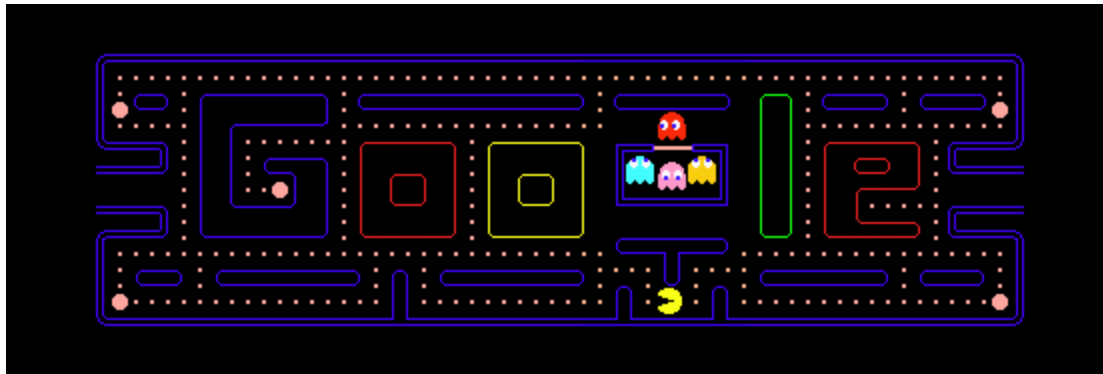


# Googling for Genealogy



Thursday October 14, 2010

Rochester Genealogical Society – Computer Interest Group

<http://nyrgs.org/>

Dennis A. Hogan, <http://www.dennisAhogan.com>

# Resources

➤ *Google Your Family Tree* by Daniel M. Lynch

➤ (Lynch, Daniel M. *Google Your Family Tree : Unlock the Hidden Power of Google*. Provo, UT: FamilyLink.com, 2008. )

➤ *Google·pedia* by Michael Miller

➤ (Miller, Michael *Google·pedia : the Ultimate Google Resource*, Third Edition. Indianapolis, IN: QUE, 2009. )

➤ <http://www.searchforancestors.com/archives/googlegenealogy.html>

# Preamble

- Genealogy is NOT = Internet
  - Google is not the only search engine
  - Search syntax is not the same for every search engine
  - Anything said about the Internet is almost immediately obsolete
- There's some grey areas with Google

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Depending on context, Google **may** ignore words such as *a, of, the, and, or, to, where, how* (“stop words”)
  - **the republic of ireland** (128,000,000) vs **republic ireland** (120,000,000)
  - contents of 1<sup>st</sup> page of results are different
- Take Away: Try with & without stop words.

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Quotes “ ”, exact contents of quotes must be found
  - **“republic of ireland”** (5,320,000) does NOT yield the same results as **republic of ireland** (123,000,000)
  - Exception to finding exact contents of quotes: **“hogan john”** returns results such as:
    - Nick **Hogan, John** Mayer
    - Hulk **Hogan: John** Graziano

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Case Insensitive even inside quotes (except Boolean commands AND and OR)
  - **“republic of ireland”** (4,860,000) vs **“Republic of Ireland”** (4,860,000)
  - **republic of ireland** (106,000,000) vs **Republic of Ireland** (106,000,000)

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- AND vs and
  - **and** is usually ignored
  - **AND** between keywords indicates page must contain both keywords

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

## ➤ Automatic AND

➤ **hogan john** (should) yield same results as **hogan AND john**

➤ **hogan john** (13,600,000) vs **hogan AND john** (14,100,000)

➤ 1<sup>st</sup> page of results have only 3 common items

➤ Daniel Lynch notes that for some unknown reason, the above statement is not true.

➤ Take Away: Try with & without AND

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- OR vs or
  - **or** is usually ignored
  - **OR** between keywords indicates page must contain either keyword (| = OR)
  - **hogan OR hagan** (Particularly helpful with spelling variations)

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Order of keywords – first (leftmost) is considered most important
  - Surname placename given
  - Change the order to see different results
  - **john hogan** (5,350,000) vs **hogan john** (13,400,000)
    - Is more better than less?
    - Why is **john** returning less results than **hogan**?

