

Family Tree Maker

- ◆ Organize your family's precious history
- ◆ Search billions of historical records
- ◆ Create charts, timelines and memory books

Maker®

2008

In October 2005, I wrote an article for GUM called, *My Family.com on the Road*. I reported on a brief couple of days meeting with *My Family.com* (now The Generation Network TGN) in Provo, Utah. In the penultimate paragraph I wrote:

“Perhaps the highlight for me, being a long-time Family Tree Maker user was to put across my suggestions to the people who actually approve and make the enhancements, and while I cannot talk about new features, I am confident that Family Tree Maker and related products will get better and better”.

What I was referring to but couldn't say at the time was that I was privileged to have been given a very confidential and early glimpse of what is now called **Family Tree Maker 2008**. I think it should be called *Family Tree Maker 2007*, but I won't quibble.

In writing about this new version, I cannot simply talk about “what's new” from the previous version, as the program is **totally new from the ground up**. This program has been in development for some two years and is one of the reasons why TGN did not release a substantial update to version 2006; the development resources were being focussed on the new project.

Why a Totally New Version?

Up until now *Family Tree Maker* has followed a series of about fifteen progressive updates and enhancements. In my “100th column” in March 2006, I traced the history of *Family Tree Maker* from its early beginning in 1989 or so. Over this very long period (18 years) *Family Tree Maker* has been enhanced and gone through various iterations of *Windows*. Its code base was essentially based on code “way back when”, which is a very long time in terms of computer programs.

These changes had been done by numerous programmers working for the various

companies associated with *Family Tree Maker*. The program finally got to the stage where, to make any worthwhile changes, became increasingly difficult and finally the folk at TGN decided it would be better to start again from a “blank piece of paper”.

This is a bit like doing up an old house with a series of additions and alterations. It becomes increasingly difficult to make changes without affecting other parts.

The program is written from “scratch” around the **Microsoft .NET framework**¹ and is optimised for the newer versions of *Windows*. More importantly, it was written to **ensure a base for future developments**. In our house example, the old house has been demolished and a new house with provision for future development and expansion has been built. But starting from scratch means that it is a ‘series one’ program and it has some immaturity.

It has been very interesting to be involved in this project. One of the frustrations of beta testing an already written program is that essentially the program is finished and you are looking for bugs. I and a lot of other people were involved in this beta activity. However in this case, I was involved in the earlier phases where program ideas were being suggested, developed and evaluated. This process started in earnest early in 2006 with a very small team of advisers then increased to an “alpha team”, so it has involved a lot more time and effort than simply a couple of months of beta testing. It is not appropriate to detail this activity, suffice to say that it has been fascinating and highly rewarding. One other GUM member was an alpha tester and several were beta testers. A public beta was made available on 8 July 2007.

A very good Family Tree Maker Help Link

<http://www.familytreemaker.com/Support/>

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.NET_Framework

See also link at the end of the article

Operating Requirements

The following has been specified:

- Operating System: Windows XP/Vista
- Processor: 500 MHz Intel Pentium II or equivalent (1GHz or faster processor recommended)
- Hard Disk: 400 MB for installation. Additional space required for data files
- Memory: 256 MB of RAM (512 MB of RAM recommended)
- Monitor: 800x600 resolution (1024x768 resolution recommended)
- Internet: All online features require internet access

Personally I think you need **at least** a P4 (or equivalent), 2GHz or better and 1GB of RAM (2GB with Vista).

Note: *Family Tree Maker 2008* will **not run on Windows 98**.

Family Tree Maker 2008

Obviously this article is going to set the scene and now I have a wonderful range of column subjects as I work my way through the new program. So where to start? Perhaps a bit of an overview looking at its appearance and perhaps explaining the overall feel of the program?

The program is **totally different** to any previous version of *Family Tree Maker* so I am a new boy again. Please also note that this initial review is being written around a beta not the final version. I will try and keep track of the updates right up to release date, but some things could change in the final product.

It has seven work areas being:	The Menu items are:
Plan	File
Person	Edit
Places	View
Sources	<Workspace>
Media	Tools
Publish	Help
Web Search	

<Workspace> means that it shows what ever work area you are in

The Plan Workspace

This is the area that you see when you open a file. *Family Tree Maker 2008* will open any previous *Family Tree Maker* file or GEDCOM.

It will also open native files from *Legacy Family Tree*, *Personal Ancestor File* and *The Master Genealogist* using the same GenBridge Technology as TMG does under a license agreement. I am hoping that other genealogy software providers will also follow this lead so users can have some import consistency.

