

# Chapter 15 - Exporting Data

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TMG5 can export to two general types of data files (**File > Export**). In the first case, data are exported to one of five types of GEDCOM files (GEDCOM 4.0, Personal Ancestral File™, Ancestral File™, Temple Ready™ and GEDCOM 5.5). In the second case, which we'll call 'Data File' export, the contents of the TMG data files are exported to a set of text/data exchange/spreadsheet files. For all data exports, an **Export Wizard** is used.

## **Data exchange and GEDCOM**

GEDCOM files are the *terralingua* of genealogy programs – in other words, the only common language allowing communication between the different programs. More precisely, GEDCOM files are the standard medium of computerized data exchange between users of genealogy software programs (see GEDCOM Overview below).

When you exchange data with other users whether directly or indirectly (for example, via the Internet), you need to make decisions about what data you plan to share and how to share that data. Are you planning to publish the result of your many years of research effort? Maybe you want to limit what you share until your book or CD-ROM is published. How do you respect the privacy of living persons included in your data? Who is that person who has asked you to share your data? Is your data going to appear on a web page without your concurrence? These are non-trivial decisions that require careful thought.

If you plan to exchange data by way of GEDCOM files, you need to understand what data is exported and in what form. You need to understand what data is *not* exported and why. GEDCOM is a loose standard subject to interpretation and misinterpretation by programmers. This results in variations in the GEDCOM files exported by different programs. GEDCOM files work fine when exporting most simple data (birth, marriage, death and burial events with sources) as well as most individual and family events and attributes.

More complex programs such as TMG can record data in forms never anticipated by the current GEDCOM 5.5 standard (see the Export

Considerations section below). You need to understand the limitations of GEDCOM files and make decisions very early in your use of TMG about how important GEDCOM export is to your work and whether you need to record your data in TMG so as to maximize what data can be exported. The **Export Considerations** section looks at whether tags have one or two principals, whether you record witnesses in TMG tags, how you record census data, and other issues.

To pull this together, you need to decide how important GEDCOM export is to you very early in your use of TMG. What data is critical to export? How do you enter your data? Do you need to limit what advanced TMG features are used in order to maximize GEDCOM export?

## **GEDCOM Export**

### **GEDCOM Overview**

GEDCOM is an acronym for Genealogical Data COMMunication and the GEDCOM standard was developed by the Family and Church History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). The current version 5.5 standard was released in final form in January 1996 and this version is supported by all genealogy programs in common use today.

A GEDCOM file is a structured text file divided into several sections.

- **Header** – data detailing the origin, version and character set of the GEDCOM.
- **Individual records** – individuals and their names, events, attributes, and relationships.
- **Family records** – families and their events and attributes.
- **Sources** – where the individual and family data were obtained (books, census records, etc.).
- **Repositories** – where the sources were located (libraries, historical societies, etc.).