

## Genealogists “Go Mobile”

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When many genealogists first began researching their family history, “going mobile” meant filling the car’s trunk or the van’s back with boxes, notebooks or other material about your research that you “might” want access to before you hit the road to the courthouse, cemetery or archive near where your ancestors settled. You made sure you had lots of writing paper and pencils for all those copious notes. You had a stack of dimes and quarters to use in the photocopy machines. You may have taken a camera, but you would have to develop the film at a one-hour shop to make sure you had taken a quality photo before hitting the road again.

Today “going mobile” has a totally different meaning. You can “go mobile” from home or on the road. In fact, you can visit places you might never have been able to visit. You can also meet relatives that you might never have known existed through the beauty of social networking. You can take your entire family tree and genealogy library with you on your research trips and even manage to pay bills while you’re on the road. There are so many ways to choose just how mobile you want to be.



### What’s in Your Mobile Kit

Here are just a few of the categories you might find in your Mobile Kit. Remember, whatever is in there today will probably not be there in 2-5 years, maybe not even next year. It will have been replaced by something faster and smaller and with more capabilities.

Visit the FamilySearch Research Wiki for resources and links to keep you up-to-date on the latest technology - <https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Technology>. Since technology changes so frequently, an update to this handout is available at [www.crowleysplace.com](http://www.crowleysplace.com).

### Laptops & Netbooks – Still the Standard, but Not for Long

Laptops combine convenience with performance. Take your files with you and use the same software you have on your desktop computer. The disadvantage is often a smaller screen, but the portability more than makes up for that. Major considerations for laptop computers are often battery power and weight. The larger the screen, the more the laptop weighs. If you travel frequently, you might opt for a smaller screen to keep the weight down. Screens generally are 12-18 inches.

If you’re really looking for lightweight, try one of the new netbooks. These are regarded as “downsized laptops” which generally have the bare minimum hardware needed for productivity. While laptops cost from \$499 up, depending on capabilities, netbooks usually cost between \$300 and \$500 and weigh as little as 2-3 pounds. Most do not include an internal DVD drive, though external drives are available for an optional price.

The primary question is: How will you be using the laptop/netbook? If you want to have your full range of software with you at all times, then a laptop might be your answer. If, however, you want something to take with you on your research trips that you can use to keep track of information and check email, then a netbook or tablet just might be the solution for you. In each case, you will evaluate the processor, memory, operating system, storage capacity, display, battery, number of USB ports, networking capability (wireless is a must), keyboard, etc. of each device to determine what will work best for your situation. As Cloud Computing becomes more robust, many of these features will disappear as new needs are identified.

## Tablets

### iPad/iPad2 (iOS operating system)

Apple Computer has a reputation for developing innovative products, and the Apple iPad is certainly that. Even people who do not use Apple Macintosh computers are flocking to get their hands on an Apple iPad or iPad2. It may not replace your laptop – yet. However, it could be taken on short trips. Your iPad or other tablet can do a lot:

- Access and update your family tree that is stored online;
- Research online sites;
- Read books, including history, genealogy or family-related stories;
- Create notes while you're interviewing a family member;
- Send email to family and friends;
- Store photos and share them at family reunions;
- Serve as a pseudo netbook computer with optional keyboard and VGA adapter.



Take it to family reunions to share old photos with family – maybe even get the names of a few people who look familiar but you can't identify. Play movies or slide shows that you've created. Take photos with your digital camera or even your iPad2 and quickly upload them to social meeting or somewhere in the Cloud. Prices for the iPad range from \$499 for the Wi-Fi only, 16 GB model to over \$800 for the Wi-Fi, 3G model with 64 GB storage.

Applications specifically designed for genealogy can be downloaded to your iPad. These include Reunion for the iPad, Mobile Family Tree, iHeritage and others. Visit the FamilySearch Research Wiki for an updated list. Other Apps such as iPages, Dropbox and Plain Text can be used for note-taking and file sharing.

### Android/Honeycomb Devices

Android is an operating system developed by Google for smartphones and tablets. There are currently over 400,000 apps available for Android through online stores such as Android Market, the app store run by Google. Android phones have surpassed the iPhone as the best-selling smartphone platform with over 200 million Android devices in use as of November 2011.

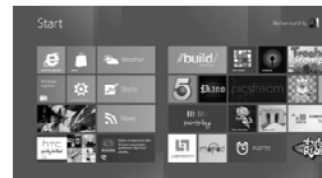
Honeycomb is a version of Android developed specifically for tablet devices, including support for larger screen and new user interfaces with accelerated graphics. The first device to offer Honeycomb is the Motorola Xoom tablet.



### Microsoft Windows

Windows Mobile is an operating system developed by Microsoft that works with smartphones and Pocket PCS. Android and iOS have greatly surpassed Windows offerings; however, Microsoft is Beta

testing its Windows 8 operating system and has released it for developers. It is expected to be available for shipment in 2012. Windows 8 features a complete new Start Screen user interface designed for touchscreen input in addition to mouse, keyboard and pen input.



