CHAPTER 4

A Directory of Family History Software

'Certified' Software

See a list of family history software programs that have been "certified" by FamilySearch to synchronize with *new FamilySearch* beginning on page 158.

Family history has become a real passion and big-time hobby for millions of people today all around the world. Alex Haley called it "a hunger, bone-marrow deep, to know our heritage". Family history helps you discover a sense of identity and family pride in your life. It can also help unite and strengthen bonds between family members.

Whatever your reason for tracing your own family roots and stories, genealogy software can become one of your most valuable and indispensable tools. Software helps you discover your ancestors, organize and store your information (such as family photos, scrapbooks, health and personal data, reunions, etc.), measure the progress of your research, share your information with family and friends, provide tons of tools to make it easier, and much more. Software programs today are fun and interesting for the whole family, and no longer just about names, charts, and graphs.

In this Directory, you'll learn where to find comprehensive reviews that will help you make an informed decision about which software is right for you. Selecting the right software program can make all the difference in how much satisfaction and information you will derive from your family history quest. And the right software will help make your journey fun and much easier.

Suggested Activities

1. Educate yourself about the different family history software programs available. Read the reviews of the various programs.
2. Try different free versions or demos if you wish. Make a decision on which one(s) you want to purchase.
3. Go on a treasure hunt. Discover some of your buried treasure in the web sites provided.
4. Persevere in searching for your ancestors and understanding what their life was like.

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Which Software is the Best?

The most often asked question today by people interested in family history software is *"which one is the best?"* This question is difficult to answer because what is right for me may not work as well for you. Everyone has different needs and preferences. There may be features in a particular family history program that I may not use, e.g. web-site creation or multi-media scrapbooking, but may be very important to you.

Some people even use more than one program to meet their needs. For example, you may prefer a primary, heavy duty program for your everyday use, and a different program to generate well-designed charts. Each program has its own strengths and weaknesses; each program does certain things well and other things not-so-well.

And they are always changing and upgrading. New features and options are constantly being introduced. They offer a wide variety of options including the way they format data, the types of charts they print, their ability to help you organize your research, and their capacity to store photographs and documents. They can even assist you in your research by letting you keep a research log or a to-do list with your family data. With dozens of software programs, and hundreds of features available, which program(s) should I choose?

Whether you're just starting out, or upgrading your existing software program take some time and effort to make your decision; it's well worth it.

You may want to consider making a list of features that you want or need, then prioritize that list to decide which are most important to you. As you gain more understanding and knowledge your list may change and grow.

Here are some things to keep in mind as you decide which features you may want or need.

Software Features

- **What do you want to do** with your family history information? Are you just looking for a basic program to organize names, dates and events? Some program basics may include: planning tools, data recording, analytical tools (search features, custom lists, flags, custom data fields, multiple note options, etc.), source documentation, reports, charts, publishing, multimedia, internet, portability, additional tools and convenience items.

- **What about charts and reports?** Do you want to create beautiful family trees to decorate your home; do you want to include photos, audio and video with your data? What kind of charts and reports would you like your software to be able to print?

- **Do you plan to create a family Web site** to share your information with family and friends? The popular software programs offer you the ability to upload your family tree data online right from your computer program, and help you create a simple family Web site.

- **Will you want to write a family history book** using your information? Some software programs offer more features for printing a family history book than others.

- **If you're a member of the LDS Church,** do you want to take your ancestors to the temple? If so, you will want to use software that helps track the special ordinance information.

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the latest versions of the most popular family tree software programs in this software roundup.
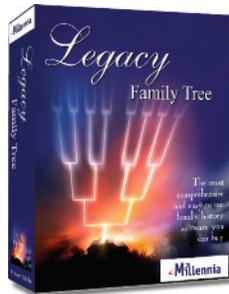
Windows Family History Software Programs

Software Programs Make it Easy

"Once you start moving beyond your parents and grandparents in your personal research, I cannot imagine keeping track of your family tree and research efforts completely by hand or in paper files anymore. Great software programs are available that make it easy to build, organize, manage, share, and view your family history." Paul Nauta, FamilySearch Public Affairs Manager
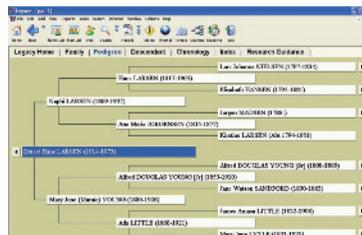
Paul Nauta

Legacy Family Tree.com – ($) (FREE)

www.legacyfamilytree.com

An easy-to-use, award-winning, full-featured, super-intuitive software program with numerous customizable features. You choose the options to reach the level of detail and accuracy you want. As your skills increase, Legacy's abilities and features are there to grow along with you. You have complete control as you decide which tools to use and how to use them. Their exclusive *Research Guidance* feature increases the odds of adding new ancestors to your family tree by guiding you step-by-step through the research process. And their *Chronology View* is the software's most powerful tool.
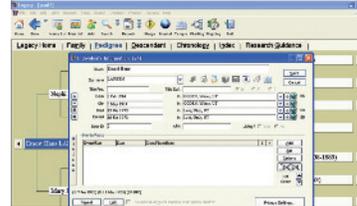
Using Legacy

While Legacy's interface and usability suites the beginner, it is also robust enough to meet the demands of serious researchers. It was created with the genealogist's needs in mind, and is designed to work with popular document retrieval and organizational systems. It uses the same *numbering system* as PAF (Personal Ancestral File) (RINs and MRINs) which is a well-known organizational system.
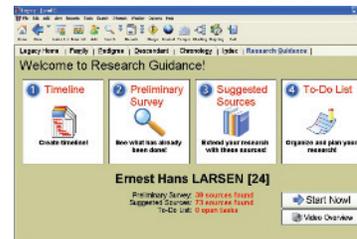
Features

Legacy is organized around four family tree views. Choose to import from a GEDCOM file or start a family tree from scratch. Add individuals on the *Family View* or on the *Pedigree View*; click to pull up the individual's information. Use the icons to add specific information like spouses, siblings and children. You have advanced color-coding options available to make it easier to trace ancestor lines. There is also a *Calendar Creator* that lets you create your own calendars, complete with pictures, birthdays, anniversaries and pictures.

Other standard features include: A wide variety of reports, global search and replace, auto-complete, powerful merge features, slide shows, multimedia, split-screen views, a Geo Location Database, and Master Location List Mapping . It automates the process of creating a family Web page, offers a good book feature and even helps you print out custom *Address Labels and Name Tags* (complete with pictures or three-generation pedigree charts) for your next family reunion.

Research Guidance

Built-in *Research Guidance* helps guide you step-by-step with the research process. You'll start with a *Timeline Review* and end with a *To-Do List* with detailed source tips along the way. The *Preliminary Survey* tab suggests sources, such as the best websites, message boards, and histories, and most are just a click away. If you want help with original research, click on the *Suggested Sources* tab where you can choose from one of the pre-defined goals of birth, death, marriage, parents, siblings,