# Brandon Workshop

**April 18, 2015**

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## SOLUTIONS FOR A NEW WAY OF DOING GENEALOGY

Searching MGS Indexes use to require travelling to the MGS Resource Centre on Winnipeg. Even the few researchers who knew of all of the approximately 80 MGS Indexes rarely searched all of them. Most would check a couple of the largest on MGS computers.

Now from the comfort of your home you will be able to search all of them.

### PERSONAL COMPUTING

MANI does not need special software installed on your computer. You search using your web browser.

Even the Pay-per-View function to view content pages from the books and the pdf data sheets for cemeteries only need the free pdf reader that most people already have.

This provides access to the indexes as well as enhanced content from you home computer.

MANItoba
The **MA**nitoba **N**ame **I**ndex

Welcome To MANI
a project of the
Manitoba Genealogical Society

## Discovering you ancestors In Manitoba Resources.

With already over 700,00 entries ( there are another 500,000 being prepared for uploading) MANI is changing the way we do genealogical research in Manitoba. MANI will soon reach 1.5 million items in it's indexes.

Some of the largest MGS Index collections, the ones most often searched in-house, were still divided between many Access databases and you needed to search each one separately. MANI searches all of the databases at once.

MANI includes:

- Indexes for almost 1,400 MGS Cemetery Transcriptions
- Indexes for Obituaries from both rural and Winnipeg papers
- an index of "Generations" along with a digitized repository of all issues
- indexes of B,M,D from publications and newspapers
- MGS indexes created from local histories published without an index.
- Indexes to miscellaneous publications of interest to genealogists

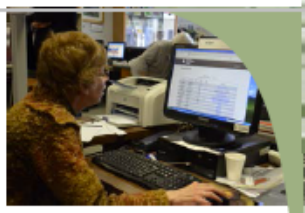
MANI is an ongoing project and it will grow to include indexes from other books and publications as they are identified and indexed by volunteers.

We are working cooperatively with the Manitoba Historical Society and you will find link to MHS cemetery descriptive pages for cemeteries in Manitoba. This is part of their Historic sites of Manitoba Project. Each cemetery page has a location map for the cemetery as well as photographs and text where they are available. In return MGS is supplying them with information for cemeteries that we have located but they do not have in their system yet. They will have a link on their pages back to MGS for purchase of transcriptions from MGS

Manitoba Genealogical Society Inc.

# What first-time Users really need to know.

## We asked volunteers who have been using MANI



*MANI in use at MGS*

## PRINCIPLES FOR SEARCHING SUCCESS

If you are not finding what you are searching for try entering just the first initials or reducing the number of first names you have entered. If the name is unique enter a last name or even a first name only.

Keep the check box checked for *"include entries with no year values"* to include those items without dates associated with them. Many local history and other publication do not include a date.

Narrow down results by removing the check mark and entering date ranges.

Do not include titles (Dr or Rev) as they may not be included in the index.

If you might be using a nick-name try using the proper name.

Try using a nick name. Some individuals never used their legal names.

You can sort you results by any column, such as first name, by clicking on that column header. If you click again it will reverse the sort.

If you are looking for particular information you can enter text or a date in the column box to filter for only those records containing that information.

There is also a search box at the upper right of the search results that will search in all columns.

What are the missing pieces in MANI? As members use MANI we receive feature requests for additions and changes to the way MANI works. Some of the changes can be accommodated in the current cycle of improvements while others require a much larger change to the database and will have to wait for a future upgrade.

Working with MANI has some limitations and the Volunteers that have been using MANI have come up with suggestions on how to get the most out of it.

Keep a list of what you have searched and the results. As MANI grows you will want to redo your searches to look for new leads.

Future upgrades will include search tools like Soundex and exact search choices. You will be able to select just what tables you are searching to narrow down the range to just cemeteries. In the current version you can do the same by entering ct for Cemetery Transcription in the TypeCode box at the top of the column. As the search for C for Census would return all codes containing c you can then click on the column header to sort the results to separate them.

You can apply more than one filter to narrow down your search. For example you might filter by c and a first name.

Remember to clear all of the filter boxes to expand your search back to all results. At the bottom left of the search results MANI shows the number of records being currently being shown filtered from the total entries for your initial search.

Because the system looks for any match to what you enter you can enter just part of names etc. This will help if there are various common spellings

Remember to check the link. They open in a new window so you do not lose your search results and provide additional information not shown in the search results. For example Census links show most of the columns transcribed from the census form.

## "TO IMPROVE MANI YOU MUST ACTIVELY TAKE THE REINS"

Do you know of an index that should be in MANI?

Do you know of a publication that does not have an index? Are you willing to index that publication?

With your help MANI will continue to grow. Many tasks have already been identified. These range from re-reading and updating the many cemeteries that were last read in the 1970's and 80's to negotiating with the owners of information that could be included in MANI.

MANI will ultimately be what you make it. The possibilities are almost unlimited.