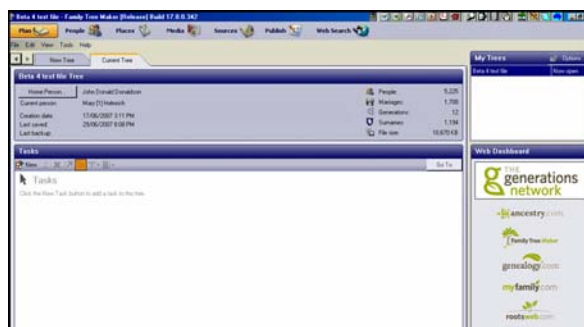


Figure 1: The Plan Workspace

Note that being a totally new database structure; it **cannot export a Family Tree Maker 2008 file back to an earlier Family Tree Maker version other than GEDCOM**.

In the **Plan Workspace** you can see your basic file statistics, you can add tasks, rename trees and also you have a web dashboard with links to other sites owned by The Generations Network eg Ancestry.com, Roots Web etc. It also has a Task area.

The People Workspace



Figure 2: People Area Family View

This comes with two Tabs being the **Family View** and the **Person View**.

The Family View

In the Family View you essentially have three work areas:

- 🌳 The LH Pane with the Index (actually indexes)
- 🌳 The RH Pane (called the Information Pane) where you do data entry
- 🌳 The Centre Pane that contains a Pedigree View and a summarized Family (children) View. They are not used for data entry.

Configuring the Appearance

Note the LH panel can be collapsed, the RH panel dragged (expanded) (but not collapsed) to the left, the data entry fields expanded and the bottom of the Centre Panel can be dragged up and down vertically. So the appearance of the view can be altered so that you can focus on an area of interest.

On many of the workspaces, the left pane, Index Pane, is the highest or most global method of navigating. This gives you access to all of the records for the appropriate workspace. You can use it to Find specific records (e.g. Individuals, Media or Sources). In a number of them you can Filter the display (introduced in version 2005). Some are predefined Filters which are called "List by" or "Sort". Alternately you can use the "Filter" to tailor your own search criteria. Finally, you may see Bookmarks and History. Bookmarks allow you to select individuals who are of special interest to you. History displays all of the items you have edited or changed. Unfortunately this is only for the current file session. When you close the tree or *Family Tree Maker 2008*, the history disappears. I hope that this is fixed so it is retained between sessions.

In the Centre Panel you can set the number of generations up to (5) and right clicking on a name reveals their Birth and Death information.

Clicking on the boxes of the two primary persons will also focus them in the RH box for editing. There is also a button in their boxes to add spouse and the number next to the button indicates the number of spouses.

Below this you have a summary line of their marriage and below this again details of the children with a links to show family. This list can be scrolled with a mouse wheel and you can drag

the list up or down so you can see all the children. You have the three sort buttons for the children as well. You can also customize the details that you see in the RH box

The Person View.

This has three main work areas. The main area has personal information that it is used for **reviewing** individual and personal information.

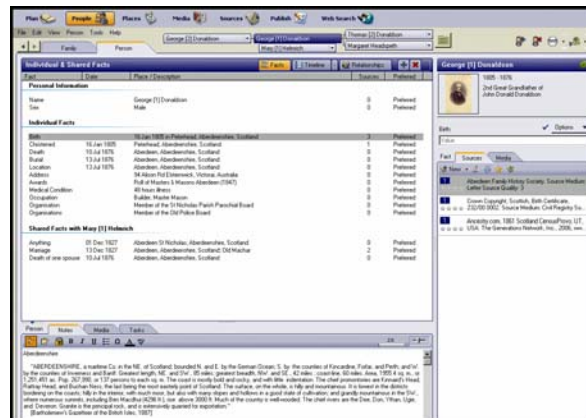


Figure 3: People Workspace—Person View

Beneath the main area are Tabs for Notes, Media and Tasks. Much to my joy, Notes (still 1MB per person) **can be formatted** and you can have Research Notes and with the ability to mark them as private so they don't show up in reports. (Big Cheer 😊). Notes are also available for Individual Facts, Sources, Source—Citations and Media.

The Individual and Personal information work areas have two additional Tabs as well as Facts, being Timeline and Relationships.

