

ProgenyLink.com

Optimized for descendant-sequence research

Major User Goals and Benefits

1. Notify the world of your research intentions, and seek their direct cooperation. By naming an ancient ancestor as the place to start for same-surname descendant research, you have made clear your plans and intentions for up to perhaps 5,000 people.

(In contrast, by definition, when doing pedigree-sequence research, with up to 32 surnames to research at 5-generations back, you can't tell what most of your pedigree looks like before you have researched it, so usually you can't cooperate and coordinate with other people, at least not long term and on a big scale.

2. Organize and communicate with your cousins so everyone benefits from cooperation.

3. Link your data with others' to get a free 10-generation pedigree. Such a pedigree would probably cost about \$2 million to have it researched just for you.

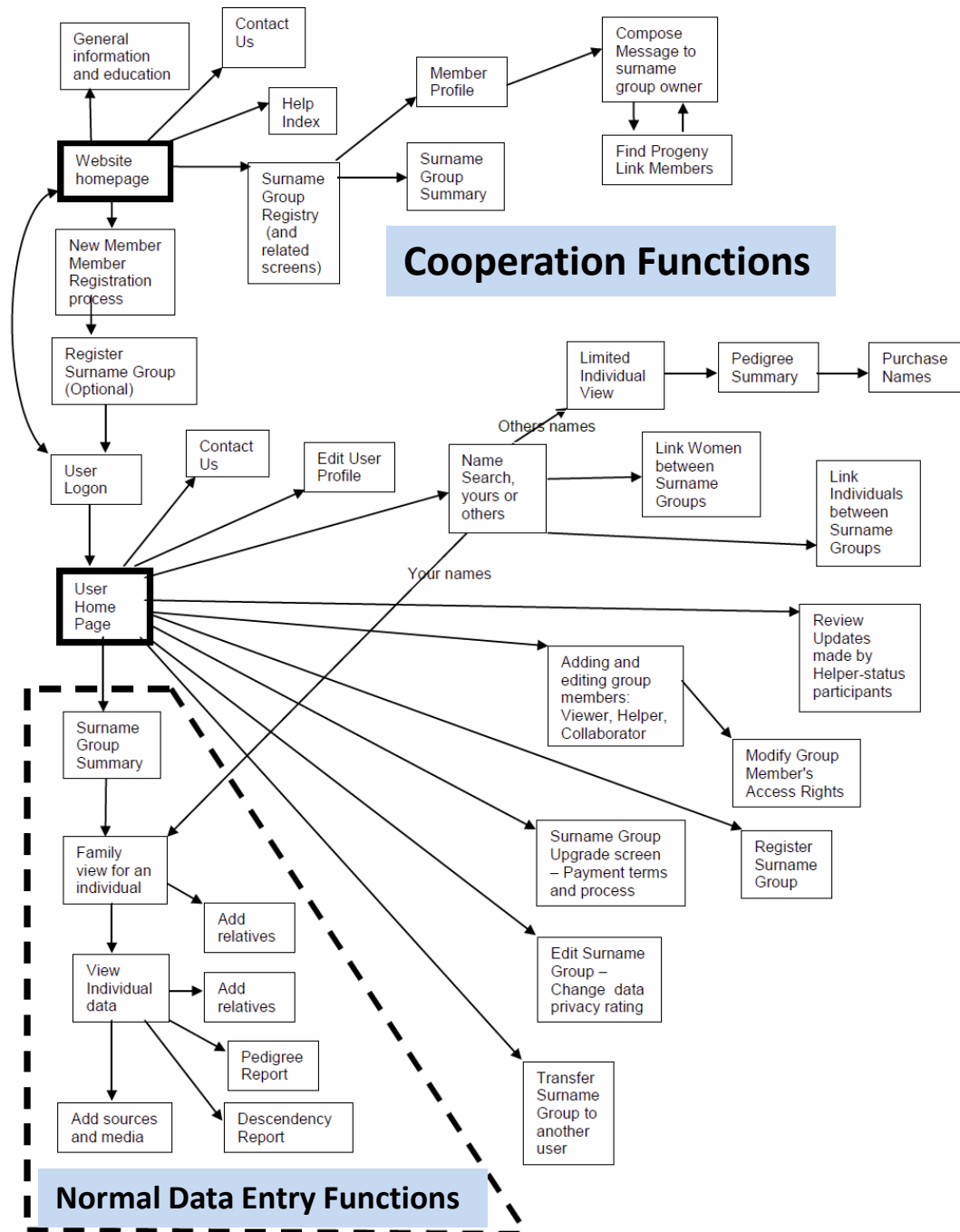
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A New Genealogy Research And Recording Procedure,

