Well, I tried to import a Family Tree Maker 2010 Gedcom into my online data and ran into a few snags. This was to be expected. Before exporting I tried deleting a person and adding someone else. With FTM 16, deleting a person left an empty record which caused all the higher records to shift up when a Gedcom was created. Luckily, adding a person filled in that empty record which prevented this shift and unwanted renumbering.

FTM 2010 handles things differently. This information comes from trial and error; FTM doesn't document or even acknowledge the existance of record numbers. When I tried this deletion and addition in 2010 I found that FTM doesn't re-use the empty record. Instead it just creates a new record and ignores the old one. When I looked at the exported Gedcom, the new person had an INDI number of 19968, but FTM was telling me (correctly) that I still had 19967 people. This isn't so bad except for the fact that FTM still knows it has an empty record number. I even 'compacted' my tree to see if the empty record would be cleaned up. No dice. Suppose a future version, patch, update, or whatever decides to utilize those empty records and renumber half of my tree. The real problem is that FTM doesn't recognize the need for static record numbers.

As if record numbers weren't enough to worry about, FTM 2010 decided to make more changes to it's Gedcom export. In my previous article I discussed the resorting of Gedcoms from numeric to alphabetical. And when I uploaded the new Gedcom to my online genealogy I lost all of my picture links. It turns out FTM now exports Gedcoms without and leading zeros in the INDI number. I00001 is now I1. I06073 is now I6073. You and I can tell they are the same person, but my online database thinks they're different. So unless a person has an ID number of 5 digits, it changed when I updated. It won't take me too long to reconnect all my online pictures and articles, but past experience says this will probably change again in the future.

The bottom line is that every person with an ID number less that 5 digits just changed. You may not even notice (or even care) but if you've saved the direct link to a person, that ID number is in the url. You'll need to remove those leading zeros from the ID if you want the link to work.