

The Amateur Genealogist

by Celia Lewis, MA, Genealogy consultant

Help! When you are confused.

TIP: Before you even begin going through a website, click on the HELP button, and investigate the various resources on the site.

Most websites you will visit in your family history searches have a HELP button on the top of the website, usually on the right side. If not, go to the bottom of the web page and look there for a HELP link. This will take you to pages of frequently-asked questions, and/or information about how to use the site effectively, what the different sections of the site can display, etc.

An amazing number of people researching family trees never use a HELP link – I'm not sure why. Perhaps some feel they are *"intelligent, capable, competent, efficient, exemplary, plus comfortable with computers, so don't need to use Help!"* Hmmm. Really. Most experts I know are very happy with HELP!

HELP is particularly useful when you are in early stages of research and wanting to gather information on which sites or programs might be your first choices to use. By using HELP you can read topics others have brought up for discussion on *"How-to"* for instance, fix problems or add information that is unusual. If a site does not seem to have a HELP link, go to the bottom of the page and search for the "FAQ" – Frequently Asked Questions link.

You will eventually use the Family Search website, the ancestor catalogue and library of ancestors from around the world. This huge site is hosted by the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), more frequently referred to as the LDS site. On their www.familysearch.org pages, you will find a wonderful HELP link that will save you so much time and confusion!

Have you been on Library and Archives of Canada – a very large website of information? www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/index-e.html Check out the HELP link before you ever begin searching through the "On Our Website" link.

A final note: <http://genealogy-software-review.toptenreviews.com/> Remember that you will most enjoy using family tree software that has a high rating for "ease of use" and "help documentation". This site also provides a Screenshot of the top-10 programs to help you decide which one will work best for you!



Questions? Email Celia@RootsBasic.com