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Word Variations – Stemming. Incorporates searches based on the stem of the search keyword.
  - Singular/plural, other tenses
  - **running** yields results including **running, run, runs**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Plus Sign with preceding space. Finds exact keyword excluding variations (no stemming)
- **water +running**
- **water “running”**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Minus Sign with preceding space. Removes pages from results that contain the concatenated word
  - **hogan –hulk –heroes** \*\* Particularly helpful for surnames with common meanings \*\*
  - **hogan –“hulk hogan” –“hogan’s heroes”**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Wildcard (\*, \*\*, \*\*\*, etc.) within quotes
  - ONLY whole word wildcard is available in Google (\* = 1 word). Partial word wildcard is available in AltaVista and other search engines (\* = 0 to n characters)
  - **“john \* hogan”** finds John F Hogan, John F. Hogan, John Frances Hogan, John “JF” Hogan but **not** John Hogan or John J F Hogan
  - **“john \*\* hogan”** finds John J. “Jack” Hogan and John Smith, George Hogan
  - **“john \*\*\* hogan”** finds  
John and Gertrude (Bovee) Hogan  
John Smith and George Hogan

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Searching for names
  - **“john hogan” OR “john \* hogan” OR “hogan john”**
  - **“john hogan” OR “john \* hogan” OR “john \*\* hogan” OR “john \*\*\* hogan” OR “hogan john”**
  - Probably should add a placename/spouse/year range

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Number Range (..) can be used for a range of any type of numbers, including a year range
  - **“john hogan” born 1850..1870**
  - **“john \* hogan was born” 1850..1870**
  - **“john hogan” “mary o’toole” married 1850..1870**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Some searches for BMD info
  - **“john \* hogan was born” rochester OR canandaigua**
  - **“john \* hogan married” rochester OR canandaigua**
  - **“john \* hogan died” rochester OR canandaigua**
  - **“john \* hogan was buried” rochester OR canandaigua**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Tilde (~) symbol preceding a keyword finds similar words (synonyms in a Google sense)
  - **Hogan ~genealogy** searches not just for genealogy, also words/strings like ancestry, family history, roots, family tree and others
- How to determine the Google synonym for a word
  - **~cemetery -cemetery**
  - Then “subtract” bolded keywords from results until no more results - yields your synonyms

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Some other search suggestions
  - **“john \* hogan” ~obituary**
  - **“john \* hogan” ~cemetery**
  - **“john \* hogan” ~will**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- State searches, as in Michigan vs. MI vs. Mich.
- Prior to the 2-letter state abbreviations (which began ~1963), longer abbreviations were used. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_U.S.\\_state\\_abbreviations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_abbreviations)
- Take Away (see next slide for results of my unscientific study): use tilda and the old abbreviation ~**mich.** which seems the most inclusive. Safest technique would be **michigan OR mi OR mich.**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

words bolded on results pages:

<b>~mi</b>	mi, michigan, major cities in the state
<b>~michigan</b>	michigan, mi
<b>~mich.</b>	mich, mich., michigan, mi
<b>mi</b>	mi, michigan
<b>michigan</b>	michigan
<b>mich.</b>	mich, mich., michigan

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Compound clauses: **(John OR “John J” OR “John James”) AND (Hogan OR Hagan)**
- Up to 32 keywords can be in a search string

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- related: command gives the same results as clicking on *Similar Pages* in the results
  - **related:www.findagrave.com** [no space!]

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- **site:** followed by any domain name enables a google search of that site only.
  - To search all RootsWeb pages for military, **military site:rootsweb.ancestry.com**
  - Another example, **site:www.facebook.com hogan**
  - **site:gov “john hogan” 1850..1870** searches for only sites whose extension is .gov
  - **“john hogan” 1850..1870 -site:gov** searches sites except those whose extension is .gov

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- We've all clicked on a link in the Google results and gotten "File Not Found" or something similar. Return back to the google results page and click on the "Cached" link. This will return the page's contents as they were when Google last indexed it.
- Also can do this using **cache: command**.
- Another alternative is [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org) (Wayback Machine)

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- **filetype: or ext:** searches for only files of the type indicated
  - **~genealogy filetype:xls**
  - **~genealogy -filetype:pdf**
  - **hogan filetype:ged**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- phonebook: command results in an alphabetized list of name, phone, address and a map link
  - **phonebook:"john hogan" rochester ny**
- Click the [Request to have your name removed from this list](#) to permanently remove your info
- For reverse phone number searches: enter number in search box: **123 456-7890**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Calculator, enter **1930 – 73** (for approximate birth year for someone who died in 1930 at the age of 73). Operators available: + - \* / ()

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Converter, (to convert one unit of measure to another)
  - **10 rods in miles**
  - **5 euros in dollars**
  - **time in Dublin**

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Define/spell command for definitions
  - **define:grog**
  - **define grog**
  - **spell nikel** gives “Showing results for [spell nickel](#). Search instead for [spell nikel](#)”