Focused On Single-Surname Descendent Structures

This software introduces and supports a very different procedure for "industrial strength" cooperation in doing genealogy work. It has the normal data entry functions for families, but it has many other functions which are focused on cooperation. The accompanying function diagram shows that normal functions are only about one-fourth of the whole, with three-fourths of the functions relating to cooperation.

ProgenyLink Function Navigation



Some New General Rules

1. Individuals Control All Access – Registration and permission are required.

There is no communal access to the database. No one can view or update another's data without specific permission. Ownership and control boundaries are carefully preserved. This also means that participants have greater responsibility to see that their data work is done accurately and completely. No one else can fix it for them.

In unusual cases, participants can enter data into their own space and then link it to data found in another space, without seeking advance permission. However, in most cases, people will want to receive permission to make the proper updates in the proper places.

There is a "community study" exception which allows anyone to make provisional contributions to a specific project without advance permission. However, it is advisable for those people to seek normal permissions later in the project.

2. Data content – finished names only. No fishing expeditions intended.

The database is not to be treated as a sea of raw data to search. Unique names should appear only once, and be found in their proper family setting. In other words, we should only be looking for finished names. This is not at all like Ancestry or the Internet or even FamilySearch which offer billions of unconnected "raw" names. Experienced genealogists will need to restrain their compulsion to just start searching for everything under the sun.

You can choose to search your own data or other people's data. Normally, to begin with, if you search for your family in other people's data, you would NOT find any data. If you do, that means you have some cousins you should be cooperating with, or you have some possible duplication going on somewhere in the project.

Major Owner Functions

- 1. Register surname group** -- Notify the world of your research intentions, and invite cooperation. You will be speaking for the group with which you intend to collaborate. Give name, birth place and date of ancient ancestor whose descendents you will be entering.
- 2. Choose status of data** – Private, public, published. You may choose to keep it hidden from view (private) until it reaches a high level of quality. That will minimize confusion. “Public” will allow other people to view your work to a limited extent, mostly to find marriage links. "Published" means you have given permission for the data to be marketed.
- 3. Enter normal data**
- 4. Identify helpers and assign access levels to them** -- View, Helper, Collaborator. These Viewers, Helpers (provisional updates allowed), and Collaborator (allowed to make immediate updates) must register with the system just as the owner does, and they may have their own ownership functions, if they choose.
- 5. Adjudicate helper data:**
 - You may get e-mails from Viewers suggesting changes.
 - You will need to approve provisional updates by Helpers before those updates can be seen by anyone outside your group.
 - You may review past updates by Helpers and Collaborators anytime, by date and participant.

Major Owner Functions (continued)

6. Add source documents and links to documents to individuals in your data space.

7. Add card catalog information to individual source documents and links, where available, or use card catalog information as an alternative to providing source documents and links.

8. Make marriage links between surname groups, where women appear as wives in one group and as daughters in another. When making those links, only use the highest quality data which is available from other surname groups. It will only cause confusion and extra work if you link some of your people to other sets of data which are of low quality. Searches return results ranked by quality standards, highest to lowest, with 3 levels, with a fourth level of quality which is too incomplete to even show under normal conditions.

