

# The Blog as a Genealogy Communication Tool Workshop

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This workshop will consider different uses of the Blog for genealogical purposes; create, via a step-by-step process, your own Blog on Blogger.com; and, show you several methods for information sharing and communication using your new Blog.

## What is a Blog?

A Blog is a website similar to an on-line journal. The name is derived from the term “web log”.

## Why Create a Family History Blog?

I think everyone would agree that one of our goals in doing genealogy is to write the story of our ancestors’ lives or at least document for the generations to come, our findings and conclusions. On the journey to create this “story” we will collect and organize information; share stories, documents, photos, etc., with other family members; hope others will share information with us; and, perhaps look for ways to digitally archive some of our information. A Blog provides the ability to do all these things while providing you with a presence on the Internet – and it is all FREE!

## Types of Family History Blogs

Family history blogs can take numerous approaches, some include: ancestral name; family groups; reunion planning; family newsletter; honoring military, religious, or an individual such as the immigrant ancestor; recording family recipes; family vacations; or can even be used as a private blog for ongoing research.

## Examples of Blog Posts

Information placed on a Blog post is only limited by your imagination and time. Some simple examples include text (obituaries, journal/diary entries, transcribed interviews, family stories, discussion of inconsistencies found); image (photos, maps, heirlooms); video (interview, photo slides, narrated); linked posts, linked Blogs and external links to name a few. Examples of these types of posts will be shown.

## Communication Methods

The focus of today’s workshop deals with various ways you can use a Blog to reach out and share information with others as well as how your presence on the Internet provides the means for other family members, both known and unknown to you, to locate you. One of our CAGGNI members has called this “cousin bait” -- an apropos name! We will touch on the following:

- Browsers and how to move your Blog higher up on the search results
- Using social sharing, e.g., Facebook, to increase your exposure and connect with family
- Sharing specific posts with particular individuals

- Two-way communication through “Comments” on each post
- Automatic emails
- Encouraging subscribers
- Joint authorship
- Really Simple Syndication (RSS)
- Totally private Blogs

### **How to create a New Blog**

To use Blogger.com you must have a Gmail account. We will walk through the process of creating a Blog for the first time, including signing up for Gmail. For those who bring their laptops, by the end of the session, you will have created your first Blog post. For information on how to create a Blog using Blogger.com (or for any other help using Blogger) go to Blogger.com’s help page at <http://support.google.com/blogger/>

### **Backend of the Blog**

Supporting the layout, posts, colors, fonts, comment moderation, updating, gadget adding, communication opportunities, etc., is a series of backend or dashboard operations. In particular, attention will be spotlighted on list of posts, list of comments, statistics overview, blog layout, templates and several of the unique Blog settings.

### **Gadgets**

A gadget is a portable chunk of code that can be installed and executed within any separate HTML-based web page by you without requiring additional compilation. I like to think of these as Blog “aps!” Although there are scores of them, we will cover five gadgets which are most useful and/or interesting and give you a flavor of what is possible.

- Text box
- Labels – which might be better called Search Terms
- Blog Search
- Popular Posts
- Counter

Blogs are easy to create, interesting to develop, free and, short of a full-blown website, might be the best way to share information with your family but certainly a great way for known and unknown cousins to find you and to keep in touch with new discoveries on your family tree.

Maybe a “cousin” will find you, through your Blog, who has the family bible you did not even know existed and it will contain the location in the “old country” where your ancestor is from. Now wouldn’t that be wonderful!

For more information about blogs visit <http://geneabloggers.com/> “the ultimate site for your genealogy blog.” Here you will be introduced to nearly 3,000 family history blogs. They will inspire you! For a look at my Blogs, go to [www.McIntyreGenealogy.com](http://www.McIntyreGenealogy.com), click on the “Blog” tab and from there you can view any of my family history Blogs.

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