**GOOGLE STRATEGIES FOR GENEALOGISTS**

**June 21 Brick Wall SIG**
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**GOOGLE GOALS:**

- Search Efficiently
- Refine search terms
- Eliminate irrelevant results
- Set up notifications

**SEARCH EFFICIENTLY:**

- Search in lower case; Google searches are not case sensitive
- Omit punctuation; Google only recognizes quotation marks
- Omit unnecessary words; Google ignores a, the, he, she, how, when, where, if, etc. To include a common word such as "will," place it in quotes with the ancestor's name.
- Order the importance of the search terms; Google applies priority to the first words in your search string. Begin with the surname and add other descriptors. (Example; folsom Israel genealogy choctaw nation)
- Use "OR" to search for multiple phrases at the same time. (Ex. daniel holman OR dw holman OR dan holman)
- Use a different genealogical key word in repeated searches. Try adding born, birth, died, death, married, marriage, buried, burial, cemetery, genealogy, probate, will, etc. (one at a time) to the name.
- USE THE GOOGLE ADVANCED WEB SEARCH to do all of the above at once https://www.google.com/advanced_search
- Don't scroll to search long webpages; Use the "Find" function to search web pages and PDF files (Type "ctrl" and "f" at the same time, then type the key word(s) you are seeking in the resulting search box)
- Search all the pages of a website in a single search with site: followed by the web address (Example; "ancestor name" site:ancestry.com) Don't use www. Or https:// before the website and don't forget the colon. (Paid subscription sites like newspapers.com will not always work. It is most useful on large websites with promising possibilities.) Another example; "henry norwood" site:argenweb.net/Sebastian/

- Repeat searches using variations of the key words to reduce the number of hits. Aim for fewer than 200 results with highly relevant sites in the top 10 to 20 results.
- Use other search engines with the same key words. Try www.linkpendium.com, www.duckduckgo.com, www.yahoo.com, www.bing.com, etc. or a Meta-Search engine such as www.DogPile.com
- Add a website address into search to go directly to the page desired. (Example Gerald Norwood 1940 census @ancestry.com)

**REFINE RESULTS:**

- Start simple and add key words to target more specific results (Example – Start with a name, then add dates, locations, spouses, descriptive words, etc. to narrow the desired results.) Too many words may limit your results. Three words is the "magic number."
- Use an asterisk "*" as a wild card as a placeholder for a letter or letters in a word or for a word or phrase. This is useful for adding alternate spellings of a name to the results.
- Narrow a time frame by placing two dots between two dates (Example 1920..1940) For a specific date, place two dots before the number ..1940.
- Find key words near each other with AROUND(#) between key words. Example "norwood Israel" AROUND(10) Lovica. This will narrow results to searches with the two key words/phrases withing 10 words of each other on a page.

**GOOGLE FILTERS:**

Search different Google filters for specific types of results and media

- GOOGLE BOOKS to find books, journals and magazines https://books.google.com
- GOOGLE SCHOLAR to find academic books, journals and articles for key words https://scholar.google.com
- GOOGLE IMAGES to find photos and other images https://www.google.com/imghp
- In an "Images" search, clicking "Usage Rights" and selecting "Creative Commons licenses" will limit results to photographs and images which can be used by anyone with specific permissions.
- GOOGLE TRANSLATE to translate text, documents or websites https://translate.google.com

**ELIMINATE IRRELEVANT RESULTS:**

- Place the words inside quotation marks to specify a search for the exact same words that were entered. (Example “Topeka Genealogical Society” or “Rev. Israel Folsom”)
- Use the minus sign “-“ to exclude unwanted results. This is useful for surnames like “Groom,” “Fox,” etc. (Example; Fox Genealogy -animal) or famous people with the same surname
- To find a specific file; To search for or return to a specific file, Google the search term with filetype:pdf (Example “Mary Lenore Knapp” filetype:pdf) pdf can be replaced with any filetype command.

**SET UP ALERTS:**

- Google Alerts will constantly search the internet for the keywords or phrase entered
- Set up Google Alerts at www.google.com/alerts In the search bar. Inset your query or keywords, add your email address in the box below the search bar, and click “Create Alert.” Emails can be sent on a schedule interval that you select. Google will send links to web pages that match your search query.

**EXTRAS:**

- Retrieve “404-This Page Not Found” pages with the Internet Archive Wayback Machine https://archive.org/web or use the drop-down arrow on the result to click on “Cache”
- Find websites similar to ones that have produced successful searches. Type related: before the website url. Example related:ancestry.com
- Use Steve Morse’s One-Step Webpage for searching many databases https://stevemorse.org

**REFERENCE ARTICLES:**

- www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/hot_tips_on_how_to_use_google_for_genealogy_searches_page1.html (Note - If you copy and paste the URL, back space at the beginning of the address so nothing is to the left of “www” Copying automatically adds characters which foul up the link.
- www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/how_to_use_google_advanced_search_for_genealogy_part_1_page_1.html (See note above)
- www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/how_to_use_google_advanced_search_for_genealogy_part_2_page_1.html (See note above)