

Genealogy Software

By Howard Maynard Faulkner

Genealogy Software is the *right arm* of the family historian. Today's software packages look nothing like those of 5-10 years ago. Indeed if you have not upgraded in the past 2-3 years you are missing out on fantastic easy to use features. Best of all the basic programs are frequently free with full featured programs for around \$30.00. The top programs are still well under a hundred bucks. Generally, it's easy to upgrade from what you are currently using to a full featured program. Most products on the market today, allow direct transfer of your old data directly to the new programs using GEDCOM, (an acronym for GENEalogical Data COMmunication). This process usually will take less than a couple of minutes on a relatively new computer.

Friends and students frequently ask: 'What is the best genealogy software for me?' This is like asking a person that has always bought Ford's, 'What is the best car for me?' Of course I have my own preferences. For beginners and most amateur genealogists and family historians I like: *LEGACY* v. 6.0 (Std. Ed. FREE, Deluxe Ed. from \$21.95) for details go to: <http://www.legacyfamilytree.com/>) And for advanced users and professional genealogists interested in establishing Websites, preparing large format high quality charts, publishing a family history/genealogy book or making DVD's I recommend: *The Master Genealogist, Gold Edition* v. 6.0.(from \$59.95 w/ free trial) (<http://www.whollygenes.com/>)

I always recommend recent reviews of the most popular programs by independent sources. Listed below are three reviewing organizations with their websites and current recommendations.

1. **About.com:** <http://genealogy.about.com/cs/genealogysoftware/a/software.htm>

Rated Highest in Order: *Roots Magic, The Master Genealogist, and Legacy*

2. **Top Ten Reviews.com:** <http://genealogy-software-review.toptenreviews.com/>

Rated Highest in Order: *Legacy, Family Tree, and Ancestral Quest*

3. **Consumer Search:**

<http://wsj.consumersearch.com/software/genealogy-software/index.html>

Rated Highest in Order: *Roots Magic, Legacy, Family Tree Maker*

For Apple MAC users, the news has not been too great. The software for family historians is not frequently upgraded, does not work well across platforms, and is expensive compared to products for other platforms such as IBM/Microsoft. Recently, there have been some advances and new releases that show promise. I suggest if Mac's are your thing you read the recent well prepared article by Dick Eastman in his weekly newsletter at:

http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2007/09/genealogy-progr.html#more