



Creeping on Facebook

Social Media Research from the Shadows

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Who knows who you might find on Facebook, or what you can learn about family members to add to your genealogical records? Photo by Johan.V. (Creative Commons)

THERE WAS A TIME IN THE NOT-SO-DISTANT PAST when proud parents proclaimed the births of their children in daily newspapers and when engagements, marriages, deaths and even christenings were regular columns in most community news publications. It was convenient for genealogists and researchers to find and add such current information to their family records. But times have changed. Those forms of personal news and family events are now rarely published in newspapers. It's not as easy as it once was to keep family records updated. And there are barriers at every crossing due to privacy of information laws, restrictions on public records and a fear in the general population that genealogical information could be used for identity theft, that make contemporary research more than an ordinary challenge. The modern genealogist has to use every resource available when tracing family trees, particularly the most recent generations. And in this age of technology, the worldwide web and social media, it is still possible to find family information, especially about current generations, if you are willing to conduct a little research from the shadows.

Facepionage



It has been predicted that the countless postings about the minutiae of our lives on Facebook will, at some future date, make this website a goldmine of information for social researchers and historians and, of course, for genealogists. Photo by acidpix. (Creative Commons)

These days parents tend to celebrate news of a recent birth by posting it to their social media pages. Likewise, birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and even the passing of family members are commemorated on social networks. One of the