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Introduction

Reunion 6 includes an electronic manual, not a printed manual. We believe that we have created the finest electronic help and documentation system to date -- a superior, friendly, fast, and effective way to answer your questions and help you learn about Reunion.

Do I need to be "on line" in order to get help?

No. The new Reunion manual uses your browser (Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer), but in a "local" fashion -- meaning it is **not** necessary to be connected to the Internet in order to get help or view the manual. In other words, the browser reads the text and images from your hard disk or from a CD -- **not** through an Internet connection.

Why doesn't the AOL browser work properly with Reunion?

Unfortunately, AOL modified (some would say crippled) its browser to the extent that it's impossible for Reunion to automatically open the AOL browser to the correct help pages. If you use the AOL browser, you'll have to get Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer. Fortunately, both are free and [readily available](#).

Why did you decide to use a browser for viewing the manual?

- With the growth in popularity of the Internet, browsers are among the most widely used application programs. In fact, a growing number of people are using browsers more than **any** other application program. People are using browsers for news, sports, shopping, information gathering, research, communications, etc. We decided to take advantage of this ubiquity in the same way that Reunion has always used your word processor for text reports.
- Browsers are **free**.
- If you are reading this page, you already know how to use a browser.

How can I make it easier to read text in a browser?

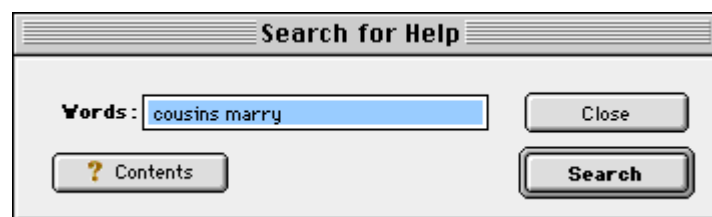
1. First, make sure the **font size** is big enough to read!
2. Second, if you haven't already done so, you should experiment with different **fonts** in your browser. Unfortunately, modern browsers ship with **Times** as the default font. The problem is that **Times** is difficult to read on screen! Try **Stone Sans** or **Palatino** for the "Proportional Font." You'll be glad you did. In addition, your text color should be set to **black**.

When I'm using Reunion and I need help, what do I do?

In Reunion, you initiate a request for help in one of three ways:

- clicking a **?** button
- using the **Help** menu
- pressing Command-?

A simple window appears where you type some key words and click a **Search** button. It's an interface very similar to online search engines like Excite, Lycos, AltaVista, Hotbot, etc. -- but without blinking graphics or animated advertisements.



The results of your search for help are quickly summarized and sorted using a model similar to the results provided by the better internet search engines.



Why isn't there a regular Index in the new Manual?

Reunion 6 uses a better, faster system which is more likely to find the help you seek. It's much more efficient than picking up a book and dragging your eyes across hundreds of alphabetized words.

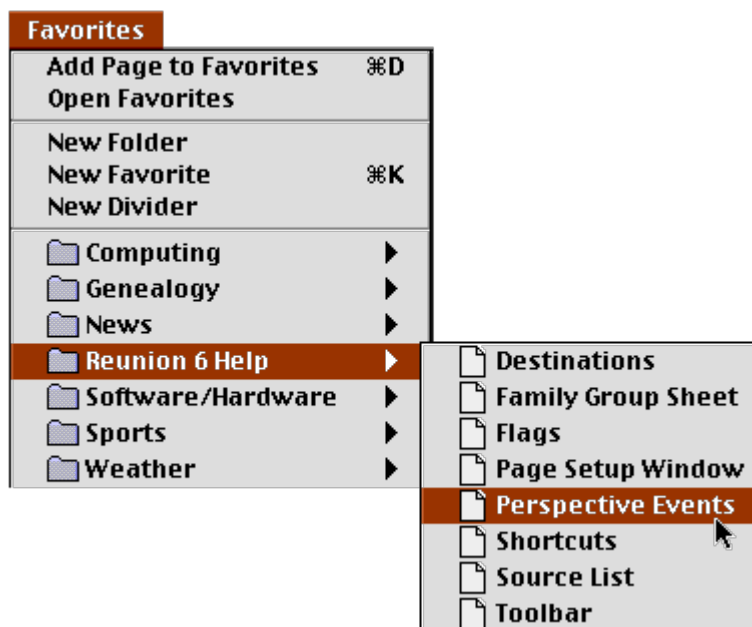
Internally, Reunion keeps track of every important word in the entire manual. When you search for help, Reunion finds all the manual pages containing the keywords you specified for your search. The more words you enter, the more your search is narrowed and focused.