## SmartPhones

Cell phones today do more than make phone calls. You can take pictures, search the internet, review your family tree if it's stored online, or even enter new information into your online tree. In other words, your phone has become "smarter," hence the name "smartphone." This includes Apple's iPhone as well as phones running Google's Android operating system and Microsoft Windows Mobile. Other systems are available, however, these are the most prevalent in today's market. Applications that run on tablet devices are often available for smartphones as well.

### "There's an 'App' for That"

Every mobile device – iPad, Android tablet, smartphone – uses applications, or "apps," to perform just about any task you need. To date, there are more than 600,000 iPhone and/or iPad apps in the iTunes store, and more than 400,000 apps in the Android Marketplace. Many apps are free, while others cost as little as \$.99. Here are just a few that you might find useful. You can narrow your search for apps in iTunes and Marketplace by searching for "genealogy" or "family history" if you are looking for something specific.

Search Android Market for "genealogy" and as of November 2011, you'll get a list of 270 applications including magazines, GEDCOM viewers and reference materials. Many of those listed, however, are general applications that somehow are not filtered out of the Android search. Apps that are common to both Android and iOS platforms include:

**Adobe Photoshop Express** – Simple photo editing includes cropping, rotating/flipping, straightening, adjusting color, and using filters.

**Ancestry.com** – Access your online family tree at Ancestry.com; update or add information. Updates are stored in your online tree which syncs to your Family Tree Maker 2012 file on your laptop or desktop. (iPad app is available and was updated in November 2011; Android version is in Beta)

**BillionGraves** – Use your phone to photograph and upload tombstones in a cemetery. Upload to the BillionGraves website or search for existing tombstones.

**Dropbox** – Sync and share files online across computers and mobile devices; share files with friends and family as well via Dropbox shared folders.

**Evernote** – Create textual, photo, or audio notes and auto-sync between your device, your computer, and the Web.

**Families** – Display and edit your Legacy family trees. Designed to operate in conjunction with Legacy Family Tree on your PC.

**Find-a-Grave** – Search or input cemetery information including photos of tombstones just as you would on your desktop or laptop.

**GedStar Pro Genealogy Viewer** – Works with a genealogy program on your PC to show all the details of your family history. Converts directly from The Master Genealogist and Legacy Family Tree or from GEDCOM files.

**Google Earth** – “Fly to far corners of the planet with just the swipe of a finger.” Show geo-located photos from around the world. Upload your family images with geo-codes and place on map. Search for cities, places, and businesses around the globe.

**Research Logger** – A compact research log for genealogists. It accommodates separate entries for each person with the ability to add pictures and audio recordings to entries. Fully searchable, and individual or entire log can be e-mailed

**Reunion** – This full-functionality companion to Reunion 9.0 on the Mac allows you to take your family tree with you, edit the files, and then move the changes back to the family file on your Mac.

**Skype** – Use Voice-over IP to make free phone calls and to instant message. Use Skype to visit or collaborate with others researching your family.

**WorldCat Mobile** – Search for library materials, find a library near you with that holding, and view citation format for the item.

## The Cloud

In simple terms, Cloud computing is the “delivery of computing as a service rather than a product” (Wikipedia). What that means to you as a user is that resources can be shared over multiple devices – save your family tree online and access it from your desktop computer, laptop, smartphone and/or tablet.

Make changes on one device and those changes are available to you on all devices. Everything is stored “in the cloud” – all you need to know is how to access it; it’s not important to know exactly where or how it is stored.

One example of Cloud software is Google Docs. Google offers software to Gmail users that include the ability to create documents, presentations, spreadsheets, drawings, forms and tables. Microsoft files can be uploaded and converted to Google Docs to share with other users. Likewise, files created in Google Docs can be downloaded and easily converted to Microsoft Office files.

Store your family tree on Ancestry.com, RootsWeb, FamilySearch, MyHeritage or other site and you’re using a form of Cloud computing.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using the Cloud. You will need to decide what Cloud services you want to use, if any, and how you use them.

## Dropbox, etc.

Dropbox can be classified as a Cloud storage system. Create a free Dropbox account and share files among all of your devices or even share files with other users. Store your family genealogical file in a Dropbox folder if you are not storing it on an online site. Dropbox can also be used to store PDFs of your favorite books or resource materials for a virtual “Genealogy Library in your Pocket.”



Simply by creating an account, you have 2GB of free storage. Share your Dropbox with other users and you can get 250MB free for each friend you share/refer who joins Dropbox up to a total of 10 GB for Dropbox Basic accounts and 16 GB for Dropbox Pro accounts (in addition to what you paid for). Additional storage is available starting at \$9.99 month for 50 GB. Visit [www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com) for additional details.

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