# Google Search Commands & Syntax

- Info about a web site:
  - **Info:** [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/) yields
- [RGS HomePage - index.htm](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/)
- This is the homepage of the Rochester (NY) Genealogical Society for those tracing their roots in the upper Genesee River valley.  
*www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/*
- ►
- Google can show you the following information for this URL:
- Show [Google's cache](#) of [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/)
- Find web pages that are [similar to](#) [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/)
- Find web pages that [link to](#) [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/)
- Find web pages [from the site](#) [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/)
- Find web pages that [contain the term](#)  
"www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrgs/"

# Google Tools & Apps

- Google search commands and syntax discussed above can be used in all Google tools and applications – Sort of
  - That is a goal which is a work in progress.
  - Some tools are more compliant than others. For example, most any Google web search string can be used in Google Books.

# Google Language Tools

- Local Bias, use the google site of the country you're researching
  - Ex: google.com for US, google.ie for Ireland, google.co.uk for UK, google.de for Germany
- See this link for google sites for countries and translations if available:  
[http://www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/genealogy\\_guide\\_to\\_google\\_country\\_search\\_engines\\_page1.html](http://www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/genealogy_guide_to_google_country_search_engines_page1.html)
- Google Language Tools, from the Google homepage, click on the link for *Language Tools*
  - **Search across languages** – enter query in native language, search sites of another language
  - **Translate text** – type or cut/paste text in box, select to/from languages
  - **Translate a web page** - enter a url, select to/from languages
  - **Use the Google Interface in Your Language** – select preferred language
  - **Visit Google's Site in Your Local Domain** – select the country for the desired local bias
- The Google Toolbar has an option that will translate a word when you hover the cursor over it.

# Google Books

- <http://books.google.com/>
- Google has digitized millions of books in cooperation with libraries and publishers worldwide. This collection is mainly public domain, out-of-copyright books.
- Results of your search will list books with an indication of their availability: Full View, Limited Preview, Snippet View, No Preview.
- Many books (Full View) can be downloaded free in PDF format and are fully searchable.

# Google News Archive

- <http://news.google.com/archivesearch>
- Content from 30 days old to ~200 years old, mainly US based newspapers although that's changing.
- Prices are listed in results, some items are free. Most of the fee-based services will display a subset of an item for free.
- A timeline link leads to a graphic which facilitates narrowing your time frame.
- For researching a period in history, try Google News Timeline at <http://newstimeline.googlelabs.com/>

# Google Blog Search

- <http://blogsearch.google.com/>
- Might also want to use the following (I think these sites provide more significant results).
  - <http://blogfinder.genealogue.com/>
  - [http://googleyourfamilytree.com/genealogy\\_blog\\_search.php](http://googleyourfamilytree.com/genealogy_blog_search.php)
- Also most RSS readers (see next slide) can search

# Google Reader (RSS )

- RSS (~Real Simple Syndication) is an efficient way to keep tabs on blogs & other sites that you check out frequently to see what's new.
- [http://www.commoncraft.com/rss\\_plain\\_english](http://www.commoncraft.com/rss_plain_english)
- Set up a reader to accumulate feeds from selected sites. <http://www.google.com/reader/>
- Then when you see the RSS symbol on a site, you can easily subscribe to a feed from that site.
- The originating sites have no contact info for you therefore you cannot be spammed. You don't have to spend time going to the originating sites. Updates are fed to your reader. You can read them or not.

# Google Images

- <http://images.google.com/> includes LIFE photo archives
- **rochester ny ~vintage**
- **rochester ny postcards ~vintage**
- <http://images.google.com/imagelabeler/>  
(game/tagging/time waster)
- If you want photos that you upload to be found, don't name them something like 100\_358.jpg. Rename (rt click, select Rename) them to something like hogan\_john\_wwi.jpg.
- Picasa is a great google app for managing photos on your computer (& uploading).

# Google Video

- <http://video.google.com/>
- <http://youtube.com> (owned by google) only finds youtube videos, google video searches all video sites
- Interviews, genealogy training, travelogues
- An alternative to check out: <http://www.rootstelevision.com/>. Has 23 channels including DNA, Immigration, Military, British, Irish, Jewish, Hispanic, conferences, societies

# Google Alerts

- <http://www.google.com/alerts>
- Automates queries to be done 24/7 for you. So once you've tested your "perfect" search string set it up in google alerts
- Its easy to do. Just enter the search string, your email, and how often you want to be notified: immediately, once a day, once a week.
- Additional functionality is available if you login to your gmail account...particularly useful to keep track of many alerts (unlimited number of alerts are allowed).
- Results do not include sponsor links or spam.
- Results are not cumulative. For example, using "once a day" frequency, results will reflect items added since the previous day.

