Genealogy & Technology

How Technology is Shaping Research & Collaboration

Matthew Ballard

mballard@rochester.rr.com

585.690.6570

http://www.matthewrballard.com

Program Highlights

- **Technology is always evolving**
  - From paper files and documents, to transcription and microform, to scanned originals
  - Genealogy is a "hobby market" and not always seen as profitable by companies (outside of Ancestry.com, fold3.com and other genealogy corporations)
    - Technology is often adapted for use with genealogy (e.g. use of QR codes at cemeteries)

- **Biggest innovations relating to genealogy**
  - Web 2.0 & Social Media (e.g. Facebook)
  - Open Source Software (Free Software)
  - Mobile Technology & Applications (Smartphone Apps)
  - Digital Imaging & Virtual Storage (Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org)
  - Quick Response Codes (QR Codes)
  - Google Searching (Google Books, Google Maps, Google Translate)

- **Some free technology worth exploring**
  - http://www.facebook.com—connecting with family and distant relatives
  - http://www.blogspot.com or http://www.wordpress.com—sharing genealogy
  - http://www.familysearch.org (click on Family Tree) - free family tree program

LINKS

Blogs:

http://www.100inamerica.blogspot.com

> *A sample personal blog containing research help and guides.*

http://mcomberbygonedays.wordpress.com

> *A sample personal blog used to organize family history.*

http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy

> *A well know and well regarded genealogy blog including research advice, reviews, and genealogy related news.*

http://ancestryinsider.blogspot.com

> *Blog serving as a review source for genealogy collections and software.*

Free Web Hosting:

http://accounts.rootsweb.ancestry.com/

> *Rootsweb provides researchers with free web space for publishing your personal genealogy. Users can easily request a free site through this link. Knowledge of HTML will be helpful in creating the website. Tutorials are available online for anyone interested.*

Mobile Applications (for smartphones & tablets):

http://www.ancestry.com/ancestry-app

> *Learn more about the Ancestry.com mobile app, which allows users to access their family tree on-the-go on their mobile devices.*

http://blog.billiongraves.com/2011/05/

> *Learn more about the BillionGraves project and their mobile app, which allows users to utilize the camera on their smart devices to upload images of cemetery markers while making use of your device's GPS technology.*

QR Codes:

http://www.qrmemorials.com

> *Learn more about the new uses for Quick Response Codes (QR Codes) and how they can be used to compliment cemetery monuments!*

RECORD DIGITIZATION PROJECTS

Local Projects (WNY):

Rochester Genealogical Society

Church Records Project

http://nyrgs.org/

The Rochester Genealogical Society formed a "Church Records Preservation Committee" in 2005 with the purpose of aiding churches in the process of conserving their vital records. This serves both the church and the genealogical society as the church has a free source for digital imaging of their records and RGS are provided with a copy to add to their research collection.

As part of their project, the society regularly updates the goals and purpose of their efforts and addresses any issues they have experienced as part of the process. All of these updates and a detailed explanation of the history of this project can be found on their website. Currently, the society is providing access to digitized images of Episcopalian, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed, United Church of Christ and United Methodist Churches in Rochester.

Albion Polonia Project

St. Mary's History Site

http://www.albionpolonia.com

As a personal project, originating in the efforts to preserve the history and artwork of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Albion, NY, "Albion Polonia" has developed into a research database for researchers with Polish roots in Albion. In its early stages, some records were made available as transcribed copies, many are still available in that format.

Over the last year, digital images have been added to the site, providing accurate access to records pertaining to Polish immigrants living in Orleans County. Since its creation, the site has added additional information on immigrant families outside of Albion. Digitized records include parochial school registers and annual financial reports. Transcribed baptismal, marriage, and funeral records are also available, as well as indexes to immigration dates, obituaries, vital records, and family photographs.

Efforts are also being made to provide accurate burial information and digital images for families interred within the two Catholic cemeteries in Albion.

ADDITIONAL LOCAL RESOURCES—ONLINE

Orleans County GenWeb

http://www.rootsweb.com/~nyorlean

This website has been a staple for local genealogy research for over 15 years. The site provides indexed access to Federal and State census records, cemetery burial lists , obituaries, and vital records (just to name a few). The site is considered the model GenWeb project, which all counties would like to emulate. Unfortunately, there are few counties or municipalities that operate GenWeb sites as detailed and complete as the Orleans County site, which makes it the gem of all online local resources.

Family Search—New York Records

http://www.familysearch.org

Scroll to the bottom of the site and click on "United States" which will bring up access to all available databases for the U.S. By selecting "New York" on the menu along the left, the databases relating to New York will remain. Here you can access a number of digital image databases containing records helpful for Western New York and Orleans County genealogy research.

Some of the most helpful resources include the "New York—County Marriages 1908-1935" database, "New York– County Naturalization Records, 1791-1980" database, "New York– Probate Records, 1629-1971" database, and "New York–Civil War Service Records of Union Soldier, 1861-1865" database which all contain records relating to Orleans County (and other counties across NYS). The best part is that many of these records are indexed (or are in the process of being indexed) and even better, they're free to access!

Monroe County Library System—Local History Collections

http://www3.libraryweb.org/lh.aspx?id=956

The Monroe County Library System (specifically the Rundel Library) provides the community with access to digitized and transcribed records relating to Monroe County. These records include scanned copies of Rochester City Directories, transcribed listings of burials in cemeteries and indexes of names appearing in various Monroe County newspapers (which can include spill-over from Orleans County). Compared to local and neighboring libraries, Monroe County provides some of the best access to genealogy and local history materials online.

Orleans County Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 103
Albion, NY 14411
http://www.orleanscountygenealogicalsociety.org

OCGS