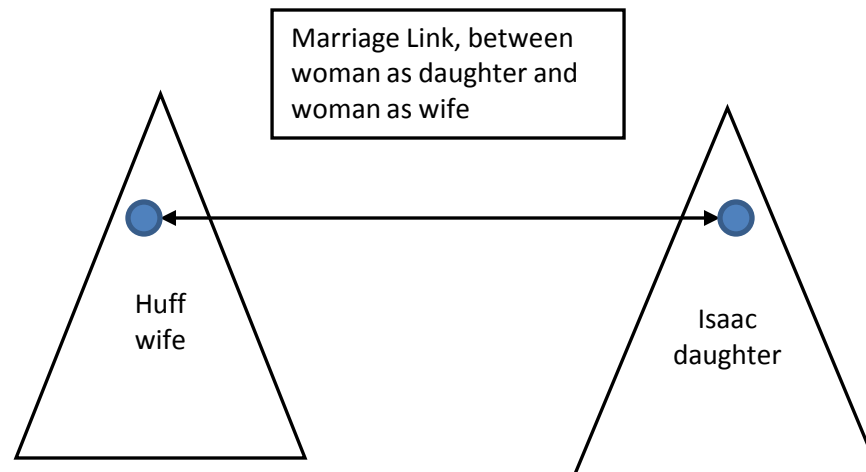
9. Perform specialized linking functions. For example, in unusual situations, two different family groups may be working on portions of a larger descendent structure at the same time. For example, if there were multiple sons of the ancient ancestor -- the "capstone" person -- there might be multiple family groups who are researching the descendents of each of those separate brothers. These separate subprojects could be tied together at the top by some special links.

Major Owner Functions

8. Making marriage links between surname groups.

When making those links, only use the highest quality data which is available from other surname groups. It will only cause confusion and extra work if you link some of your people to other sets of data which are of low quality, and later have to delete old links and make new ones.

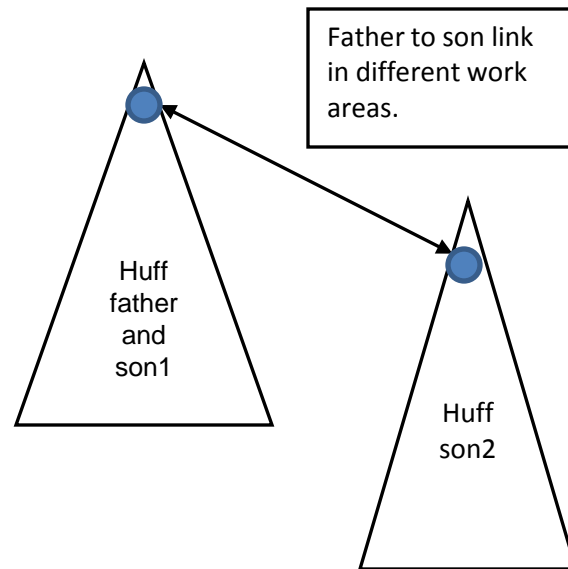
Searches of other peoples' data will return results ranked by quality standards, highest to lowest, with 3 levels, with a fourth level of data that is too incomplete and low quality to even show under normal conditions.



Major Owner Functions

9. Perform specialized linking functions.

In unusual situations, two different family groups may be working on portions of a larger descendent structure at the same time. For example, if there were multiple sons of the ancient ancestor -- the "capstone" person -- there might be multiple family groups who are researching the descendents of each of those separate brothers. These separate subprojects could be tied together at the top by some special links so that pedigree and descendency reports would give the correct results.



Functions Available to All Registered Users

- 1. Internal e-mail system**, often used for requests for access authority, and could include any suggestions or questions among participants.
2. Purchase finished names (feature not activated).

Special features for community studies

Summary

There is a "community study" exception which allows anyone to make provisional contributions to a specific project without advance permission. However, it is advisable for those people to seek normal permissions later in the project.

Discussion

Last time I checked, the "community study" software which was in use was greatly lacking in convenience and coordination features. The system operators required everyone to submit updates to a central office, perhaps through e-mail or other methods, and those additions and changes were made to a master file which was then periodically uploaded to the Internet for general viewing.

It seemed to me that a system for doing online, real-time updating would be far more efficient, and would avoid the continual problems of knowing what the status of the real database was at any point in time. This is something like the old Ancestral File where updates were accumulated for perhaps two years and then a new release was produced. Many coordination and duplication problems could happen during that two-year period. The current "community studies" methods probably involve much shorter update cycle delay times, but they can still cause much confusion and inefficiency.

Data Sales Functions

(The data sales functions are only partially implemented and are not currently active.)

The basic concept

People can purchase data one name at a time, and then retain long-term access to whatever data they have purchased. They can come back later and extend their purchases, presumably going further up the pedigree lines. Fees in the range of \$3 to \$6 per name are assumed.

