

Choosing Genealogy Software

Mendlesham Computer Club

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Where We Left Off

- Decided who you were going to research and what you were hoping to achieve
- Collated and organised all the information you have
- Ready to start creating a family tree either by using:
 - Handwritten charts (My History)
 - Online search engines (e.g Ancestry) which also allow for the creation of family trees at the same time as you are using them for research
 - Genealogy Software

What is Genealogy Software

- Tools to help you document & share your family history
- They are not research tools, but may have direct links to popular research sites

Why Use Genealogy Software

- Organises your family data
- Builds visual family trees
- Stores all data and media
- Preserves research (completed and ongoing)

Types of Genealogy Software

- Desktop products
- Web (Cloud) based
- Mobile apps

Before Selecting a Product: Things to Consider

- Your
 - research goals
 - collaboration needs
 - experience and comfort level using technology
 - technology requirements
 - budget

When Selecting a Product: Key Functional Features to Check

- User Friendliness
 - Quick setup
 - Easy data entry
 - Simple interfaces
 - Tutorials & Guidance
- Charts & reports
- Ability to capture Source citations
- GEDCOM support

When Selecting a Product: Budget Considerations

- Free & open-source tools
- One-time purchase
- Subscription models
- Version upgrade costs

When Selecting a Product: Privacy & Data Ownership

- Check:
 - Who owns your data - look at Data Privacy policies
 - Do you have control over your published data
 - Export capabilities
 - Security & storage options

When Selecting a Product: Collaboration & Sharing

- Online publishing
- Invite family members
- Shared editing
- Ability to turn off sharing

When Selecting a Product: Technical Considerations

Software, Support, Storage, Backup & Version Updates

- Does it work on your current technology
- What are the backup and storage options
- What are the upgrade options
- Is the product supported, current and what it seems
 - Family Tree Maker
 - <https://www.mackiev.com/ftm/index.html>

When Selecting a Product: Try Before You Buy

- Online Demonstrations
- Free trials
- Try importing a sample of data (photo, document)

Popular Desktop Examples



Good reporting, supports GEDCOM, has a free “Essentials” basic functionality version. Runs on Windows or Mac



Good interface to Ancestry.com, supports GEDCOM, good charting and reporting tools. Runs on Windows or Mac



Designed exclusively for Mac & iOS, supports GEDCOM, good charting and reporting tools, real-time family collaboration via iCloud/CloudTree.

Popular Web Based Examples

 requires a subscription, has good publishing options which are enhanced when used in conjunction with desktop Family Tree Maker software.

 has good publishing and sharing options, requires a subscription for full publishing functionality.

 is free, good for research collaboration, has minimal publishing and presentation functionality, no control over final presentations.

Mobile App Based Examples



Has a companion mobile viewer app (iOS only; doesn't let you edit your tree directly).



Has FTM Connect as the companion mobile app to view your FTM tree (iOS).



Has a dedicated mobile version called MobileFamilyTree for iOS, syncs with the desktop app.



Full-featured official app on both iOS & Android.



Official app for viewing/editing trees, records, photos on iOS & Android.



Multiple free mobile apps for tree building, memories, and collaborating.

Recap

- Identify your goals
- Choose features that meet your requirements
- Check privacy & backup options
- Is the software current
- Check pricing, upgrade costs and subscription commitments

Summary - Genealogy Software Comparison

Software	Strengths	Weaknesses	Best For
MacFamily Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced visual charts & timelines • Strong offline data control • iCloud & Apple integration • GEDCOM support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No built-in historical records • No DNA testing • macOS/iOS only 	Mac users who want detailed visual family trees
Ancestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge historical record database • DNA testing • Easy collaboration & hints • GEDCOM support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires paid subscription • Online-only data storage • Limited advanced charts 	Users researching records & biological connections via DNA
MyFamilyTree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple and beginner-friendly • Interactive tree building • GEDCOM support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited research tools • Basic charts & reports • No DNA or large databases 	Beginners creating basic family trees

Next Time

- Using Genealogy Software
 - Functionality Demonstrations of
 - Ancestry
 - My Family Tree
 - MacFamily Tree