

# TERMINOLOGY FOR COMPUTER GENEALOGISTS

**ANCESTRAL FILE** – A **database** created and maintained by the **LDS** at their [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org) **website** with over 35 million names organized into families and **pedigrees**. Because these names have been submitted by **LDS** Church members, the information has not been verified, nor are sources supplied. See also: **IGI**, **LDS Websites** and **Pedigree Resource File**.

**ARCHIVE** – The physical location where historical documents and records are stored.

**BOOKMARK** – a web address (**URL**) that is saved for future reference in Mozilla FireFox web browser: (also see **Favorite**)

**BOOLEAN LOGIC** – The use of the terms, **AND (+)**, **OR**, & **NOT (-)** to clarify the search criteria in an Internet **search engine**.

**BROWSER** – (or Web Browser) a software program – which allows your PC to “browse” or view the internet (e.g., Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla FireFox or Netscape’s Navigator)

**BULLETIN BOARD** – see **Message Board**

**CD** – refers to Compact Disk, a high-density storage media equal in capacity to 500 **floppy disks**.

**DATABASE** – an organized collection of data (facts and information). Most genealogy programs create highly specialized **database files** made up of individual **records** comprised of **fields** (names, dates, locations, photos and their source citations).

**DATA CAPACITY** – refers to the size of a data file or a data storage device; examples: **BIT** (represented by a 0 or 1), **BYTE** – (a series of bits, e.g., letter “A” is represented by the bits: 00010011), **KILOBYTE** – 1,024 bytes (about 40 pages of text), **MEGABYTE** - 1,000 kilobytes (1 million bytes or about 40,000 pages of text), **GIGABYTE** – 1,000 megabytes (1 billion bytes or about 40 million pages of text), **TERABYTE** – 1,000 gigabytes (1 trillion bytes or 40 billion pages of text).

**DATA PROCESSING SPEED** – refers to the number of instructions/calculations per second that a computer’s processor is capable of managing: **MEGAHERTZ** – millions of instructions per second. **GIGAHERTZ** – billions of instructions per second

**DEMOWARE** – limited featured (crippled software) or self-expiring (demonstration) **software** that is offered at no charge but which is useful only to evaluate features before buying a commercial version. See **Freeware** and **Shareware** (below).

**DOWNLOAD** – Verb: to transfer a file (a program, a document, an image, etc.) from somewhere else (the internet or another computer) to your computer. To **download** is the opposite of to **upload**. Noun: a **download** is a file that has been downloaded.

**DOMAIN** – The portion of a **URL** or web site address following the www. (example: all the **Web Sites** and **Web Pages** beginning with [www.Rootsweb.com](http://www.Rootsweb.com) belong to the Rootsweb **domain**). Email like [Info@Rootsweb.com](mailto:Info@Rootsweb.com) also belongs to the Rootsweb **domain**.

**FAQ** – shorthand for “Frequently Asked Questions” – a web page listing explanations for common questions.

**FAVORITE** – a web address (**URL**) that is saved for future reference in the browser: Internet Explorer (also see **Bookmark**).

**FIELD** – a placeholder within a **database** consistently used to store a particular type of data.

(e.g., the “Last Name” **field** of a genealogy **database**)

**FILE** – a collection of data. Often called a “data **file**”. In Windows operating systems, files have 3 letter suffixes to identify which programs may open the **file** for viewing. (Example: MS Word saves files as .rtf and photos may be .jpg, .gif, .tif or .bmp)

**FLOPPY** – a 3-½ inch hard plastic computer disk capable of storing 1,400 kilobytes.

**FREWARE** – full featured (non-Demo) **software** that is offered at no charge (free). Also see **Demoware** and **Shareware**.

**GEDCOM** – a type of computer genealogy file (.ged) developed by the **LDS**; the closest thing to an industry standard (example: Bradford\_Family.ged). **GEDCOM** stands for (GEnealogical Data COMmunication).

**HARDWARE** – the physical components of the computer and its accessories. Example: keyboard, mouse, monitor, hard drive, memory chips, printer, scanner, etc.

**HTML** – “Hyper Text Mark-up Language”, the computer language used to program **web pages**. **Web sites** and other Internet **files** use the **file** suffix: **.html**

**HTTP** – “Hyper Text Transfer Protocols”, the Internet’s data exchange convention (protocol) used to transfer information that defines **web pages**. **Web site** addresses begin: **http:\www.Ancestry.com**

**IGI** – The “International Genealogy Index”, the **LDS**’s on-line master **index** of genealogy extracted from vital records of over 600 million names throughout the world **downloadable** as a **Gedcom** file. The **IGI** is much more accurate than the **LDS**’s unverified **Ancestral Files** submitted by church members. See also: **Ancestral File**, **LDS Websites** and **Pedigree Resource Files**.

**ISP** – refers to “Internet Service Provider” or the company through which you access the Internet (e.g., execpc.com, earthlink.com and aol.com are phone line **ISP**’s; AOL, Charter and RoadRunner are **ISP**s).

**INDEX** – a list or roster; surname indexes are common genealogical **files** in which data are sorted alphabetically by surname.

**KEY WORDS** – the individual words entered into a Search Engine to produce a web search (a.k.a., **Search Terms**).

**LDS** – refers to The Church of Jesus Christ of the **Latter Day Saints**. See also: **Ancestral File**, **IGI LDS Websites**, and **Pedigree Resource File**.

**LDS WEBSITES** – **LDS** Church volunteers have categorized thousands of personal genealogy websites with links from the **LDS's website** ([www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org)). **LDS** online databases include **Ancestral File**, **IGI** and **Pedigree Resource File**.