# Google Maps

- <http://maps.google.com/>
- Maps: enter an address in the search box. **3280 Lake To Lake Rd, Stanley, NY.** When the map is displayed, click on More and then Street View to see an interactive photo of that address (not all addresses have photos). Street View available in some foreign countries including Ireland.
- Because of local bias, initial map is for the country site you're using.
- **catholic church gorham ny**
- **cemeteries canandaigua ny**
- For any view including Street View you can Print, Send (emails a link) and Link (provides link to include in an email or IM & html to imbed on a website).
- Don't know of a feature in google that allows you to save an image of the map. Can use a screen shot utility like MWSnap to accomplish this. Also can use the Print feature and then select "Print to File."
- May be able to pinpoint obsolete addresses, for example property taken by eminent domain which now exists in the middle of an expressway.
- **What about a street name change where you enter a house number with the old street name. Will it find the correct location on the street?**
- **What about a numbering change to house numbers. If you enter an old obsolete number, will it find the correct location?**
- Google My Maps lets you create custom private or public maps.

<http://nyrgs.org/>

<http://www.dennisAhogan.com>

# Google Earth

- <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>
- Google Maps on steroids
- Can display image of a cemetery good enough to map it – can identify gravestones with annotated placemarks.

# Google Toolbar

- <http://www.google.com/toolbar/ff/index.html>  
(ff = firefox)
- Integrates the Google Toolbar into the major browsers. Google apps of your choosing will be 1 click away.
- When using a country site with a non-English language, the Google Toolbar has an option that will translate a word to English when you hover the cursor over it.

# Daniel Lynch's Power Searches

- [http://googleyourfamilytree.com/genealogy\\_powersearch.php](http://googleyourfamilytree.com/genealogy_powersearch.php)
  - Genealogy PowerSearch #1 (ancestor search)
  - Genealogy PowerSearch for Google Images
  - Genealogy BlogSearch
  - GEDCOM Search and Other File Types
  - Genealogy PowerSearch using Google Maps
  - Genealogy Database Search on Leading Sites
  - Directed Search on Government Archive Web Sites
- (Also see <http://www.searchforancestors.com/google/searcher.html>)

# Other Search Engines

➤ The Big 5 per

<http://searchenginewatch.com/3641266> are:

➤ [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

➤ [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

➤ [www.live.com](http://www.live.com)

➤ [www.ask.com](http://www.ask.com)

➤ [www.aol.com](http://www.aol.com)

# Other Search Engines

- Here's some sites noted in Daniel Lynch's book:
  - [www.mamma.com](http://www.mamma.com) ...ask, entireweb, about plus white & yellow pages
  - [www.cuil.com](http://www.cuil.com) ...claims largest online index, has a 1-click box of categories of results
  - [www.alltheweb.com](http://www.alltheweb.com) ...yahoo partner
  - [www.euroseek.com](http://www.euroseek.com) ...European-centric
  - [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com) ...once the go to search engine

# Other Search Engines

- Metasearch Tools – searches using multiple search engines. At <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/MetaSearch.html>, UC Berkeley is generally critical of metasearches, but is “tolerant” of the following 4 metasearch tools:
  - [www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com) ... google, yahoo, bing, and ask
  - <http://search.yippy.com/> ...(formerly clusty) direct link/integration with Wikipedia, clusters results in “logical” groups, searches Ask, Open Directory, Gigablast and others
  - [www.surfwax.com](http://www.surfwax.com) ...for “SERIOUS Deep Digging”
  - [www.copernic.com](http://www.copernic.com) ...for “SERIOUS Deep Digging”, can search web from home page but also available is a free download of Copernic Agent.
- Possible Best Practice: Use Google with your “perfect” search string & a couple metasearch tools & MyHeritage

# Genealogy Specific Search Engines

- MyHeritage, <http://www.myheritage.com/research>
  - Search portion only works with Internet Explorer (IE) browser
  - Searches 1500+ sites. Use the Advanced Search to focus the search on relevant sites (not all 1500+).
  - You can select the sites to be searched (1 to 1526)
  - For each search you can pick up to 5 spelling variations for the surname. Also have a choice of Exact, Soundex, Megadex.
  - Can save search results & can schedule recurring searches
- Archives.com, <http://www.archives.com/>
  - US GenWeb Archives, Interment.net, findagrave, cousinconnect, immigrants.net
- Ancestor Hunt, <http://www.ancestorhunt.com/>
  - A portal to many sites

# More Google

- Google Docs – free “office” tools
- Google Cars – eek!
- Google Directory - The web organized by topic into categories.
- Google Labs

# No More Google

➤ The End