Encourage greater participation

Those who supply the high-quality data can receive royalties when the data they have published is purchased. This should encourage many people to participate by allowing their high quality data to be used by the public, where they might not do so otherwise. This can add some fairness to a sometimes unfair process where idealistic volunteers may feel taken advantage of by others. In other cases, people may have access to valuable data, but cannot afford to do extensive genealogy research unless they can receive some monetary compensation, especially in Third World countries.

Semi-automatic Sourcing of Entered Data

Automated Procedure.

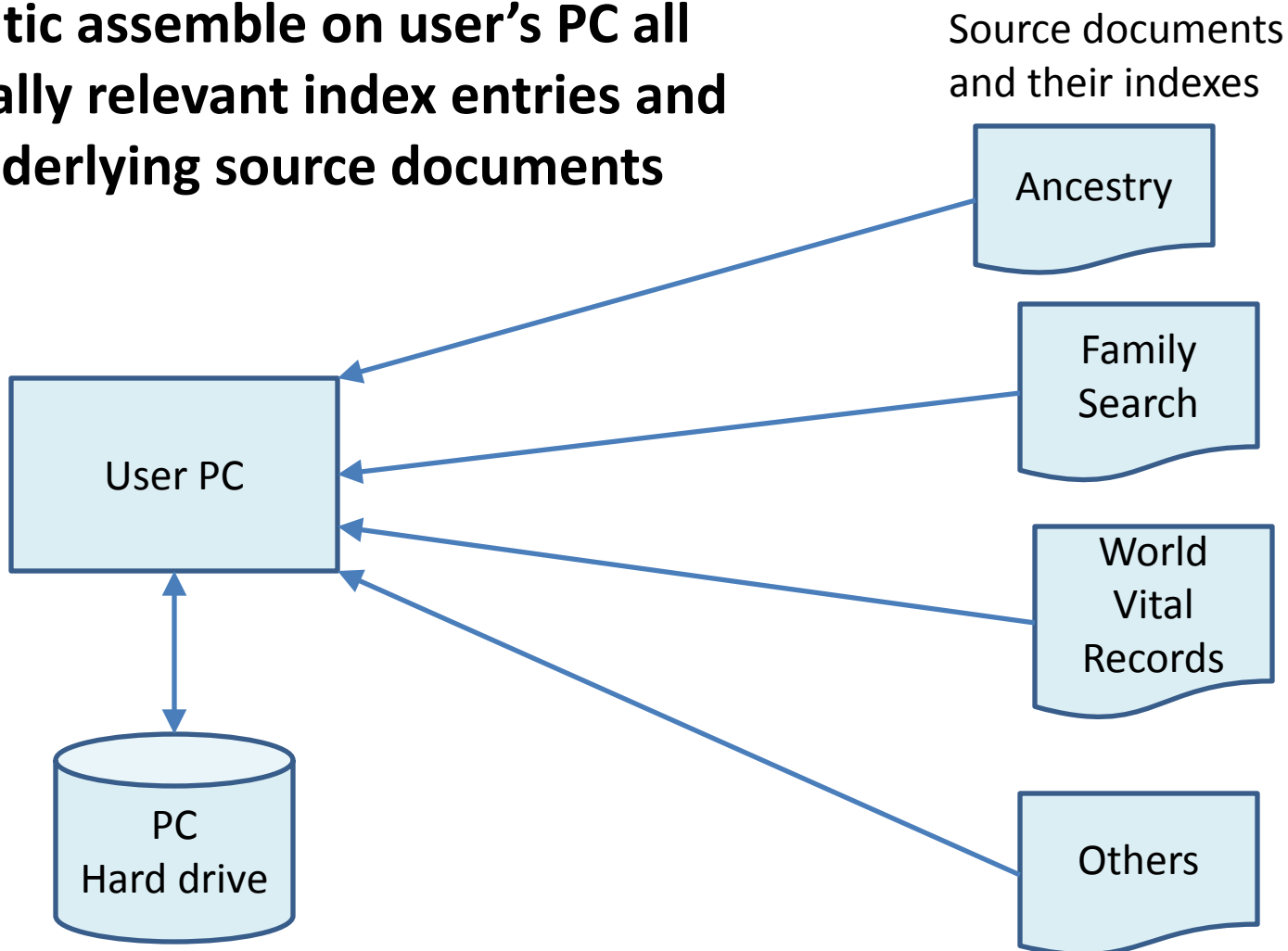
Using all available online repositories of digitized and indexed genealogy original source records from Ancestry, FamilySearch, WorldVitalRecords, etc., automatically retrieve all potentially relevant index entries and underlying source document images and store on a single PC hard drive.

