

Genealogical Standards

Standards For Use Of Technology In Genealogical Research

Recommended by the National Genealogical Society

Mindful that computers are tools, genealogists take full responsibility for their work, and therefore they—

- * learn the capabilities and limits of their equipment and software, and use them only when they are the most appropriate tools for a purpose.
- * do not accept uncritically the ability of software to format, number, import, modify, check, chart or report their data, and therefore carefully evaluate any resulting product.
- * treat compiled information from on-line sources or digital databases in the same way as other published sources--useful primarily as a guide to locating original records, but not as evidence for a conclusion or assertion.
- * accept digital images or enhancements of an original record as a satisfactory substitute for the original only when there is reasonable assurance that the image accurately reproduces the unaltered original.
- * cite sources for data obtained on-line or from digital media with the same care that is appropriate for sources on paper and other traditional media, and enter data into a digital database only when its source can remain associated with it.
- * always cite the sources for information or data posted on-line or sent to others, naming the author of a digital file as its immediate source, while crediting original sources cited within the file.
- * preserve the integrity of their own databases by evaluating the reliability of downloaded data before incorporating it into their own files.
- * provide, whenever they alter data received in digital form, a description of the change that will accompany the altered data whenever it is shared with others.
- * actively oppose the proliferation of error, rumor and fraud by personally verifying or correcting information, or noting it as unverified, before passing it on to others.
- * treat people on-line as courteously and civilly as they would treat them face-to-face, not separated by networks and anonymity.
- * accept that technology has not changed the principles of genealogical research, only some of the procedures.