicon Valley PAF Users Group

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