Manual procedure.

Examine, compare, and select relevant documents for linking to names in database.

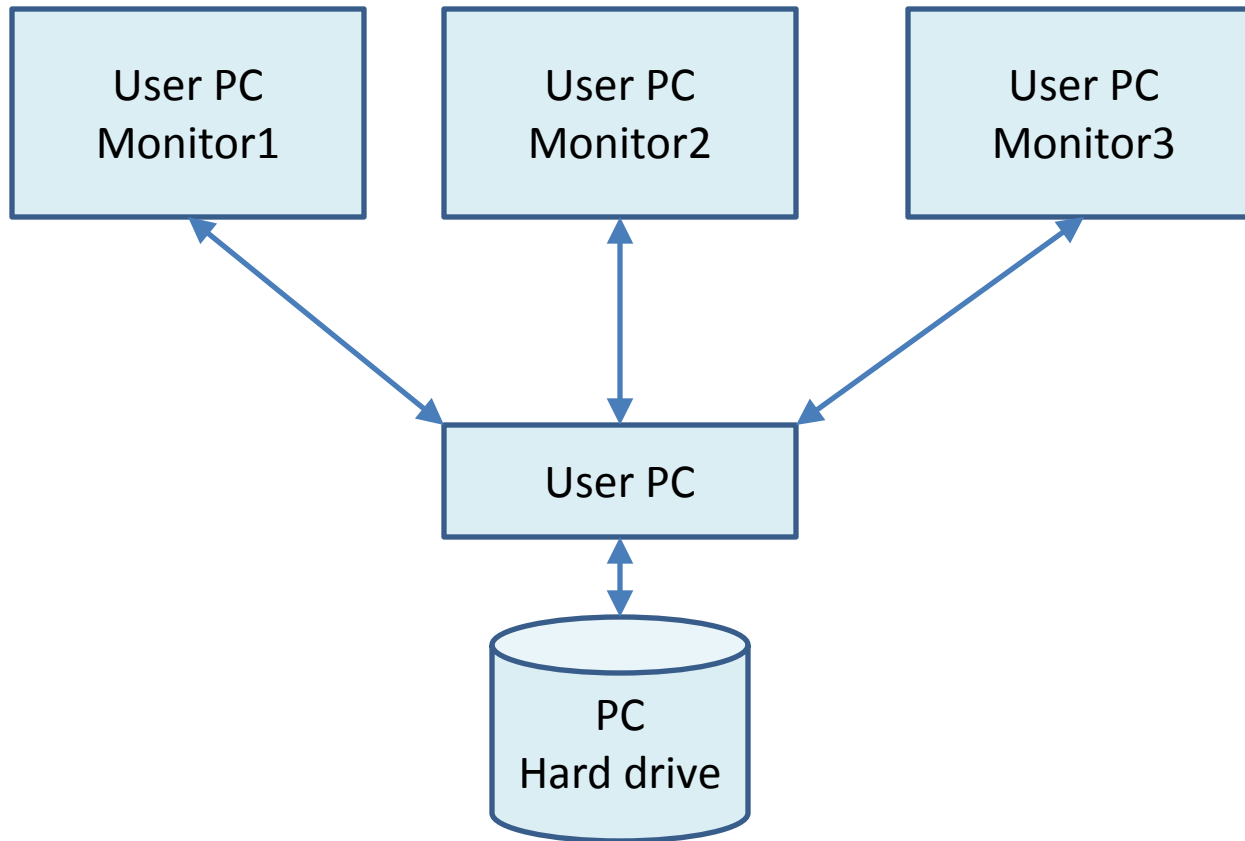
(More fully explained on a later pages)

Automatic assemble on user's PC all potentially relevant index entries and their underlying source documents



Example: The 30,000 Huffs in US history might each have 6+ entries in public systems. 200,000 documents at 2MB each would be 400,000 MB = 400 GB. Many harddrives can store 1000 GB.

