JANUARY 2004 PC DISK OF THE MONTH

The focus of this month's Disk of the Month is Genealogy. If you are already researching your family tree, then chances are you have already selected one of the major genealogy applications and have already entered several generations of research into your program. Computers and genealogy were apparently made for each other! So the intent is not to tell you which genealogy program to use but instead to provide some additional tools, utilities and insights which will help you be more successful with your research.

As I began doing research, I found that the computer simply helps organize the facts I uncovered. And to my amazement, this resulted in additional clutter with new facts collected on small tib bits of paper. Researching multiple family lines at the same time resulted in my constantly finding my memory was incorrect. I could not keep track of the facts of the family unit I was trying to document. Then I discovered the maddening trend of families using the same given name over and over again. My gosh, I was amazed at how many James Turners and John Roberts there are in my family!

I realized I simply had to have a better way to keep family units and members organized with respect to time or a timeline. Several genealogy documents are available for your use in the folder RTF Docs. Open Genealogy folder, then RTF Docs. This is what's included:

Correspondence Log.rtf – this is the generic correspondence log in rtf file format. Use it as a journal to document your correspondence progress. Remember, snail mail takes time.

Blank to do.rtf – is a form I created for daily use in my previous corporate world. It gave me a way to update and manage my to do list. The "Last Saved" is a field that is updated by right-clicking the date and time and selecting "Update Field." This will help identify which version of the file is the latest. I usually used the date as part of the filename, e.g. 040124 todo.doc using the (YYMMDD) for the date helped keep the files organized.

FamilyLine.rtf – is simply pages of tables that allows you to document family members birth, marriage and death by decade. It helped me to keep up with the James and Johns in the family. The document is formated landscape and begins with 1760 and continues up through 1900. You can easily add additional decades as needed.

TimeLine.rtf – is a document I originally drew then created using using Visio and finally simply imported the Visio image into a MS Word file. You can personalize the TimeLine for any individual and also date the page for your files. Then you simply draw a line from the date of birth up toward the top. Along the way you can add any additional milestones that are important to you or the individual. As you can see, the TimeLine begins in 1260 and ends at

2000.

These tools really helped me in my early research and I hope you find them useful in some way as well.

The real gems on the CD begin in the Census Tools folder. Five unique Excel spreadsheets have been included to help document US Census information the researcher finds through their journey. These five files are distributed as .exe files. When you install them they expand to become complex Excel files complete with instructions. The author is Gary Minder of El Cajon, CA. He offers all of these files free of charge, but he is requesting a $10 donation if you like them. I personally believe that will be the best $10 you ever spend. I cannot even imagine how much work went into the creation of these spreadsheets! They are as follows:

Census.exe – This sheet provides an easy way to enter census data for any family branch into a single file. When printed, this provides a way to examine the data and compare census to census. Directions for using, and copying pages of the workbook and formatting for printing are also included.Worksheets included are: 1790 Federal through the 1870 Federal, then 1880 Soundex and Federal, 1900 Soundex and Federal, 1910 Miracode and Federal, 1920 Soundex and Federal and the 1930 Federal.

Special.exe – This Special Schedules collection is a supplement to regular Census Spreadsheet. It includes worksheets for: the1850 and 1860 Slave Schedules, the 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1880 Mortality Schedules, 1883 Pensioners on the Roll, and 1890 Surviving Veterans and Widows. Again, instructions for use and printing are included.

Tracker-v2.exe – This is Census Tracker Version 2.0 - While this version is not 100% accurate with the census questions and official source documents, it does allow researchers to quickly and visually summarize their vital census information. The genealogically significant data fields the maintenance of data to two or three letter-sized sheets for reference or for a road trip. Where the U.S. Census Spreadsheet was designed to organize census information for an entire family, each sheet in the Tracker can be used to document a single person.

USChecklist.exe – This particular worksheet is used to simplify the tedious task of keeping track of where certain census related records are kept for a family, a surname or an individual. This is basically a map that designates the location of specific census information elsewhere in your files.

1930.exe – This worksheet is provided as a supplement to the census.xls worksheet you installed earlier. Detailed instructions are included on how to copy this 1930 Census sheet into the 1790–1920 workbook.

Progeny Software Folder

One of the products I presented at the meeting was Genelines by Progeny Software. Up until the end of 2003, Progeny provided a free program called GEDmark. Many genealogists share research using a file format known as Gedcom. A Gedcom file is to genealogy software as a rtf file is to wordprocessing software. It is a way to export data from one program to be imported into another. Progeny Software created GEDmark as a program that would read your Gedcom file and mark it as yours. That way it will provide you with the credit for the research you did.

PDF Files

Three PDF files are also included in the Genealogy folder which make for good reading and advice. They are:

1. Planning a Research Trip
2. Clooz manual – a copy of the Clooz User Manual. Clooz is one of the programs I presented
   during the meeting.
3. Genelines 2 User Guide – Genelines is a genealogical timeline program I presented during the meeting. This is the user manual for that program in case you are interested in purchasing a copy. This program is also from Progeny software.

OpenOffice Folder

Sun's Star Office 5.2 was suggested as an alternate program for Exel when working with the Census Tools. But Sun has moved on and recently announced Enterprpise support for OpenOffice which is both and Open Source application and a project. OpenOffice.org 1.1 is available in your language. It is free to use and distribute. ***OOo_1.1.0_Win32Intel_install.zip*** – is a true 32-bit application and installs on all Window clients, Win 98 and newer. It is 65 MB in size.

