Red Flags. Protecting Genealogy from the Data Grabbers

stove pipe hat

The one thing which has always been troublesome to the genealogist, is paperwork and filing cabinets. That element of research is improving, however, through the use of the Internet. But what if we put our family

tree on a website, and that website is hacked, fails or goes under? Thus, one must still maintain independent copies of all their work. Data is king. After the Zuckerberg hearings, we should have some understanding of the fact that our data is being transported by bots, and sold. Then, it is used to sell us something.

Little bots which seem to know us creep onto our screen everywhere. And this technology is expanding all over the world. We can no longer maintain privacy in our lives.

So, what to do? Here are a few ideas. Look for websites which do not collect your credit card information. Georgia Pioneers does not have a record of credit cards of any type.

Instead, it uses Authorize.net and Paypal, which are highly regulated and data-protected companies. This helps to protect the website against hacking. The family trees being used on member websites have their issues if the computerized versions merge family members.

Example, if the computer sees more data of a person on your tree, it will add members of the family, trace it forward, etc. with data that is not yours. Also, the fact that someone else traced it, does not make it so. The most reliable research is your own. For this reason, it is best to maintain a private tree on the home computer.

Also, one should determine if the website is foreign-owned, and whether it has huge debt figures. That is a red flag. As the world speeds forward with digitization and data sharing, we should avoid possible pitfalls. After all, years of research in the field is too good to lose online somewhere.