October 2014 Features Update

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Global

Many update dialogs throughout the site provide the ability to remove a unit of information. For example a user can delete the transcription of a vital statistics registration, or delete a citation from an event or fact, or even delete an event or fact from an individual, just by clicking the mouse on a button. This is a dangerous power, so each of these delete buttons now pops up a dialog to request confirmation of the user's intent to delete the unit of information.
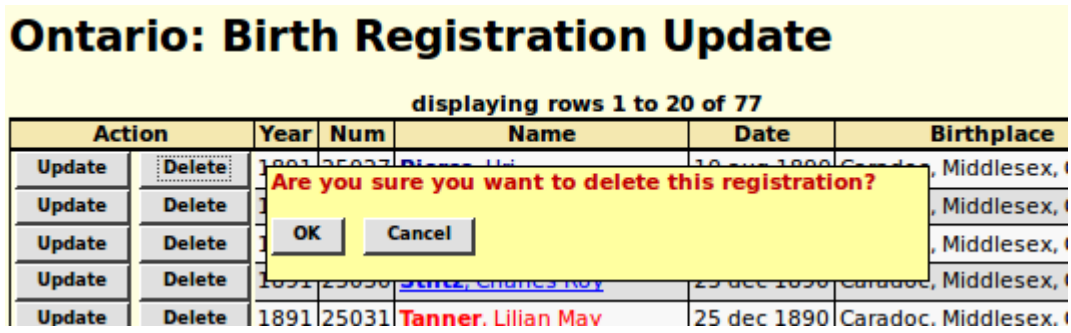

Illustration 1: Confirm Deletion of a Birth Registration

The display of popup dialogs, for example the one in the above illustration, is changed so they are displayed as close as possible to the invoking web page element, for example a button, as possible. To do this required being able to determine the exact dimensions of the popup dialog before it was displayed. Previously dialogs were made visible by setting their Display style attribute to 'block' and hidden by setting their Display style attribute to 'none', however an element with Display style attribute 'none' is not even laid out internally, so it is not possible to determine the dimensions of the element. By setting the Visibility style attribute to 'hidden' and the Display attribute to 'block' the dimensions of the element can be determined even though the element is not yet displayed by the browser. It is then possible to adjust the position of the element depending upon its dimensions to be either just to the left or the right of the associated button depending upon where the invoking button is located in the page, and then change the Visibility style attribute to 'visible' to request the browser to show the element.

The dialog used by an administrator to manage the list of subscribers is enhanced to permit the administrator to locate subscribers by e-mail address, and to manually alter the set of authorizations for an individual subscriber.

Illustration 2: Users Master List: Search by E-mail and Control Authorizations

Family Tree Enhancements

The original database design for this web-site was derived from the design of a Windows PC specific application. However the database for a shared web-site has different design requirements than an application that only supports a single user. In particular the original database design frequently requires that a single change to the information about an individual involves simultaneous changes to multiple records in multiple tables. With a multi-user system that can result in a user viewing the database part-way through the set of changes, or else requiring that the entire database be locked until all of the changes are completed. Either choice is undesirable. So this month eight events for an individual have been moved from the main record in the table of individuals to separate records in the table of events. To avoid disrupting service while the database is restructured the web-site continues to provide read-only access to the events in their original location, but whenever an event is changed the event is moved on the fly to its new location. This requires changes in almost every page accessing an individual.

For example the database design always permitted more than one birth event for an individual, with one birth event recorded in the individual's record itself, and others defined in the table of events. The event in the individual's record was the one reported in page headings. Now all of the birth events are recorded in the event table, but one of them is flagged as preferred. Furthermore all of the sacraments of the Church of Latter Day Saints were recorded in the individual record, and not in the table of events because the records in the table of events could only identify the location at which an event took place, and not the Temple at which they took place. Additional fields have been added to each row in the table of Events to deal with these anomalies.

When an event that is not permanently displayed, such as preferred birth, is deleted on the `EditIndivid.php` page the row describing the event is removed from the Data Object Model (DOM) so the browser removes it from being displayed. Previously the page was refreshed to update the display, which took longer and was noticeable to the user.

The site has long supported the display of images associated with an individual. However the underlying database design supported associating not only images but also sound and video recordings with individuals and also with events, locations, addresses, sources, and other objects. This support is now completed. In addition a sound recording can be associated with an image.