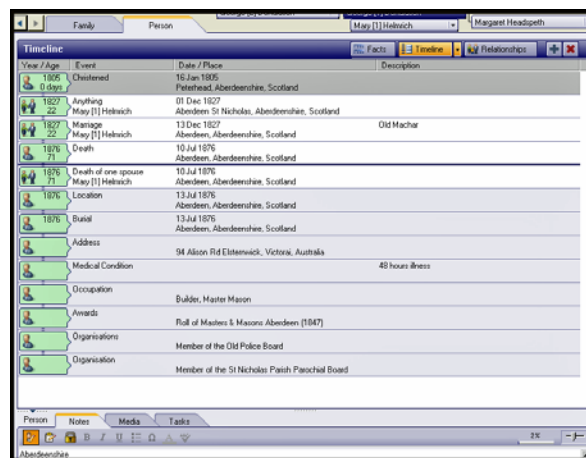


Figure 4: Timeline View

The Relationship Tab shows all the individual's relationships including parents, siblings,

spouse(s) and children. Throughout all of this the third work area, the RH box changes its function to whatever Tab is selected as well as displaying Media and Sources linked to it. This is where you Edit.

Places Workspace

This new function has a comprehensive place name authority with I understand has about three million places. If you have an Internet connection it takes you into *Virtual Maps* which is *Microsoft's* alternative to *Google Maps*.

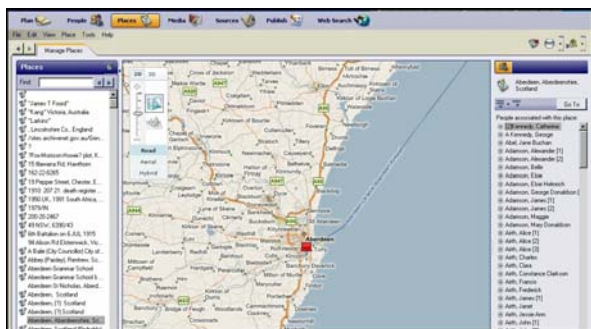


Figure 5: Places

Again the concept of three work areas. The LH box has the locations and there is a manage and resolve map location function which helps you get your places into shape.

The centre section is the map (if you are connected to the internet) which is zoomable and offering map, satellite or hybrid features. It also has a 'bird's eye view' for a number of cities. The RH section has the people who have an event linked to a particular location. The RH box shows people associated with a location.

Media Workspace



Figure 6: Media—Collection View

Again it is totally new. *Family Tree Maker 2008* has gone completely away from embedding images and other media and now works by external links. It is interesting if you import a *Family Tree Maker* file with images from [say] version 16 and you find that the import process extracts the embedded images and saves them as separate image files. **Gone is the Scrapbook** but the Media function allows you to link certain types of Media files to any Person, Fact or Source very much more flexible.

The Media Workspace organizes the media files you have linked to People, Facts, and Sources. It also organizes media files that are not associated with any object in your tree. You can view media by category or by what object in the tree the media is attached to. For example, you can view all of the media files attached to a particular person.

The Media Workspace helps you to quickly add details to a media file so you can easily find and identify it. The details can also be used in Charts and Reports to identify images you have included.

The Media Workspace has a second tab called the Detail View where you can look at an individual media and add Notes, Description, Captions, etc. It also provides the file name and full path link. File types supported for a thumbnail views include JPG, TIF, BMP, GIF and PNG. The *Adobe Photoshop* PSD format is not supported with a thumbnail, but you can link to an Adobe PSD image which you can double click on to open.

Sources Workspace

Family Tree Maker 2008 uses three levels of source management to help make the job of documenting your research easier:

- Source-citation (citation)
- Source
- Repository

Family Tree Maker 2008 is quite different from older versions of *Family Tree Maker*. Before you had a Master Source with multiple Citations but each Citation could only be associated to one Individual and one Fact. With *Family Tree Maker 2008*, you can enter one Source (old Master Source record). You can link one or more Sources to one Repository. You can also link multiple citations to a single Source but more importantly you can link multiple individuals and facts to a single citation. BJ Hamilton—Beta tester

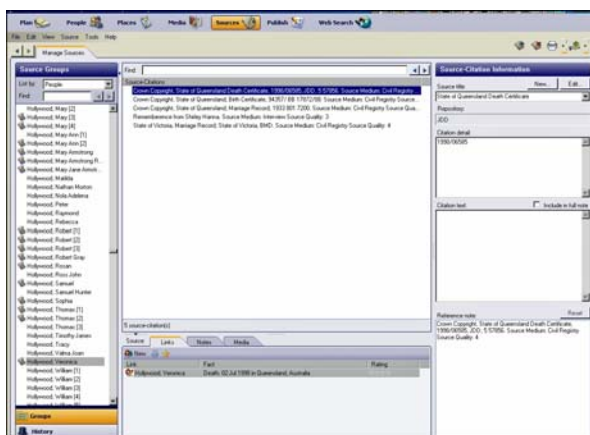


Figure 7: Source Workspace Source-Citation

A citation is a snippet of text, dates, or other facts that supports the fact assertion the citation is linked to.