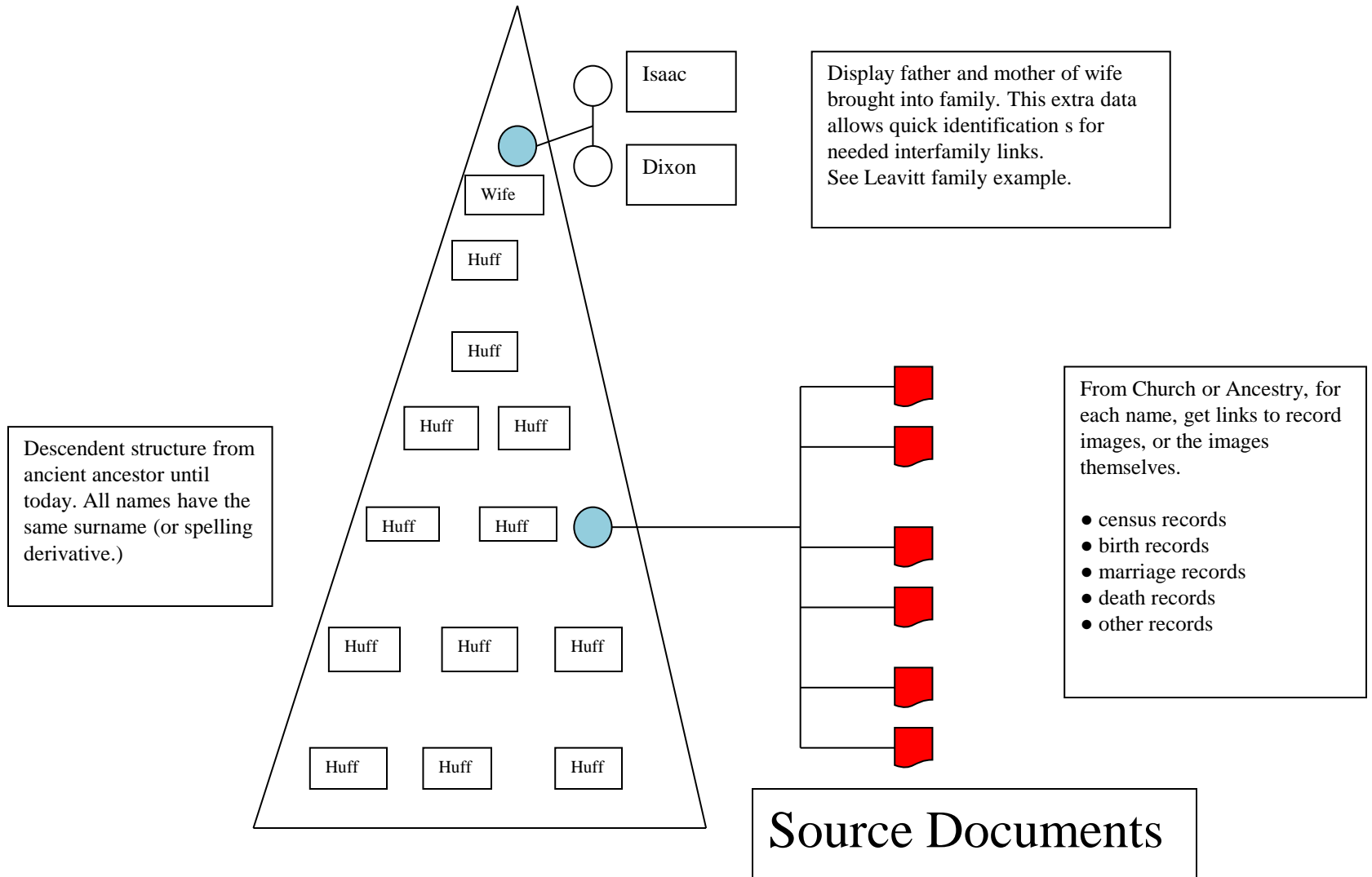
Manual selection and assembly of relevant source documents



Examine and compare multiple documents simultaneously on 1 or more PC monitors.

