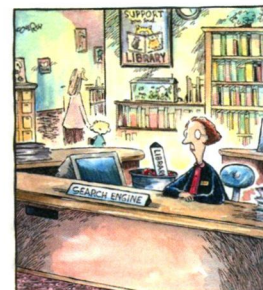


# Basic Guide to Researching Family History on the Internet

1. Before starting your search on the Internet, determine what you are seeking. Have a list of names, dates, and places of events readily available.

2. Not everything can be found on the Internet. There are millions of records available in local, state, and national facilities that have not been electronically converted and made available in a digital format on the computer. Many of these records may never become available on the Internet. Other information is not available for public viewing or access.



3. Information found on the Internet should not be treated as Gospel. Anyone can publish anything at any time on the Internet. Search the website for information pertaining to the compiler and the skill level of the compiler or researcher. When possible, seek out those websites that include family information that is well documented.



4. Information found on the Internet does not magically appear. Someone has to take the time to select the information for digitizing and take the appropriate steps to make the information available on the web in a format that is user friendly. Digital images as well as abstracts, excerpts, and transcriptions of records all involve some level of preparation done by individuals.

5. Indexing available online includes many errors. Errors may occur when computers misinterpret letters. Also, many websites are indexed by people. This means that the interpretation of handwriting is left to the ability of the individual reading the information. Keep in mind that information was recorded phonetically on most historical documents. Spelling and name variations are quite common, regardless whether the research is done online or through more traditional means (microfilm, books)

6. Some information on the Internet is freely available while other information is available through a paid subscription. Probably, the most frequently visited website that is free of charge is [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). One of the most used subscription websites is Ancestry (either Ancestry.com for home users or Ancestry Library Edition for libraries). These are only two of thousands of websites that are used by researchers daily.