

## Genealogy Do-Over – Step 12

**Topics:** 1) Sharing research and 2) Securing research data

### Sharing Research

Sharing your genealogy research with others should be a “no-brainer,” right? But if you have been doing genealogy for a number of years, you know that it is not always as easy as it should be.

### The Do’s and Don’ts of Collaborating and Sharing

Here are some ways you can not only benefit from collaborating and sharing with other genealogists, but also repay those researchers who provided valuable information for your own search.

- **Be nice.** The world is a small town. The genealogy community is really a small place and you realize that more and more with the advent of social media. Rude genealogists are duly noted and their reputation will precede them. Kindness offered to others is often returned ten-fold.
- **Ask for attribution and give attribution.** If you want your work to be credited, make sure you are walking the walk on attribution. Drafting the text, sending it to the researcher, and getting their approval is a nice gesture. Also don’t be afraid to set some reasonable rules when providing your research and always ask for attribution. Again, providing the ready-made text that credits your work not only makes it easier, but can also help educate the other researcher if they are a newbie.
- **Don’t give to get.** It can be difficult to embrace an abundance model, but once you start to share with others, you get the hang of how it works. Don’t fall into the “tit for tat” game, but don’t be a sucker either.
- **Track your work.** Use **Google Alerts** (<http://www.google.com/alerts>) to track your copyrighted content. One trick: create a unique phrase for each document or intentionally misspell a word in a phrase and use them as your search string.

You think it would be simple to collaborate and share especially since the genealogy community is generally known as a dedicated and intelligent group of researchers all focused on a similar goal: finding our ancestors. Yet researchers are people, and as such, little things, like the ego and even misinformation or lack of knowledge, can be like sand in the gears of the genealogy machine.

### Securing Research Data

Whether you are brand new to genealogy and The Genealogy Do-Over is your first serious effort at research OR you have accumulated years and years of research, let me ask you this question: ***What have you done to preserve and “future proof” all your hard work?***

More difficult questions include:

- If you lost all your data, would you be able to recreate it?
- Would you even know where to begin?
- If you died today, do you know what your family would do with your research?
- Have you made plans to preserve your research for generations to come?

### **Backing Up Your Genealogy Data**

Your genealogy research data is an investment reflecting the time and effort you've spent tracing your roots. Like any other investment, your genealogy data should be safe and secure for future use.

The best way to get started on backing up your genealogy data:

- **Create a backup plan.** Just like a research plan for your genealogy, you need to determine what data needs to be backed up and how.
- **Identify data for backup.** Don't forget that as genealogists we tend to store data in many different places. Do you have emails and Internet favorites related to genealogy? Are you certain that information is backed up?
- **Identify a backup method that works for you.** Don't select a backup method, such as copying data each week to a flash drive, if you aren't going to perform the task on a set schedule. Look for automated backups such as cloud backup or an external hard drive with auto-backup software.
- **Test your backup data.** Why bother backing up data if you can't prove it works? Run a test restore on data and make sure you're covered.
- **Future-proof your technology.** Don't rely on outdated tech such as backing up to CDs and DVDs (did you know the coating degrades on these items after just five years?). Upgrade to current technology that has been proven and tested, not the "latest" new thing just on the market.

### **Future Proofing Your Genealogy Research**

Do you have concerns about what will happen to your research once you've passed on? More and more genealogists are realizing that they have not put safeguards into place to ensure that their years of work won't simply be discarded by family members and friends.

Here are areas that require your attention:

- **Take inventory.** Determine what you have and this includes hard copy as well as digital assets and online sites.
- **Include in estate planning.** Create a codicil to your will or make sure there are instructions concerning your genealogy research.

- **Have that conversation with family.** Be very clear about where your genealogy research is located, why it is important, and what you want done with it.
- **Contact organizations.** Determine which libraries, societies and archives will accept all or part of your collection. Donate items you don't need NOW.
- **Post items online.** Consider starting a blog, even a private one, to preserve your family stories. Do the same with a family tree on Ancestry or one of the popular genealogy sites.
- **Do stuff NOW.** Tell your own stories NOW. Write that genealogy book NOW. Interview family members NOW.

I will admit that none of this is easy to do. It is easy to talk about and give advice on the topic, but many of us just tend to put it off . . . until it is too late.

### **Step 12 To Do List – Full Do-Over Participants**

- **Sharing Research:** If you have any trees or items you have shared prior to embarking on The Genealogy Do-Over, consider “warning” others about the presence of any unsourced information. Realize that you are not calling out your mistakes . . . you could even give a nice plug for The Genealogy Do-Over in your explanation!
- **Securing research data:** Seriously consider creating an action plan for both backing up your genealogy research data and ensuring that it is preserved for future generations.

### **Step 12 To Do List – Review or “Go-Over” Participants**

- **Sharing Research:** If you have the time (and the energy) and you are correcting your research, consider doing the same for any online trees or messages or other information you've shared with others.
- **Securing research data:** Seriously consider creating an action plan for both backing up your genealogy research data and ensuring that it is preserved for future generations.

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