PocoMail

PocoMail 3.03 (Shareware) Free Trial, $34.95 to Purchase

PocoMail was recently recommended as a wonderful email program that has consistently received 5 - star ratings from most reviewers. It is in the same class as Microsoft Outlook but much less expensive and with none of the security issues that come with both Outlook and Outlook Express.The new breed of email viruses has the ability to infect your machine simply by reading a message, unless you are using Poco: PocoMail does not use the Internet Explorer component to preview your HTML messages like some competing products, but an internal HTML viewer. PocoMail does not understand either VBScript or JavaScript which are used to write email viruses, so it will never get infected by such a virus. On the other hand, PocoMail will not run a PocoScript from a received message, it will only run PocoScripts you previously enabled on the message to better process it, so such viruses cannot propagate. The basic difference is simple: while VBScript and JavaScript allow a third-party to control your mailer, PocoScript was designed for the exact opposite - to allow you to better control your mailer, and no one else. And of course, PocoMail has excellent scanning features for standard viruses.

Moreover, you have one-click access to features like Sanitize HTML and Strip HTML. Sanitize HTML will leave the message you view intact, but the displayed copy will have any dangerous HTML tags neutralized, while retaining most of the original formatting.
Strip HTML completely removes HTML and views the message in plain text. These actions are also available as filters so that you can permanently sanitize or strip HTML on incoming messages.

Finally, PocoMail does not support Internet Explorer viewer within PocoMail, not even as an option through program interface(*). Great care was taken to ensure that only PocoMail's

viewer can render HTML messages, which means that you are not vulnerable
to common email virus attacks, yet you get accurate and quick HTML display.

I recently switched to this email program and I am very pleased with the features and the
security. I will never look back!

SyGate Personal Firewall

A version of this software firewall program in included for all supported versions of Windows.
Most of us that have access to a broadband connection are aware of the necessity of using a
firewall. While most of us have been using ZoneAlarm, the experts have recently endorsed this
free program over ZoneAlarm. It seems that ZoneAlarm doesn't offer many installation options.
It seems to be very single minded, if you will. Now the average user is not extremely
knowledgable about stuff like firewalls, but those same experts insist that this product is more
flexible during installation without being too geeky. Best of all, it is free just like ZoneAlarm.

OTHER FILES ON THE DISK

Cal Digital Library Image Stds-2001.pdf

We have all heard the discussions about archival storage for future generations. What is the
correct file format and what is the best media to guarentee readability in 20 – 99 years? This is
important to all genealogists since we're saving files, photos and digital scans of census
records all the time. I don't have an answer for you, but the California Digital Library just might.
After all, this is directly from Silicon Valley where the technology
and the application both live.

DVDshrink23.zip

DVD Shrink is a great freeware tool for fitting your DVD-video onto a single DVD-R disc. It
permits you to select compression levels up to 50 percent for each video track, preview files,
and manage media assets. The re-authoring, decryption, and preview features make this
product a hot pick.

What is DVD Shrink:

DVD Shrink is software to backup DVD disks. You use this application in conjunction with DVD
burning software of your choice, to make a backup copy of any DVD video disk.DVD Shrink
does not burn DVDs! The output from DVD Shrink is saved as files on your hard drive, which
you can then burn to a DVD-R using separate burning software,
such as the software provided with your DVD-R drive.

Why Use DVD Shrink:

Most DVD titles are designed to prevent you from making copies.

The first preventative measure is encryption. Most DVD titles are encrypted, which prevents
you from either copying them to your hard drive, or if you manage to do so, being able to play
the resulting files. DVD Shrink overcomes this problem with built-in decryption algorithms.

The next problem is not so easy. Most DVD video titles are simply too large to fit, without modification, onto a single recordable DVD-R disk. DVD Shrink overcomes this problem by modifying or "shrinking" the data from your original DVD.

EasyOffice.exe

This is another another MS Office clone. Again, I was attempting to find additional options for using an Excep compatible clone to work with the Census Tools provided on this DOM. This application should work with all versions of Windows from 98 and newer.

Eraser57Setup.zip

Eraser is an advanced security tool (for Windows), which allows you to completely remove sensitive data from your hard drive by overwriting it several times with carefully selected patterns. Works with Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000, XP and DOS. Eraser is FREE software and its source code is released under GNU General Public License. Top reviews from the most popular software sites and magazines confirm that Eraser is one of the best security tools available for Windows.Eraser has over 2.5 Million Users Per Year!

PhotoEdit_PG_Final_288.pdf

This is a special "How to" article from PC World Magazine that contains Top Photo-Editing Tips. The Author is a good fan and user of PaintShop Pro and many of his explanations are step-by-step directions using PaintShop Pro. The second part of the article discusses some interesting ideas for the genealogist. Specifically,
making digital photo gifts. Okay, let's all get out our new digital camers and take some great pics. If they need improving and you want to save them for the next few generations, then read these articles.

Scan Photos Like a Pro

Get the best results out of your photo scans with Patrick's pro tips, By Patrick Norton

http://www.techtv.com/screensavers/howto/story/0,24330,3588812,00.htm

This is the link to view this article online. In addition, Patrick has included links to other sites that provide a graphics education in their own right. Neat stuff like, scan for the long term, learn how to use the histogram tool, the unsharpen mask is your friend and finally, pixels, dots and inches explained.This article and links can really augment you photo and image management education.

I hope you find this Disk of the Month useful with lots of free stuff, advice, tools and things to learn. Please let one of the board members know if you find this DOM useful and if the presentations were meaningful to you.

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http://www.wacug.org