

WHITLOCK DATABASE AND COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Since the last issue of the newsletter I have had a major update of my computer system. I have made that painful change from DOS to a Windows system. While learning everything over again has been frustrating I had to do it for my job anyway so took the plunge.

The benefits to Whitlock researchers of this change should be many. Firstly my email system is now state of the art!! I can do all those wonderful things like download documents and files and attach items to my emails and generally make sharing information much easier. Next, with the ability to download documents easily I have been working with Dick Whitlock in South Africa to upgrade the Whitlock Web Site that he kindly operates for us. Over the past few weeks I have been downloading the charts to Dick and he has been adding them to the Web site. This will mean researchers can now get copies of our charts directly from the Web site without having to contact me and wait for the mail to arrive.

An added bonus is that the Web site can be directly updated, although to keep the integrity of the site I am recommending any updates be passed through me before Dick adds them. This will enable people to update their charts directly.

Once the charts are all on the system I will work with Dick to add some of the other research tools. I can see the Xmiscellaneous and Reference lists being of use as well and the census files. We have not tackled the Gedcom files yet but I suspect we will be able to add them as well. I am not sure about the Access database files but if they work as well we can add them too.

This will hopefully ease things up a bit for me as well as make research easier for those used to the benefits of the internet system.

One major bonus is the search capability of the system is enhanced enormously. While computer searches are not the greatest, when they work well they are a terrific tool. I can now search my whole computer for a name or a phrase and come up with every file containing that name. This now means I can pick up the name off a chart or in the reference lists or even in the old mail. I can also open several documents at the same time and move data from one to the other. This has made searching for connections and making the best use of the vast amount of data we have collected much more efficient. This is particularly important to me as I have less and less time to do the in depth searching of the files often needed to unearth the clues our files contain.

While everything runs off of my office laptop computer I have made one addition at home. I finally broke down and purchased an ink-jet printer. All the mail and non-graphic items can still be printed on the old dot-matrix printers but the graphics and pictures and downloaded documents can be printed on the new printer. A bonus to this new technology is I am starting to code documents in the files with image file names if there a scanned image of the document in the computer. This will enable me to share copies instantly. The possibilities are mind boggling!! Can my own scanner be far behind??

If you haven't been to the Web site lately I urge everyone to check it out and keep an eye out for items that might be of help to you.