# Technology for Manitoba Searching

MANI started life as the MGS "Data Project" in 2010. It evolved not only into updating hardware and infrastructure at the MGS Resource Centre but locating and organizing the digital files. We quickly realized that there were no electronic copy of much of the MGS produced material. This was a result of various technology used in the almost 40 years that MGS has been creating unique Manitoba material. After all manual typewriters didn't have a floppy drive!
We have acquired a high speed page scanner that allows us to scan paper copies and then convert that information into digital files.
These files have to be checked and in many cases reformatted to meet our current standards. The final files are proof read before they are prepared and uploaded into our Network file storage and in many cases uploaded into MANI.
Digitizing documents and creating indexes is just one part of managing our resources. In order to make the information available online to our members we had to create a new database and website..
Since the Fall of 2012 we have been working with a series of student teams from Red River College's Buisness Information Technology program. The students have created a unified database that will eventually include all of our indexes. We have now hit the point where we had to move off of the college's student server and we are now on a server host by a Winnipeg service provider. This allows us to add additional functionality that was not possible while we were hosted on the student server.
We will be adding a MGS Membership module that will allow you to join MGS and it's branches or renew your membership online. It will also track your membership and allow MGS to manage your preferences and renewals. This system will also track the credits you purchase for the Pay-per-view feature on the site.
In order to handle the financial transactions on the site we will be adding an e-Commerce module. This will allow us to accommodate financial transactions that include processing memberships to purchases of MGS publications and pay-per-view credits.
MGS will be launching an e-Newsletter that will help MGS communicate more effectively with it's members and fill in the gap between issues of "Generations" The e-Newsletter will also allow MGS to quickly get information to you. Both the e-Newsletter and "Generations digital distribution will be handled by the Membership module.

## Q&A Technology Tips

### Q: Why can't I access MANI and create an account

A: When creating an account in MANI the system compares what you enter to what was entered in the MGS Membership database when you registered or updated your Information with MGS. The system matches key data from your account and rejects the application if there is not a match. This is to protect your privacy.
If you need help in getting set-up in MANI send an e-mail to Webmaster@mbgenealogy.com
Even if there is a match and you are successful in setting up a MANI account, The account has to be activated manually by the MANI administer currently.
A MANI account is available to any MGS member in good standing and it will terminate if your MGS membership expires.

## Rural Members

One of the early aims of the project was to make the resources of the MGS available to all of our members. It was decided that an online database would not only be a benefit to our rural members but hopefully attract new members. A system that not only allowed searching of the indexes, but also would provide links to the actual pages from the document on a pay-per-view basis was also envisioned.

As more local histories become available online MANI will also link to digital copies of the indexed items where possible.

## Funding MANI

The MANI project is wholly funded from sources outside the MGS budget. In fact some items traditionally in the base budget are being covered as part of the project.

We thank the following for funding:

- The Winnipeg Foundation
- Heritage Grants Program, Government of Manitoba
- Winnipeg Scottish Association
- MGS Capital Campaign with donations from members like you
- the Southeast and Winnipeg Branch MGS

Fees from Pay-per-View will offset the cost of running the MANI system in the future.

# Future upgrades

## MGS Membership Module.

We will be adding a MGS Membership module that will allow you to join MGS and its branches or renew your membership online. It will also track your membership and allow MGS to manage your preferences and renewals. This system will also track your credits you purchase for the Pay-per-view feature on the site.

## e-Commerce System

In order to handle the financial transactions on the site we will be adding an e-Commerce module. This will allow us to accommodate financial transactions that include processing memberships to purchases of MGS publications and pay-per-view credits.

Non members will also be able to purchase Research services from MGS Volunteer Researchers.

## New Sources Indexed

Almost on a weekly basis members are identifying indexes or other content that can be included in MANI.

In a future phase we will add unique tables to MANI to accommodate information that does not fit in the current ones. This will allow us to expand what we include in MANI

## Cemetery Re-reading and Updating

As most of the MGS Cemeteries Transcriptions were done in the 1970s and 80s we plan to update all of our almost 1,400 cemeteries. Several Branches have already started this process.

We have already updated a number of cemeteries and will continue to add the new information collected into MANI.

## Indexes to restrictive content.

We are negotiating with content owners to get approval to include indexes for content we do not own the rights to. This would greatly expand the information in MANI.

## Pay-per-View Content.

MANI users will be able to purchase credits for MANI and use them to get digital copies (pdf) of the document pages linked in MANI. The first area that will come online will be Cemetery Transcripts. When you find a cemetery listing in MANI you will be able to select to purchase a copy of the page from the transcription that the content is located on. You will also have a link to purchase the complete Cemetery Transcription if you prefer. The number of documents with Pay-per-View will be expanded to include other types of publications in the future.

## Digital Repository for MGS publications.

We are making progress on scanning all of our MGS magazine "Generations". The digital pdf copies will be accessible to members who either want to look back at them or find a link to a person of interest that they found in the MANI index of Generations.

The pdf files are searchable.

## Enhanced MGS Communication System.

We are looking at a number of ways to improve our communication with our members. We will be launching a e-Newsletter that will allow for speedy communication with our members.

We are revamping our web site to update the design and add features for our members. We will be working with Branches to enhance Branch sub-webs.

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