



NYSFHC Session Syllabus

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Digital Organization for Everyone: Ways to Conquer the Mess

New York State Family History Conference / NYSFHC @ Home - September, 2020

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As genealogists, we are constantly seeking better ways to organize our treasures. In this “short talk” we’ll aim to make sense of our electronic chaos, and get organized, digitally!

Digital Organization strategies

Given today’s brief time allotment, we’re going to focus on just four areas that can make a big difference in an individual’s organization process:

- 1.) Taking stock of what you have.
- 2.) Hardware.
- 3.) Software/web platforms/apps.
- 4.) Process/order/routine.

TAKING STOCK OF WHAT YOU HAVE

You may have digital content in many places - on your phone, on hard-drives, in the cloud, on your partner’s computer, on your work computer... the list goes on.

Before we can begin to conquer the mess, we must first assess it. Where are our files? What is redundant? What is no longer needed? What do we have in a physical/hard-copy format that would be more useful to us in a digital format? Are our “backups” safe?

By assigning one, single (digital) repository we can take a first step towards knowing what we have and how to find it.

Rules for this “digital repository”:

- It must be cloud-based (Google Drive, Apple iCloud, Microsoft OneNote, etc.)
- It must be redundantly back-up-able (even though you’re saving to the cloud, you should not trust that fully)
- It must be organized in a way that makes sense to you, and, ideally, those with whom you work (or, perhaps, those who might inherit your work).

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HARDWARE

Is your current hardware sufficient for your needs? Perhaps you have a flatbed scanner and find scanning to be tedious and time-consuming? Have you considered investing in a sheet-fed scanner?

Fujitsu ScanSnap - iX1500 - a true workhorse

<https://www.fujitsu.com/us/products/computing/peripheral/scanners/scansnap/ix1500/>

Overhead Scanners

Fujitsu ScanSnap - sv600

<http://www.fujitsu.com/us/products/computing/peripheral/scanners/scansnap/sv600>

HoverCam - <https://www.thehovercam.com/>

CZUR - <http://www.czur.com>

Additional tip: custom glass: <https://www.dullesglassandmirror.com/custom-glass>

Book Scanners

DIY Book Scanner community - <http://www.diybookscanner.org> (\$)

High-end (library/archive) models - <https://www.imageaccess.de> (\$\$\$)

Photo Scanning (Sheet-Fed)

Kodak PS-80 (faster, and includes TIFF support) and PS-50 (less expensive, JPG only)

No longer being made, but rental options available from <https://ezphotoscan.com>

Epson FastFoto FF-640 - more reasonably priced, reviews are a bit more mixed

(HARDWARE - OUTSOURCING)

If you have larger projects, you may wish to outsource some of the digitization efforts.

1dollarscan.com - <http://www.1dollarscan.com> - destructive scanning only, but incredibly affordable and ideal for quick and professional digitization of books, journals, and all bound matter. Despite the antiquated interface of its website, the scanning technology is quite current and efficient.

ScanCafe.com - <http://www.scancafe.com> - and other commercial digitization services for photos, slides, negatives, film, video, etc.

FamilySearch -

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/FamilySearch_Online_Book_Collection_FAQs

Archive.org - <http://www.archive.org> - rates vary but include perpetual storage in their constantly growing collection, as well as the exposure of their search engine.

SOFTWARE/WEB PLATFORMS/APPS

Database/Data Management

- *Airtable* - you may have heard of this web-based database platform, but have you used it yet? It offers extreme usefulness for genealogy (and other life activities!) - and we'll take a quick look at some ways it has been employed to help organize the aforementioned mess! <https://airtable.com/>

Photos/Images

- *Google Photos* (<http://photos.google.com>) - free, robust, great facial recognition
- *MemoryWeb* (<http://memoryweb.me>) - truly geared towards genealogists, with lots of exciting things in store. Metadata editing, FamilySearch integration, etc.
- *Vivid-Pix* (<https://vivid-pix.com>) - simple photo restoration/improvement software

Project/task management

- *Microsoft To Do* (formerly Wunderlist) (<https://todo.microsoft.com/>)
- *Google Keep* (<http://keep.google.com>)
- *Trello* (<http://www.trello.com>) (see Dannell Altman-Newell's outstanding article on Trello in the *APG Quarterly*, March, 2019.)

PROCESS/ORDER/ROUTINE

Do things right the *first* time:

- scanning at the right resolution
- saving in the right format(s)
- future-proofing your originals
- nested folders, when appropriate
- file-naming structure - coming up with a system that works
 - (front) / (reverse)
 - YYYY-MM-DD
 - Maiden, First (Married) - and other ancestor naming strategies

Storage/Internal Copies

- Cloud storage is a must, but SO are redundant hard-drives/servers
- Remember, LOCKSS! (Lots of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe!)
- Optical discs: just say no.
 - <http://www.cdrecyclingcenter.org> and <https://www.greendisk.com/>