**LIST MEMBERS** – refers to subscribers to a message board to whom a copy of all posted queries are emailed as a free service. See **Mailing List**.

**MAC** – or iMac is shorthand for the Apple Computer Corporation's Macintosh Personal Computer

**MAILING LIST** – a collection of email addresses of people who share a common genealogical interest in a surname (e.g., Bradford), location (e.g., Rock Co., WI) or some other topic (e.g., Erie Canal). **Postings** (Queries) sent to their **message board** are then sent automatically to **List Members** via email individually (list format) or periodically en mass (digest format).

**MEMORY** – There are three types: RAM, ROM and Storage Memory. See each below.

**MESSAGE BOARD** – A topical (e.g., specific surname, location or other topic) electronic **Bulletin Board** to which questions or requests for assistance are **posted** for viewing by others who share this interest (a.k.a., **Bulletin Board** or **Query Board**).

**META-SEARCH** – an Internet search tool that uses multiple **search engines** to obtain more comprehensive results. Examples include: [www.Momma.com](http://www.Momma.com), [www.DogPile.com](http://www.DogPile.com), and [www.Copernic.com](http://www.Copernic.com).

**PC** – “Personal Computer”, once a generic term, now means IBM-compatible computers made by IBM, Sony, HP, Dell, Gateway and others (as opposed to **Mac** made by Apple Macintosh).

**PEDIGREE RESOURCE FILE** – These are **LDS** Family history files that individuals have submitted through **LDS's Family Search** website. If you find a match, the CD can be purchased for \$5.00 per disc, or in bundles of five disks for \$15 plus an index. These can be especially helpful, as sources are shown. See also: **Ancestral File**, **LDS Websites** and **IGI**.

**POST** – Verb: to **upload** a message or question (**query**) to a computer bulletin board.

**OS** – “Operating System”, the system software that runs your computer, (examples: Windows 98, Windows XP, Linux, Macintosh OS-X)

**QUERY** – A question or request for assistance that has been posted on an Internet “**Query Board**” or “**Message Board**” – much the physical act of tacking a note to a **Bulletin Board**.

**QUERY BOARD** – see **Message Board**.

**RAM MEMORY** – “Random Access Memory”, the operating memory of the computer used to calculate, display graphics and run programs. Information stored in **RAM** memory is lost each time the computer shuts down (or crashes). This is where your word processing document is held “in limbo” until you save it to your hard disk. **RAM** is the kind of memory you need when someone says, “You need a memory upgrade.” **RAM** memory exists as a chip(s) that plug into the inside of your computer.

**RECORDS** – The individual searchable components of a **file**. Example: Asa Bradford’s birth **record** was found in the **file** of Wisconsin Births. A record is comprised of **fields**: example: a surname **field**, a given name **field**, a birth date **field**, etc.

**ROM MEMORY** – “Read-Only Memory”, this is the memory that is programmed (hard wired) into your computer when it was manufactured. It is the basic instructions that the computer “Reads” each time it starts-up. Information in ROM never changes.

**SEARCH ENGINE** – A **utility** or program that scours the Internet for web sites whose contents match your search criteria. Examples of search engines are: [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com), [www.Altavista.com](http://www.Altavista.com), [www.Lycos.com](http://www.Lycos.com), and [www.Ask.com](http://www.Ask.com).

**SEARCH RESULTS** – The list of web pages (hits) that are produced as a result of a web search by a Search Engine. Also see **Search Engine**, **Key Words** and **Search Terms**.

**SEARCH TERMS** – the words entered into a Search Engine to produce a web search (a.k.a., **Key Words**). The definition of **Search Terms** may also include the **Boolean Logic** terms (AND, OR, NOT) used in a search.

**SHAREWARE** – full featured (non-Demo) **software** that is offered on a trial-basis at no charge, but for which the software developer expects modest payment if the software is kept and used long-term. Also see **Demoware** and **Shareware**.

**SOFTWARE** – The application programs that run on computer **hardware**. Examples include Microsoft Word, Family Tree Maker, Windows 98, and **CD** data disks.

**STORAGE MEMORY** – refers to the storage capacity of types various **storage devices** (Hard Drives, **Floppy disks**, Zip Drives, **CD-R/W** drives and more recently, DVD R/W drives). See **Storage Device** (below).

**STORAGE DEVICE** – refers to the computer **hardware** that captures and saves **files** and data for future reference. Speed and capacities vary by device. Examples: Internal and External Hard Drives, CD Drives, DVD Drives, Zip Drives and Floppy Drives.

**SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE** – An on-line genealogical data base company that charges a fee and assigns a user name and password to gain access to its proprietary information.

**UPLOAD** – Verb: to transfer a file (a program, a document, an image, etc.) from your computer to somewhere else (the internet or another computer). To **upload** is the opposite of to **download**. Noun: an **upload** is a file that has been uploaded.

**URL** – shorthand for “Universal Resource Link”, a.k.a., a Web address (Example: [www.rootsweb.com/~mac/faq.html](http://www.rootsweb.com/~mac/faq.html)).

**UTILITY** – A small single-purpose program. Example: a Ged2HTML, a **utility** that converts your **PC’s Gedcom files** to **HTML files** that can be **uploaded** to a **web page**.

**WEB PAGE** – a single screen of information on the Internet.

**WEB SITE** – one or more linked **Web Pages** comprising a person’s or company’s whole internet presentation.

**WEB SITE SUFFIXES** – by convention, **Web Sites** use a limited number of three-digit suffixes that convey something about the sponsor of the site: **COM** or **COMmercial**, **.EDU** or **EDUcational**, **.GOV** or **GOVERNment**, **.ORG** or non-profit **ORGanization**, **.NET** a web site near the a web’s hub.