

## Adding New Magic to RootsMagic

Sometimes it's better to renovate, and sometimes it's better to take down the old house and build a new one in its place. In the upcoming release 4 of the popular RootsMagic genealogy software, the structure will look familiar, but inside the walls the house will be humming.

RootsMagic prime developer Bruce Buzbee, who will speak to the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group at the November 8 meeting, got so enthused about the new build of the software that he started a blog ([blog.rootsmagic.com](http://blog.rootsmagic.com)) in July. Post by post, he has announced new features that will emerge in RootsMagic 4, due for release by the end of 2008. Thousands of curious RootsMagic users follow each announcement.

Buzbee will unveil the release to SVCGG at the November 8 meeting, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., at the Quince Avenue chapel in Santa Clara, California. (See directions on the back page, and at [www.svcgg.org](http://www.svcgg.org).)

"We've never had an upgrade anywhere near this big," Buzbee explains. "This is an order of magnitude bigger than any previous upgrade." The development team has been working on the upgrade for three years.

"What I'm working on right now is the last of the reports," Buzbee explains. "Then fixing



bugs that the beta testers have found—we've had our beta testers hammering on it." Finding and fixing bugs is standard for any new software release, and is an indication that the functionality of the software is being tested thoroughly before it is released to the public.

Buzbee's presentation November 8 will provide several firsts for the users group. Not only will it be the first look at the new release of RootsMagic, but it will be the first demonstration of how the new generation of genealogy software will interface with the newFamilySearch program being rolled out in geographic increments by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS).

The newFamilySearch program incorporates the various databases held by the LDS Church into a pedigree structure built by the users. It has been opened to LDS members by geographical area for testing

and development, and will become available to the public. Major genealogy software packages such as RootsMagic are being configured to interact directly with newFamilySearch.

The new release of RootsMagic, which has involved a complete rewrite of the software, will include innovative features in a familiar look-and-feel environment. Not only is RootsMagic 4 being written in a different programming language than prior versions, but it also employs a new database engine. It also will be possible for developers to write tools for RootsMagic 4. These changes will "allow more flexibility down the road," says Buzbee.

After 18 years of genealogy software development, Buzbee says he is getting a feel for what will excite users. For example, RootsMagic 4 will provide DNA support for both mitochondrial and Y chromosome information—a change users find excit-

ing, even though relatively few are likely to use it. Another new feature will be "shared" events, or witnessed events, which can be added to multiple persons but not necessarily applied to an entire family.

Some changes are designed just to make the program easier to use, such as changes in the print preview process of report generation. Users will be able to email a report directly with the click of a button from inside the program. Additionally, the program will create PDF or rich text files for attachment to email, without the users having to know how to generate those types of files. This feature will be popular with "a big chunk of users," Buzbee predicts.

Other features include Unicode support, and a shareable CD feature that allows the software to run from a CD without requiring software installation. This popular feature also was in version 3.

Buzbee and his team of programmers have been working long days to wrap up the final tweaks to the release. In the final weeks before the release, Buzbee will continue to use his blog somewhat like an advent calendar, to tantalize users with final announcements of what may be the most popular features.