December 2013 Features Update

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Global

There is a subtle implementation change in input forms. I started implementing web pages over 20 years ago, using Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) version 2. That was before Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) were even a gleam in some designer's eye. The only way to line up the fields in an input form then was to place them in cells of a table. Since this provided a visually pleasant functional appearance to the forms I kept on doing it. However there are several problems with this technique:

1. The resulting set of tags does not logically describe the functional relationship of the various components. In particular the descriptive human readable label associated with an input field is not logically associated with it except that they are in adjacent cells of the table.

2. The identifying label and its associated input field are enclosed in separate outer tags.

3. If the page is presented to a visually limited user through a browser feature which "reads" the content of the page out loud the user is presented with a lot of meaningless gibberish about table rows and columns.

4. The layout tags are hard to maintain.

With HTML 4 (and now HTML 5) and CSS new techniques were introduced. In addition to resolving the issues described above, they introduce additional functionality. In particular the human readable label is explicitly identified as a label and it references the associated input field. This provides a number of additional capabilities:

1. Clicking on the label moves the keyboard focus into the associated input field.

2. If the input field is a check box, its state is toggled.

3. Holding the mouse over the label pops up the explanatory help bubble in the same way as holding the mouse over the input field itself.
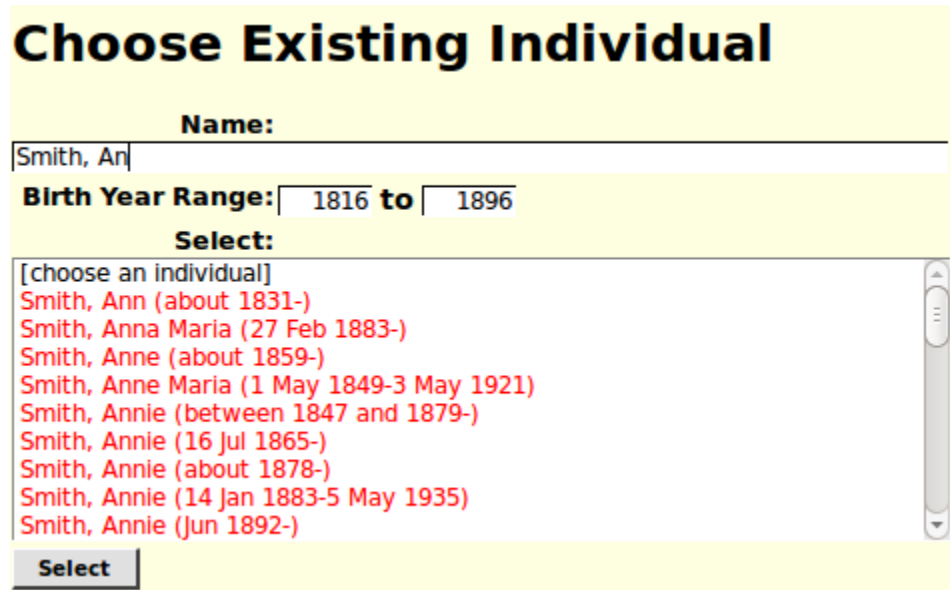
This change modifies almost every file in the site.

The sections of the main genealogy page are rearranged to put the monthly status reports at the bottom.

Because the functionality of the site has not been exhaustively tested for older releases of Internet Explorer, and there are almost certainly minor flaws in that support, the site now warns the user if they are trying to view a page with an unsupported browser.

Family Tree Enhancements

The main page, "`legacyIndivid.php`" is changed to defer loading the Google® Maps API code. This eliminates a delay loading the page if the Google server is overloaded.

The common dialog for choosing an individual, implemented by `chooseIndivid.php`, now supports explicitly specifying the birth year range to limit the response. This is added because as the database grows the number of matches would frequently be too great without this feature. This exploits a new feature of the script `getIndivNamesXml.php` which is used by many scripts to identify individuals.

Illustration 1: Choose Existing Individual Dialog

When searching for an existing person to add as a spouse on a marriage the birth date of the primary individual is used to determine a probable birth date range to initially limit the responses when the `chooseIndivid.php` dialog is presented.

When searching for an existing person to add as a child to a marriage the birth dates of the mother and father are used to determine a probable birth year range to initially limit the responses when the `chooseIndivid.php` dialog is presented. It is assumed that at the time of birth the father must have been at least 15 years old and no older than 65, while the mother must have been at least 15 years old and no older than 55 years old.

Census Database Enhancements

All of the census related pages and scripts are now in the folder "database".

Census Page Edit Forms

There is some additional dynamic functionality in the forms for editing a census page. This functionality is most noticeable on the 1921 census.

Vital Statistics Enhancements

Aside from the change to the use of Cascading Style Sheets for layout the vital statistics portion of the web-site is largely unchanged.

A number of the scripts are updated to support administrations other than Ontario, Canada, but as none of the databases have any data to back up those other administrations, the functionality is invisible.

All of the vital statistics related pages and scripts are now in the folder "Ontario".

Bug Fixes

- Many of the pages would only work properly on Firefox due to the inadvertent use of a Javascript extension which is currently only supported by Firefox. All pages should work properly with all current web browsers, and have been tested with Internet Explorer releases 6 through 9, Firefox, Chrome, and Opera.

- There was a bug in the main search panel for finding an individual in the family tree by name, `legacyIndex.php.` When invoked on older releases of Internet Explorer the identifying information about each individual, name and birth and death dates, was not visible in the selection list.

- There was a bug in the common dialog for selecting an individual in the family tree to apply an action to, `chooseIndivid.php,` and in the closely related dialog for choosing a relative for calculating the degree of relationship, `chooseRelative.php.` When invoked on older releases of Internet Explorer the identifying information about each individual, name and birth and death dates, was not visible in the selection list.

- There was a bug in the dialog which pops up to present a selection list of locations that begin with the text from a location field when updating an event, to provide the option of selecting a previously defined location rather than creating a new one. When invoked on older releases of Internet Explorer the text for the matching locations was not visible in the selection list.

- If your browser supports the current HTML5 standards, which is Internet Explorer release 9 and above, and all versions of Firefox, Opera, and Chrome that are less than four years old, then the site generates HTML5, while for older browsers it emits HTML4.1. The generated output for the Facebook "like" button failed the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C) HTML5 validator because it contained compatibility attributes for older releases of Internet Explorer, which are not valid HTML5. This bug is copied from Facebook.com itself.

- There was a missing close tag on one of the hyperlinks in the Canadian censuses index page. This was visible only on a syntax validator.

- An empty birth year field in any census was flagged as invalid. Of course the indicator of an invalid field in a census table is changing the color of the text to red, which was invisible because there *was* no text. That is why I had not noticed it. However as soon as you started typing a new value into an empty birth year field, the new text appeared in red. New text in an empty birth year field now appears as black until you leave the field and the value is revalidated.

- Facebook links are added to those pages that did not previously have them. They were missing because the facebook link must be added individually to each .html file.

- The script `legacyIndivid.php,` which displays the information about an individual, did not display the relationship of a child to its parents. Now, for example, a child who is recorded as adopted is displayed as adopted.

- The script `getIndivNamesXml.php,` which is used throughout the site to obtain a list of individuals failed if an invalid value of desired sex was specified.

- The script `getIndivNamesXml.php` failed if the surname was explicitly passed as an empty string.