Source

A source is the work that a citation comes from. You may cite several facts from a source, or only one, but it is always good practice to document the source so you can return to it when needed. In *Family Tree Maker*, you can record a source a single time and then link several citations to it.

Repository

This is new. A repository stores a **group of sources**. The most common repositories are libraries and courthouses or other buildings that house legal documents. *Ancestry.com* is a newer type of repository that houses electronic documents. Knowing the repository helps you to find the master source more easily.

Publish Workspace



Figure 8: Publish Workspace—Collection View

This is where the charts and reports are located. You are presented firstly with the Collection View, where you select the chart or report that you want to use. Thumbnails are presented of the chart or report.

You select the group from the LH column. This then shows the thumbnails in the centre panel. You can either double click on a thumbnail or select it and click the Detail tab. Here you get a zoomable image where you can in the RH box make adjustments.

The Detail View of the of the selected chart of report allows you to see the chart or report in a zoomable print preview form and in the RH pane you can adjust the chart or report with items to include, background, fonts, etc.

Books—Ancestry Press.

If you select Books you are linked to *Ancestry Press* where you can upload data and create a book from pre supplied templates. <http://www.ancestrypress.com/>. Many people have complained about the lack of Books within *Family Tree Maker 2008*.

Narrative Reports are not expected to ship with the initial *Family Tree Maker 2008* CD but are expected to become available via a patch sometime in September. At the time of writing this overview, I have not seen them.

Web Search Workspace

As you can imagine in a genealogy program being produced by the worlds largest provider of paid genealogy databases *Ancestry.com*, that *Family Tree Maker 2008* will talk to 'big brother' very well. And it does. To use this function you need to have an Internet connection and a subscription to *Ancestry.com* (or some paid *Ancestry.com* vouchers) to get into *Ancestry.com's* downloadable data.

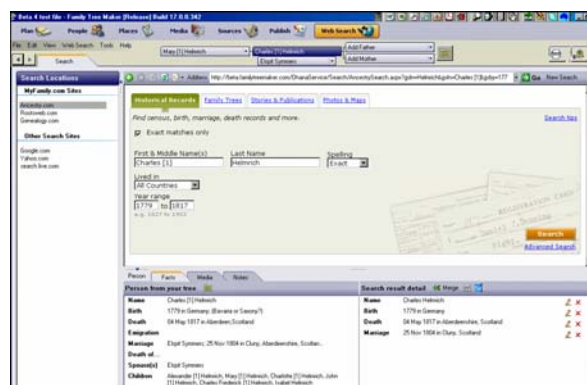


Figure 9: Web Search

Other Links

The workspace is linked to other databases such as *Rootsweb*, *Genealogy.com*, *Google*, etc.

The exciting bit is that **you can add your own links** and keep track of them as favourites! So you can add [say] *familysearch.org* and search it from right inside *Family Tree Maker*. That is neat!

Now while *Family Tree Maker* can merge data from *Ancestry.com* very well as you would expect, it has another new trick. The technology is called **Web Clipping** which gathers data and images to merge to your tree. So you can merge from *Ancestry.com* as you have been able to since version 2005 and web clip (if that is a verb?) from other sites.

My Reaction

As noted in the beginning of this piece, I have been involved in this project for quite some time and have my biases and also my concerns. I am also bound by a Non-Discloser Agreement and cannot discuss the entire process, but it has been fascinating. Let me try and paint the positives and the negatives as I currently see them.

My Concerns

During the testing I have had a number of concerns:

Program Speed

The program does not run as quickly as previous versions and some functions take a long time (comparatively) to run. Having a lot of RAM will help.

Books

The Books feature in *Family Tree Maker* is currently not supported although it may reappear in a future release!

User Home Pages (Genealogy.com)

Again this is no longer supported so you will not be able to edit your home page in *Family Tree Maker* 2008. If you have a Home page in a previous version you are encouraged to keep it going if for no other purpose than to access Books and edit your Home page.

Global Search and Replace

This has not made it to the new version which is a pity. The Resolve Place Name Tool will efficiently correct and standardise place names

which is a pseudo Search and Replace for Places and works very well.

