DNA for your ONS: Pros and Cons of Adding DNA to Your One-Name Study

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Adding DNA to your one-name study is an opportunity to make discoveries beyond the paper records. The foundation of your ONS is your research in various record sources. DNA is another source for research — one that can often clear up puzzling questions, generate surprising discoveries, help sort out multiple trees in the same location, or provide a direction for further research.

DNA seems too difficult and complex

When I first visited the Family Tree DNA website in 2000, that was exactly my conclusion, so I bookmarked the site, put it on my someday list, and moved on. It was only in 2001 — with the unexpected death of my brother, the last known male in my family tree — that I had to act, or there would be no point to ever having a project. My project turned out to be the most interesting aspect of my ONS, and I made discoveries that I could never have done from the paper records alone.

DNA testing for genealogy isn't that difficult or complex, and you don't need a science background. Learning about DNA testing is actually less difficult than figuring out some of the record sources we deal with.

Concern about the time required

DNA testing is like any other record source: you decide the time you want to invest. The most important aspect of getting a DNA project now is to get your registered surnames. Each month, as more people around the world who are not Guild members start projects, Guild-registered surnames are placed in projects. Your recourse then is for me to negotiate a role for you in the project, such as Co-Admin, or, if your surnames don't fit with the other surnames in the project, to try to negotiate an extraction of your surnames.

Recruiting participants

The one aspect of a DNA project that seems to concern people the most is asking other persons to take a DNA test. The first one you ask is always the hardest, and after that it keeps getting easier. You do not need to pay for the test kits, though providing paid test kits makes recruiting easier. Usually for your tree you will provide paid test kits for two distant males. One way to offer paid test kits for other participants is to raise donations. Perhaps several people in a family tree will contribute to test one — or ideally two — males for the tree. Persons in migration destination countries, such as the USA, are an excellent source of funding to test persons in the UK. Some projects run by USA persons have thousands of dollars in donations, and they need to solve the issue of finding UK persons. No matter where you are located, your project is global and you can raise donations anywhere and test anywhere you find a willing participant who is relevant to your ONS.

The negative to raising donations through the Family Tree DNA donation system (which is very easy to use since it takes credit cards) is that currently these funds cannot be used to order discounted kits through the Guild. The option then is for the payee or multiple payees to pay the Guild directly. You simply initiate the order. Write Teresa Pask at: **dna-kit-order@one-name.org**.

Everyone is related

Perhaps there is the belief that everyone with the surname is related, so there is no point to DNA testing. Supporting your genealogical research with DNA testing would benefit your ONS and it could be very interesting and might lead to surprising discoveries.

Reason to act now

If you have any family trees with only one or a few surviving males, that makes the situation pretty urgent. If you don't get someone tested for that tree while you have an opportunity, the opportunity could be gone forever.

Steps to a successful project

If you decide to take the plunge and add a DNA project to your ONS, it will be very easy. You first check if any of your registered surnames are in a project. Search the surnames at this link in the box that says 'Project Search' above it: **https://www.familytreedna.com/surname-search-results. aspx?**

Then write to the DNA Advisor, **DNA@one-name.org**. If your surnames aren't in any projects, the following will happen:

1. The DNA Advisor requests your project.

2. Family Tree DNA establishes your project.

3. The DNA Advisor gets credentials and uses these to create a user ID and password for your project.

4. The DNA Advisor sets up your project. This includes using proven marketing text for the DNA project profile and DNA project website, as well as selecting standard options. You will be able to change anything. Your project is set up to meet Guild standards and the Guild logo at Family Tree DNA is turned on.

5. You will receive an easy 20-step 'getting started' email and your user ID and password. You can change

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the password if you so desire. Just do the 20 steps, which include education, and you are on your way to success. If you are pressed for time, do one step a day or one step a week. Once you have protected your registered surnames you proceed at your own speed. Ideally, after you do your 'getting started' email, your first priority is to recruit males for those trees with only one or a few surviving males, as well as to test two distant males in your own tree.

6. You learn as you go and encounter different situations. This includes how to interpret results. In addition, the DNA Advisor is available for questions and consultation, and the Forum is available to post questions.

If any or all of your surnames are in an existing DNA project, also write to the DNA Advisor. The existing project will be investigated, to determine the best course of action.

If an extraction of your surnames is the best course of action, you will be asked to write a short document or brief on your surnames. This is to provide information to be used in negotiations as to why your surnames aren't variants of the other surnames in the existing project. I have received many excellent briefs from Guild members, and it makes the extraction negotiations fast, easy, and most importantly, successful.

If extraction is not an option, then a role is negotiated for you with the project. You decide what you want, and the DNA Advisor negotiates to achieve this outcome. Perhaps you only want to recruit UK persons, or you don't have time now, and want a role and access to the data in the project, and will provide suggestions or leads from your research to help the project administrator recruit.

Or do it on your own
You also always have the option of going forth on your own, whether it is setting up a project or negotiating a role in an existing project, or negotiating a surname extraction. ■