Reunion sorts all the matches according to their relevance, and returns a list of the top 25 "hits." As you can see in the example above, the "results" provide the linked title of the manual page, the subtopic, and a portion of the actual text from the manual, to help you decide which link to follow. It looks and feels much like the Internet search engines we all use, although much faster and without any advertisements or distracting animations.

If your browser is already open, all of this happens in seconds!

I like to "dogear" pages. How do I accomplish that?

You can create bookmarks/favorites in your browser. (Some of these are already included in Reunion's **Help** menu.)



Do you plan to create a printed manual for version 6 or future versions?

No.

Why didn't you create an electronic manual AND a printed manual?

Because the two systems are structured, designed, and authored in completely different ways. A printed manual takes months of preparation. So does an electronic manual. It's impossible to take one format and stuff it into the other. We feel that the new electronic manual **exceeds** the utility of a printed manual. Otherwise, we would have scrapped the idea and reverted to a printed manual.

Do you plan to create a PDF version of the manual?

No. See below.

Why didn't you use PDF?

In our opinion, the primary function of PDF files is to provide a cross-platform file format suitable for high-resolution printing. PDF is great when you need to send a floorplan to somebody, or perhaps when you need a substitute for a FAX. However, our goal was to provide an **on-screen** manual. Here are some other reasons...

1. Opening and scrolling through PDF files is much slower than working with HTML files in your browser.
2. PDF files require Adobe Acrobat Reader -- an application less used and less understood than a browser.
3. PDF files rely on a reader application from a single vendor, Adobe.
4. PDF files can't be indexed in a manner which permits flexible seaching, such as the type of logical AND searches used in Reunion's electronic manual (and those used by the better Internet Search Engines) where word order is immaterial to the search. To our knowledge, PDF also doesn't support more advanced search

- technology such as word stemming and relevancy ranking.
5. PDF files do not typically encourage or support non-linear reading and learning.
 6. Did you ever try to select and copy text in a PDF file? Or change the font size?
 7. PDF has less on-screen versatility than HTML. For example, when you resize your window, PDF text does not reflow to support different size windows. Rather, PDF could be described as a "picture" of a printed page.
 8. PDF files are much larger than HTML files. As Apple Human Interface Group founder [Bruce Tognazzinni](#) puts it... "...PDF has never really blossomed even into the kind of limited tool that HTML...has, and PDF has a propensity for turning 1K documents into 100K documents..."

Why didn't you include a PDF version along with the HTML version?

Our goal was to provide a great **on-screen** help and documentation system. PDF's strength is in printed output. It's weakness is on-screen viewing -- just the opposite of our priority. In a nutshell, the entire manual would require restructuring and reformatting in order to create a PDF manual.

It's not very difficult to create PDF versions of documents that are designed to be printed. But it's an entirely different matter to create a PDF version of a document that is **not** designed to be printed.

Further, many complain about the time and resources required to print numerous pages from any PDF file, and the resulting stack of loose sheets of paper.

I hate online documentation! I've never seen an online manual that I liked.

The truth is that we have never liked any online manual or help system -- until we created the system that accompanies Reunion 6. We believe that we have done a superior job in implementing our electronic manual and search engine. To reiterate, we feel that the new manual **exceeds** the utility of a printed manual. It finds answers faster, more accurately, and in a more "helpful" fashion.

Like you, we have seen lots of lousy online help systems, and we have learned from the shortcomings of others. We ask that you keep an open mind and avoid deploring what you haven't taken the time to test drive.

In Reunion 6, when you run into a problem or need additional information, you can find what you need very quickly and easily. There's no more interruption to your work flow than a printed manual demands. In fact, there is **less** interruption. No need to page slowly through each and every unimportant area to find what is being sought. You simply tell Reunion what you need help with (such as "**adopted children**," "**linking spouses**," "**leap years**," etc.), and Reunion will instantly bring the answers to you.






Can you browse the manual, just to get ideas about using the software?

Yes! We understand that many people use documentation not just to find out how to do the task of the moment, but to discover things you didn't know you wanted to do -- to get ideas about features you weren't aware of. Reunion's documentation is neatly cross-referenced, encouraging non-linear avenues to exploring the features. Instead of seeing "[see page 34.2 for more information on marking cards](#)," the new manual simply underlines the word "[marking](#)" and you can click the word to get more detail on marking cards -- if you desire. Cross referencing also eliminates the need for redundant definitions in the documentation.

How can you learn about new features in version 6 without a printed guide?

Easy. Just open Reunion and choose **Help -> New Features**.

What other benefits are provided by the electronic manual?

