Using Blogs to Share Family History Writing
Allen County Public Library
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Presenter: Craig Siulinski
Email: sharinglegacies@gmail.com
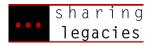**Website**: www.sharinglegacies.com

My **three main reasons** for why blogging is a great option for sharing family history:

1. SIMPLICITY. Posting articles on blogs is relatively simple to do. After knowing the basics, publishing content on blogs becomes routine. The real work is writing your content and choosing relevant images. Using the Blogger interface does not require a high degree of technical knowledge. When you do want to make changes or enhancements to your blog, or when you have puzzling platform questions, Blogger offers support with an organized menu of help options. Also, Blogger has a community forum.

2. SHARING. Once you press the publish button for each blog post, your family history is instantly shared to your chosen audience, public or private, and that content is then electronically preserved. The family history I shared on my blogs ten years ago is still accessible to my family and others. Having a blog allows for the writer of family history to share their content in smaller chunks and therefore is less overwhelming than full scale print projects.

3. CONNECTIONS. The commenting feature on every blog post allows for readers to add content in the form of additional information related to the topic of the blog post. Often, these comments come in the form of family history stories. This interactive feature that blogs provide is not possible on static websites.

BECOMING A BLOGGER

To create a blog on Blogger, you need to have an email account with Google (Gmail). Blogger is free which means you do not have to pay web hosting fees.

Family history writers can create multiple blogs, i.e., one for each family line, using the same Gmail account. Other Google applications link to that same email. An example of linked applications is using *Google Drive* and *Google Photos* to store research files and photos that relate to each of your blogs. Access these applications by signing in to your Gmail account and clicking on the *nine-dots* icon in the upper right corner of the Gmail panel.

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THE BASICS

A genealogy blog provides a way to document, share and ultimately preserve one's research and/or one's family history. Some genealogy blogs are used as a platform to educate about the practice of genealogy by sharing tips and techniques.

The three main components of a blog are the *post* (text with images), the *header* (title and description) and the *side bar* which has relevant information that shows on every blog post. Another component that makes a blog particularly unique is *comments* which allows readers to respond to the theme of the post by adding comments and stories.

Each blog post should include related citations and source references. The last step before finishing a blog post is adding *labels* that act as a sort of index to the article. Labels are relevant keywords that allow readers to find specific content on the blog. If you set your blog's privacy setting to Public, then the labels act as connectors to your blog. When someone does a keyword search on the internet, they can find your blog…and they could be a new family connection!

TWO KEY DECISIONS TO MAKE BEFORE PUBLISHING

1. **Privacy Setting**
   The three options are:
   - Public - open to all
   - Private - only blog authors (if you want shared authorship)
   - Private - only specified readers that you choose

   If the Private setting is used, you can restrict your blog to only readers you choose *up to 100 people*. However, these readers will need to log in before reading your blog, adding an extra step. You can change the privacy setting at any time. For example, my first blog was set to private for only immediate family members, but later I changed it to public. The blog then became available to non-family members which allowed for a connection to happen with an individual who helped me get around one of my brick walls!

2. **Comments Setting**
   If the appropriate setting is checked in the blogger management area, the author can moderate comments as they are posted to the blog. The comments come in the form of emails. The author then chooses to PUBLISH, DELETE or move them to SPAM. Moderation allows for strict control of what gets posted as comments.

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BASICS FOR CREATING A BLOG ON THE BLOGGER PLATFORM

- Determine the area of content for your blog, i.e., an ancestor, a family line, a location
- *Or, create a blog that shares your genealogy research techniques and findings*
- Decide on a relevant (easy to remember) title
- Choose a template that visually presents the content of your blog according to your design preferences
- Write a passionate purpose statement that viewers will see when they visit your site. *The purpose statement is shown with the title in the header on the main page.*
- Decide on settings for Privacy and Comments
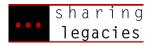

IS A BLOG RIGHT FOR YOU?
Respond to these questions:

- Do you have a subject in your family history that you are passionate about?
- Do you have an area of genealogy expertise that others could benefit from knowing?
- Do you like the idea of writing (and sharing) your family history in coordinated bits and pieces rather than trying to complete a full story from beginning to end?
- Do you like the idea of combining text with carefully selected images that showcase your family history stories topic by topic?
- Do you like the flexibility of being able to write content and share it out on your own schedule and decide when you want to write your next post?

CLOSING STATEMENTS

For reasons of simplicity, sharing and connecting, Blogger offers a great platform to share your family history. Here are more questions to help you decide on the content of your very own family history blog:

- ➢ What are you passionate about in sharing your family history?

- ➢ Which ancestor would be a compelling figure to write about?

- ➢ Which family line have you researched the most?

- ➢ Is there a location or particular time period from your family history that would make for interesting content to share with your family community?

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BLOGGING LINKS

Blogging History: https://themeisle.com/blog/history-of-blogging/

The Story of Blogging by Marko Saric: https://markosaric.com/what-is-a-blog-definition/

To create your own blog (DIY): https://tinyurl.com/24z28h3h

Myriad of Resources: https://geneabloggers.com/resources/

Daily Prompts: https://geneabloggers.com/genealogy-prompts/daily-prompts/

Printing your blog: https://www.blog2print.com/

Blogger Help Menus: https://support.google.com/blogger/?hl=en

Blogger Community Forum: https://support.google.com/blogger/community?hl=en

Creative Commons (*for selecting copyright-free images*): https://search.creativecommons.org/

Where to Find Blogs *(to follow)*

Geneabloggers: https://geneabloggers.com/members/

Feedly: https://feedly.com/i/discover/sources/search/topic/genealogy

Genealogy Blog Finder: http://blogfinder.genealogue.com/
This is a good resource to find blogs of interest and to look at sample purpose statements.

Unique and Different

"Lives of the Dead" by Michael Colbruno: http://mountainviewpeople.blogspot.com/

And *just for fun*…a blog post showcasing Ancestor Signatures: https://janasgenealogyandfamilyhistory.blogspot.com/p/my-ancestors-signatures.html

Craig's genealogy/family history blogs

August Legacy: http://augustlegacy.blogspot.com
Jack and Pauline: http://jackandpauline.blogspot.com

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