

ELLIS ISLE WEB SITE SWAMPED

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Body

On the very first day it opened to the public, a **Web site** that provides information on some 22 million immigrants who came through **Ellis** Island was inundated yesterday with an average of 27,000 hits a second.

Despite the overwhelming traffic, the **site** was expected to have successfully processed 8 million requests by midnight, said a spokeswoman for the newly opened American Family Immigration History Center on **Ellis** Island.

"We felt we were absolutely prepared for the big traffic," said Peg Zitko, director of communications for the Statue of Liberty-**Ellis** Island Foundation, which runs the center and the **Web site**. "We have a terabyte and a half of storage space, and I'm told that's a lot."

However, countless unlucky information seekers got this computer-generated message instead: "Due to an extraordinary number of visitors, we must limit access to the **site**. Please keep trying, or check back later."

The new **Web site**, www.ellislandrecords.org, contains the names of 22 million immigrants who arrived at the Port of New York between 1892 and 1924.

It also holds photographs of such documents as ship manifests listing immigrants' ages, ethnicities and hometowns, as well as artists' renderings of ships.

The **site** operates on 10 servers and can accommodate 100,000 users at a time, Zitko said. But the demand for family roots far exceeds the servers' capacity, and the **site** plans to add five more.

"After I tried at 8 in the morning and then a couple of more times until 8:30, I knew that I wasn't going to get in," said Virginia Cole, 39, a librarian in upstate Ithaca. "I'm not surprised. I think it's enormous to be able to actually see the original documents on your computer screen."

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