-  **The manual is visually appealing** with tasteful use of color images, text, graphics, and captions. We applied the same design skills and philosophy to this manual that we used to create Reunion, SuperChart, and all previous highly-acclaimed printed Reunion manuals.
-  You can **open multiple pages and topics** simultaneously.
-  **The manual can easily and instantly be updated.** When we post maintenance updates on our Web site, it's simple to include a manual updater too. You can download and run the manual updater, and you have up-to-date documentation. This benefit also lets us create **new** material and examples based on feedback from users. If somebody tells us they had trouble finding help on a particular item, we can implement changes for the next maintenance update to make sure the next user won't stumble over a similar roadblock. We have already implemented such changes in [maintenance updates 6.01 and 6.02](#).
-  **Information in the manual is linked** to related Internet resources on our site and other sites. For example, instead of mentioning Epson's Web site for updated print drivers, we include a link that takes you there. Also, the manual provides links for genealogical resources, such as information about the calendar systems, etc.
-  **Portable.** You can specify where the manual is located. You can leave it on the CD to conserve hard disk space; you can put it on a removable disk (such as a ZIP disk for the road); you can install it on your PowerBook for traveling; you can put it in the Reunion folder on your hard disk. You never need to look for a misplaced manual.

It seems that the system requirements are greater, since I need to use Reunion AND a browser when viewing the manual.

That is true. To use Reunion and view the documentation simultaneously, your Macintosh must have enough memory to run Reunion **and** your browser at the same time. The amount of memory required depends mainly on the browser (and the particular version of the browser).

Do the increased system requirements ask too much of Reunion users?

Not now, when...

- places like [RAMJET](#) and others sell 32 MB of memory for \$50
- for more than a year, Apple's iMac has been one of the [best-selling](#) personal computers. This "entry level" system includes at least 32 MB of RAM, a 6 GB hard disk, a CD ROM drive, and 800x600 display with millions of colors. (Note that 10 software titles are bundled with new iMacs, including AppleWorks, FAXstf, Quicken Deluxe 98, Kai's Photo Soap, PageMill, and five others. No printed documentation is included for these 10 programs.)

In a time when Apple's most inexpensive system is the incredibly fast and capable iMac, and when the iMac is Apple's best-selling computer system in the history of the company, we simply can't ignore the changing environment. That doesn't mean we expect every long-time Mac user to buy a G3 or iMac. But it is reasonable, indeed prudent, for any software developer to heed the changing composition of the Macintosh user base.

How can I view Reunion and the manual at the same time?

Instead of seeing Reunion on-screen and the manual in your lap or next to the keyboard, you'll need to flip the **screen** back-and-forth from Reunion to your browser.

Before System 8.5, this was accomplished via the **Application** menu, or with a click of the mouse.

System 8.5 makes it easier, with a larger **Application** menu, a tear-off **Application** menu, and (finally) a built-in keyboard shortcut for application switching: Command-Tab.

Some people use QuicKeys to achieve the same application switching keyboard shortcut. QuicKeys works with older system software too.

Fortunately, since 800x600 is the standard monitor resolution for new Macs, there is more room on-screen for both manual and Reunion to appear (overlapping or side-by-side).

Can I modify the manual? Can I add notes and comments to the manual like in a paper manual?

Yes. When the manual is installed on a hard disk, you can add, modify, or customize pages using an HTML or text editor.

Is an electronic manual more difficult for new users?

In most cases, no -- because typical new computer users don't like a program which requires them to read a thick manual. That scares them. They generally prefer to double-click the software and start playing with it. You can certainly do that with Reunion. It is very easy to understand, to get "up-and-running." Reunion's reputation was built because it is easy to use for the beginner, yet sophisticated enough for those who need power -- not because it had a good manual.

Are you looking for feedback on the electronic manual?

Of course! There is always room for improvement and we welcome your constructive suggestions. We want to improve the electronic manual, just as we have always strived to improve Reunion itself.

Comments from users and reviewers...

"When Reunion v. 6 was introduced, I thought I wanted a printed manual as well. My chief concern was that I would not retain information read from the screen; I felt I needed a book and printed index I could leaf through. After working with the electronic manual, I am surprised that my retention level is higher than when I used v. 5 with a printed manual. I attribute this to learning to do things "hands-on." Also, the printed index did not always point me to the section I wanted because I wasn't looking for the specific term the index used. The Search function in the electronic manual is keyed to many terms and, in my opinion, is much easier to use than the printed version."

"...just released Reunion 6, an even better genealogy program. Among its innovations is a remarkable HTML-based help system that replaces the old manuals."

"...the help is linked and cross referenced in several different ways. There have not been any cases when I couldn't find the answer to a question, even if the answer was that the feature was not available."

"Intuitive interface, excellent help and tutorial, perfectly suited for beginners and professionals."

[New Features in Reunion 6](#) / [Reunion 6 Page](#) / [Reunion Home Page](#)

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