All of the child windows opened by the edit family or edit parents dialogs are now explicitly positioned on top of the main dialog. The edit family and edit parents dialogs now correctly change the married names of both partners if the surname of the husband is changed and the married name rule is the traditional English practice.

There were several places where clicking on a button would cause information to be retrieved from the web server to be used to update the display. All such relatively long running operations are supposed to pop up up a "Loading..." indicator. Several more such requests have been identified and corrected, in particular those buttons on the edit family and edit parents dialogs that require retrieving a family record from the server.

The concept of record ownership, which until now applied only to individuals in the family tree, now also applies to locations. Previously only the administrator could alter a location, for example to correct a spelling mistake. Now any user can update a location that user created, or which the user has

been explicitly granted permission to update. In other words, you can correct your own spelling mistakes, or update the geographic coordinates of a location you created.

Census Database Enhancements

The pages that report the results of a search of the database, and the completion of an update of a page now include a link to the page for requesting a search in the page header and footer.

Clicking on the button to reset a census page edit to default values now uses the contents of the last line of the previous page to determine the initial values for some columns, for example family number, surname, birthplace, and religion in the form. This facilitates filling in forms in the case where the original enumerator entered the values for the first line of the page as "ditto".

Vital Statistics Enhancements

The vital statistics section of the web-site previously only supported Canadian provincial statistics. Several characteristics of the underlying design imposed this restriction. In particular the tables which actually record births, marriages, and deaths already use a 4-character domain identifier consisting of an ISO 3166-1 2-character country code, for example 'US' for the United States of America, followed by a 2-character state or province code to identify an administrative domain within a federal state. The postal administrations of the three countries in North America all define unique 2-character state or province codes[1]. The supporting tables for identifying counties within a state or province, and towns and townships within a county, are now enhanced to support defining these subordinate administrative zones for any country in order to maintain consistent identification. The hierarchy of web pages is also redesigned to permit displaying appropriate links in the page header and footer. For each supported country there is now a page at the top level with a name of the form "GenCC.html" where "CC" is an ISO 3166-1 2-character country code.

The link to the table of counties for a state or province is now displayed in the top page for the state or province. In general these lists of counties are not populated.

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[1] Canada Post codes for provinces and territories, US Postal Service codes for states and territories, Mexican postal codes.

Bug Fixes

- New styles `input.maleerror`, `input.femaleerror`, and `input.unknownerror` are added to properly format names with syntax errors in edit dialogs.

- The script used by the Users Master List dialog to delete a user is renamed to `deleteUserXml.php` to clarify that it returns an XML document and is invoked using AJAX.

- A number of Javascript files independently created an associative array from the list of arguments passed with a page URL, even though the shared code for initializing a new page performed this function on behalf of all scripts. The unnecessary duplications were removed, but some of the dependent code also needed to be corrected to reference the argument names in lower case, so the case of the actual arguments did not have to exactly match what the code originally expected.

- The edit family page did not correctly handle surnames containing an apostrophe, for example "O'Brien".

- The dynamic script `showAddedIndividuals.js` is changed to use the common code for displaying a dialog, The common code ensures that both the Display and Visibility CSS style attributes are set.

- There was temporarily a problem with displaying the response to the server script `getLocationXml.php` as a result of the changes to popup dialog management.

- More female given names were added to the table for determining the sex of an individual.

- A new validation routine was added to determine whether the syntax of a URL is valid when a field is changed. This is used primarily by the support for images and recordings.

- The button for deleting a death registration transcription erroneously invoked the script `deleteBirthRegXml.php`.

- There was a temporary problem with the edit townships dialog that the Prov argument passed with the URL did not work.

- The 'Code' column, used to identify the unique identifier of the town, village, or township, as opposed to the external identifier, was not read-only for casual visitors.

- The 'Delete' button, used to remove a town, village, or township from a county, was not disabled for casual visitors.

- When the user clicks on the button to choose a specific individual in the popup dialog initiated by clicking on the Find button in a census page line the "Clear" button is only added if it is not already present.

- The census form dynamic logic assumed that `document.getElementById` returned `undefined` if the identifier is not found on the page. It returns `null`.

- The Query Surnames response page returned too many surnames on subsequent pages, and the backward and forward links were not hidden when at the beginning or end of the list of

surnames. A `Columns=` argument is added to the script to permit controlling the number of columns of names displayed at a time.