



**25 Scrivener Hacks  
Every Genealogist Should Know**

**LisaAlzo.com**

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**Scrivener** by Literature and Latte (<http://www.literatureandlatte.com>) is a multifunctional project management tool that can help genealogists and family historians collect and organize all types of information from research notes to family photographs and oral history interviews, to books, recipes, and more. Scrivener is writing software designed for writers, but it is much more than just a word processor. Scrivener can help anyone who works with words move seamlessly from idea to finished product.

Here are 25 “hacks” to help you make Scrivener your secret weapon to share your genealogy and family history, publish a blog, write that novel and more. Specific features and commands will differ depending on whether you use Scrivener for Mac or Scrivener for Windows users.

1. **Templates.** Use Scrivener’s built-in templates to easily set up your genealogy/family history writing projects (Nonfiction or the Blank Template often works best).
2. **Sync with Dropbox.** When creating a project, tell Scrivener to save your project to Dropbox. This will enable you to work on multiple computers by setting up folders to sync your projects in the Cloud. **NOTE: Using Sync with Dropbox is especially critical when you are using the Scrivener for iOS app on your iPhone or iPad (purchase separately from Apple App store for \$19.99). Save your projects in the Apps [Scrivener] Folder in Dropbox.**
3. **Customize your toolbar.** Keep the features you use most often right on your toolbars. Mac Users: Either Right click (or use two fingers on the touchpad) in the toolbar area and select Customize Toolbar; or go to View > Customize Toolbar. You will see a box appear with many options (icons). Use drag and drop to add or remove icons. Windows Users: Choose Tools > Customize Toolbars, then select from Format Bar or Main Toolbar. Use the “Available Toolbar Actions” Window and the arrows to add or remove items in the “Current Toolbar Actions” window. Click “Apply” and select “OK”. Hit cancel if you change or mind, or Restore Defaults to reset your toolbars.
4. **File Conversion.** You can convert web pages and PDF files to text files using Documents > Convert.
5. **Customize the corkboard.** You can easily change the look of your corkboard and index cards (line/no lines), fonts, background, themes, etc. For Mac: Go to Scrivener > Preferences > Corkboard. For Windows: Go to Tools > Options > Corkboard.

6. **Use labels.** Personalize your virtual index cards with status labels (or colors).
7. **Assign multiple labels.** Ctrl-clicking on a multiple selection of documents allows you to assign a label or status to all of them at once.
8. **Open items quickly.** You can drag items from the binder in the editor header bar as another way of opening them.
9. **Increase text size for easy viewing.** You can use the zoom pop-up in the footer bar to increase text size instead of making the font bigger.
10. **Create your own templates.** Set up a blank project with your preferred keywords, labels etc. and then use “Save as Template” to use it as a base for new projects.
11. **Resize images.** If you need to resize any images you have inserted into your text you can double-click them to bring up the scale panel (Mac), or right-click the image and select “Edit Image” (Windows).
12. **Get a better view.** To stretch the window to fit the screen—On Mac: Use Window > Zoom to fit screen or (ctrl + cmd +=); On Windows go to View > Zoom In (Ctrl + =).
13. **Take out the trash.** To empty the Trash in Scrivener, right-click the Trash folder and choose “Empty Trash” from the contextual menu that appears. Just make sure you are ready to delete those files, because once you empty the Trash, they are gone for good!
14. **Go full screen.** To work in “full screen” mode, go to View > Full Screen (or use the F11 key for Windows; control + command + F on Mac). Hit the esc (escape) key to go back to normal view.
15. **Get control.** Move the cursor to the bottom of the screen in full screen to show the control panel, or the top of the screen for menus.
16. **Customize icons in your binder.** Right click on any icon and choose Change icon, or go to Documents and select Change icon. You can also change multiple icons at the same time by control clicking the icons you want.
17. **Easily export your project.** Compile and export all or part of your writing for different projects such as a text file to your word processor for final formatting, to publish to web, format for Kindle or ePub eBook, or export to PDF.
18. **Let your ideas flow with Scapple.** Like mind mapping? Consider trying Scapple (<http://www.literatureandlatte.com/scapple.php>) (also by Literature and Latte \$14.99; free trial available) - an easy-to-use tool for getting ideas down as quickly as possible and making connections between them. Use these two programs together for awesome family history writing!

19. **Spacing text on index cards.** When in corkboard mode and entering text on the index cards, if you want to add a space or two between items, hitting enter/return won't work. On Mac hold down the option key while hitting return; In Windows, use Shift + Enter.
20. **Before you edit a document, take a snapshot.** To access Snapshots, click on the icon that looks like a camera in the bottom of the inspector window (the section with the "i" icon at the top). To take a snapshot, click the + button in the upper right corner of the snapshots window. You will hear a click (like the sound of a camera click) and will have the option to title your snapshot. [Hint: If you plan on working with snapshots often, add it to the toolbar for easy access; see tip #3].
21. **Easily spot your snapshots.** A curled corner to a document icon indicates that it has a snapshot associated with it.
22. **Import files.** Scrivener lets you easily import files into your research folder (documents, web pages, and more). First, select the "Research" folder. Then, on choose File > Import > Files. Select your file and choose Import. This works the same on both Mac and Windows. Steps for importing webpages differ between the two platforms, so consult the Scrivener manual or tutorials for detailed instructions.
23. **Get around the "pay wall problem."** Pages that require a login (for example, a record behind a pay wall such as on Ancestry.com) won't work with Scrivener's Import feature. You have to copy and paste the content or save to your computer as a PDF or other file type before importing.
24. **Get help fast.** To quickly access the Scrivener manual, press F1 on your keyboard (Windows) or place your cursor over the Help command (Mac). The Help command also gives you access to the interactive tutorial, other video tutorials, forums, and more.
25. **Interact with other genealogists on Facebook.** For even more tips and resources, join the Scrivener for Genealogists Facebook page. You will need to have a Facebook account. Search for "Scrivener for Genealogists" and then submit a request to join the group and wait to be approved.