Perhaps 20% of the documents would relate to the Huffs from upstate New York

Link All Relevant Source Documents to Each Individual



Semi-automatic Sourcing of Entered Data

The names entered into this new software system may come from published genealogies or from a website or from other sources thought to be reasonably reliable. In most cases, there will be no public source records cited in this information, even though it may have been very carefully researched in the original case. That seems to reflect the normal practice in past decades and centuries, but we should try to improve upon it now with our improved technology.

As a way to upgrade the quality of this data and make it verifiable, it will be very useful to check the indexes for public source records to see if some of those records can be used to confirm the data from the published books and other sources. So, after a significant number of names have been entered into the website, there will be a need to check the available public records to see which ones can be used to support the data.

This process can certainly be done manually. That is the main purpose of such websites as Family Search.org, Ancestry.com, etc. But this process can be very tedious and time-consuming. In this case, since data will be grouped and entered in descendent sequence, meaning that the bulk of the names entered will have the same surname, it becomes feasible to use a program to do part of this process semi-automatically.

Semi-automatic Sourcing of Entered Data (continued)

A so-called "screen scraper" program is used to automate the browser actions so that the human researcher involved does not need to key in thousands of search entries, wait for an Internet response, and then enter all the browser commands needed to download thousands of images to see what public records might be available. Many of the most repetitive and time-consuming parts of this process can be done overnight without the involvement of the researcher.

The "screen scraper" program can take the set of entered names and instruct the browser to find any index entries that relate to those names, and then download those index entries and any associated images. All of this data can be placed on the user's PC hard drive so that it can be examined very quickly without the usual Internet delays. This can be especially convenient when there is a need for repetitive access to documents of likely value. Potentially dozens of images could be shown on one or more monitors for comparison with the names being researched, and to allow comparisons among the various documents.

This new mechanism will let users operate at their full "brain speed" while examining documents, unrestrained by much slower Internet speeds and delays.

Semi-automatic Formation of Descendent Structures For Families

It should be noted that this same "screen scraper" program, with just a few changes, would enable a person to specify a surname, a location, and a timeframe, and the program could bring back all index records and related images which meet that criteria. With this collection of data, in many cases it will be possible to start from scratch and construct a family descendent structure from public records, moving backwards or forwards in time through the data as the clues may indicate, until all reasonable possibilities for family connections seem to be exhausted.

Example: If all index entries and public documents were retrieved in advance related to the 30,000 Huffs who appear in US history, those 200,000 records would presumably show about 5 or 6 separate groupings of names, each starting with an emigrant ancestor. We already know that one such grouping begins with Englebert Huff, born in 1637, with about 5,000 Huff-surname descendents. Source records for that identified group could be set aside, and the process could begin of identifying and assembling the other groupings of interrelated names. Thinking of the process on a grand scale such as this, including making better use of available technology, offers opportunities for enormous increases in the productivity of individual researchers.

The Surname Group Registry (and related screens)

The "Surname Groups Registry" or just "Registry" is a place where everyone is asked to record their intentions about the data they wish to enter into the system. They are asked to enter the surname group they wish to enter, and, if possible, to enter the "capstone person", the oldest male in the descendent structure they plan to enter. This allows users to coordinate their efforts. You can find out if someone has already entered data of use to you, or whether you might want to help them with their project, or you might ask them to help you with your project. Or you might find out that, even though you are working on the same surname, such as "Smith," you really are working on different sets of people and are not able to directly cooperate at the moment. At least, you can make sure you're not needlessly duplicating someone else's work.

[Home Page](#)[Name Search](#)[Messages](#)[Help](#)[Sign Out](#)

Surname Groups Registry

Surname Group	Birth Information	Group Privacy	Group Owner
LAXEN	1802 Aylsham, Norfolk, ~, England	Public	Glenys Marriott in Wyoming
John Adams	30 October 1735 Braintree, Suffolk, Massachusetts, British Empire	Public	Kenneth Sands in Utah
Richard Akehurst	<i>Before</i> 2 November 1617 Hellingly, Sussex, ~, England	Public	David Evans in Arizona
Stephen Akehurst	<i>About</i> 1772 Heathfield, Sussex, ~, England	Public	David Evans in Arizona
John Akehurst	1778 Hellingly?, Sussex, ~, England	Public	David Evans in Arizona
Stenhen Akehurst	1750	Public	David Evans