Two File Compare and Merge

Yes also gone for the moment and also merge all duplicate individuals. On the plus side the file merge is much better and so is merge two specific individuals.

Export to an earlier version of *Family Tree Maker*.

Again not supported. The new database in 2008 is so different from what was used in previous versions that the programmers decided it was time for a complete break. You can export in GEDCOM though.

The key Items that really should be there!!!

Double click from Reports to the Family View

This to me was one of the strengths of *Family Tree Maker* and it is not in 2008 as yet.

Saved Reports and Charts

This has been with us since version 7.5 and IMO is one of the best features in *Family Tree Maker*. **I cannot contemplate a database in 2007 that does not allow you to create and save queries**, which is exactly what Saved Views does, especially with the Custom Report. This is a major disappointment! Again I hope it makes it in with an early patch or update.



Partial Lack of Right Mouse Support

This was a feature of *Family Tree Maker* and made the program so intuitive. Support for the right mouse button has only been partially provided. This is a **great pity** as it would greatly help to assist the learning curve with the new program. If you get stuck in a view, a right mouse click was the “get out of jail free card” to see what is possible. Again, I understand that this is being enhanced before the final release, I hope so. **Every view or chart should fully support the right mouse click as it did in every previous version!**

What I like—and there are lots of features to like

There are many things to like about the new version. It also supports plug-ins similar to many other programs and I am sure that third-party developers are going to make interesting modules for *Family Tree Maker*. **Maybe they could start with a book module?**

These are some of the pluses

-  A much “cleverer” Index
-  A configurable Family View and Edit area

- ✦ The ability to search and merge different Online data bases (even use custom ones).
- ✦ Direct importation of files from different vendors. Legacy and TMG
- ✦ Linked Sources-Citations. Because they are linked, the need to copy/paste sources is reduced except for extraordinary circumstances.
- ✦ Less paging to navigate between people and work spaces.
- ✦ Export and a new Send to email with more formats **including HTML** and Images through the **Share feature**.

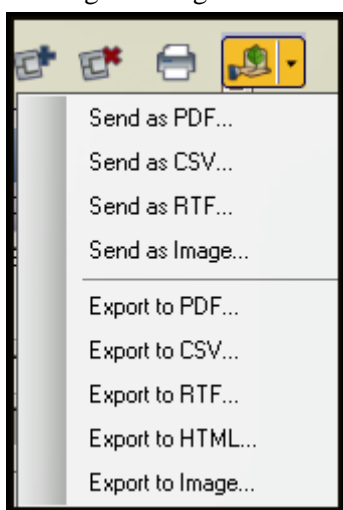


Figure 10: Share Options

- ✦ Person Notes, Fact Notes, Source Notes and Media Notes and they can all be formatted along with the ability to format or privatize the Notes.
- ✦ Linked Images which can be linked to Individuals, Facts and Sources.
- ✦ Separation between Places and Descriptions.
- ✦ Convert CAPS tool
- ✦ Easier Merge Specific Individuals
- ✦ Much easier Merge Files
- ✦ Much improved Web Search plus add your own links plus web clipping
- ✦ Better Attach and Detach
- ✦ A Maps system that offers a huge place repository (3 million) that is interfaced with a constantly updated location database mapping feature and boy does it clean up misspelt places.
- ✦ A Resolve Place Name Tool to harmonise the places in your database.

Verdict



Overall this program will be great and it shows a lot of promise and innovative thinking. It is very different and some will love it and some will not.

It can do many things that are not currently possible in *Family Tree Maker* and, as I get more practiced with it (remember the program has been constantly changing with features being added or modified), I will become more comfortable using it. You can't regain 13 years of comfort overnight.

I am disappointed about some of the missing features particularly the lack of Books, Saved Views and Home Page support and, **until I can work with my existing Books and Home page, I will keep *Family Tree Maker 16* running as well and will also use it as an additional source of charting.**

This leaves me with my final point. Don't think of *Family Tree Maker 2008* as a replacement for an earlier *Family Tree Maker* version. Think of it more as an additional new program that is being developed and will evolve into a great user experience. At some point then, maybe turn off your existing *Family Tree Maker*.

So the start of a great adventure...lots of new things to explore and.....and a whole new series of column topics. ☺

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For the Technically Minded: An interesting explanation of the programming of *Family Tree Maker 2008* is at this link:

<http://www.thinkgenealogy.com/2007/08/18/family-tree-maker-2008-is-ready-for-future-built-with-microsoft-technology/>