

EZITREE Plus

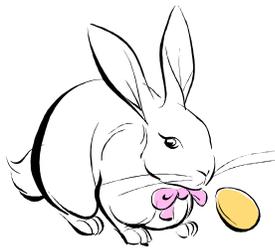
Family History Software

Port Macquarie Users Group April 2009 - Newsletter #12

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Welcome to the April 2009 meeting of the EZITREE users group.



Yvonne and I hope your and your family have had a good Easter and had the opportunity to catch up with family and friends.

We also would like to thank you for giving up your Saturday afternoon to come along to today's meeting. Hopefully, we will all have a chance to share our experiences with Ezitree and family history.

Ezitree User Group Meeting Dates Reminder

As this is the second meeting of this half of the year, I would like to remind you that the next meeting on the 23rd May is the last before the winter break. Again, I would also like to remind you there will only be two meetings in the second half of the year on 17th October and 14th November. Please note that there will be no meeting in September due to prior commitments.

Today's Topic – Your Questions

There is no major topic today which means I am handing over the meeting to you and your questions.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding Ezitree and I will try and provide the answers.

Ezitree Upgrades

Since the last meeting, very little has changed with Ezitree and therefore there will be no free upgrades this month.

Both Yvonne and I have been very busy with other projects although we did manage to do some entering of our family data.

Hopefully, you too had the chance to enter some data. All computer software by its very nature can be confusing and complicated if you do not use it on a regular basis.

Backup Reminder

One of our regular members who is unable to be here today, told me last week of computer troubles they were experiencing.

Also, last week at 10:40pm in the evening, our computers were on when there was a power surge that left us and nearly 2,000 other homes in the Lighthouse Beach area in darkness for six hours.



These examples show that you can never know when disaster may strike so please remember to do regular backups of your data.

Backup of your data is your responsibility!

A Preservation Problem

Do you plan to leave your genealogy records for use by others after your death? If so, what storage method will you use for the information?

Paper doesn't work too well. Today's acid-based paper will probably last only for fifty to one hundred years or so. Even worse, toner used by modern laser printers and photocopy machines will only last ten to twenty years even though the paper itself will last longer. Nobody will be able to read the paper documents if the toner has faded. Archival quality paper with high-quality ink will last more than 100 years but such ink is not readily available for computer printers. Would you want to write your entire genealogy by hand? Using a fountain pen?

Microfilm has been the medium of choice for years but is now disappearing. If you delay for another ten or twenty years, you probably will be unable to purchase new, unexposed microfilm, even if you can find a museum that still has a working microfilm camera. Besides, microfilm has never been a very good solution for a private individual with only a few hundred pages to preserve. Due to the expense of the film and the equipment, microfilm has been a reasonable solution only for larger organizations with millions of pages to preserve. Those organizations are now all moving away from microfilm.

A recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* illustrates the problems involved in archiving contemporary records. As part of his legacy, novelist John Updike left behind floppy disks at Harvard's Houghton Library. The library now has approximately 50 three-and-a-half and five-and-a-quarter-inch floppy disks — artefacts from late in the author's career when he, like many of his peers, began using a word processor. These aren't Windows or Macintosh or MS-DOS disks. They are proprietary format disks used by the dedicated word processors that were popular in the 1980s and early 1990s but have now disappeared.

I suspect that this is not a serious problem for Updike's books. After all, there are many copies of his books still available on paper that will probably last many more years. The Library has plenty of time to digitally create archival copies from the printed books. The potential for loss involves his personal notes and revisions, the items that were never published.

Harvard isn't the only university puzzling over new media from old — and not-so-old — masters. Emory University recently received four laptops, an external hard drive, and a Palm Treo personal digital assistant from Salman Rushdie. The University of Texas at Austin recently acquired a series of Zip disks and a laptop containing Norman Mailer's files.

Even NASA had problems with keeping readable backup copies. The agency had 2,500 2-inch wide magnetic tapes full of pictures from the lunar missions, enough to fill a good-sized truck. Assembled on pallets, the storage space required was 10 feet wide, 20 feet long and 6 feet high. Most of the pictures had never been seen by the public and no backup copies existed on any media. These obsolete tapes were the only copies available.

There was but one problem: the tapes could only be played back on FR-900 Ampex tape drives. Only a few dozen of the machines had been made for the military. The \$330,000 tape drives were electronic behemoths, each 7 feet tall and weighing nearly a ton. Worst of all, both NASA and the military had scrapped their FR-900 Ampex tape drives years ago. There was not a single working FR-900 Ampex tape drive left on the face of the earth.

The Los Angeles Times has a great story about those tapes and the efforts of NASA archivist Nancy Evans and a group of volunteers to salvage those images. You can read the full story at <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-lunar22-2009mar22,0,931431.story?page=1>.

So, how will you preserve your information?

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