# Using Social Media and Blogs for Genealogy

*By Ginny Gerber       September 7, 2019*

Social Media defined by Wikipedia: *"Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks."*

*http://www.geneamusings.com/2013/10/are-you-using-social-media-for-genealogy.html*

## Why use social media or blogs?

Networking (Cousin Finding)

The power of social networks in modern genealogy comes from being able to ASK and RESPOND.

The amount of response determines the strength of your network: More people = more potential response.

Strong network: Close friends and family

Weak network: Acquaintances and randomly met people (Weak bonds are often the strongest)

Sharing

Social media and blogs provide a platform for sharing your family history and stories

Finding Information

Don't ignore the opportunity that social media provides for finding family history and stories that cannot be found except by connecting to others who have the information you need

## Getting Started

Facebook

Two types of groups:

Page – Public

Group – Private
You would first ask to join a group, go through the brief admissions process *(that normally involves only one or two questions to answer)*, and then get started

Types of genealogy groups (Facebook has more than 11,000 genealogy groups in English)

**Locational Groups**

**General Genealogy Groups**

**Lineage Society Groups**

**Genealogy Group Queries**

Sample: "John WALSH, b. 1791 (Ireland) died in 1874 likely in Monroe County, New York, and is buried in Churchville. We are seeking his Will or probate papers and are unsure where to look for these since he may have died in an adjacent county. We would appreciate any local help."

Genealogist and speaker Katherine R. Willson created a comprehensive and frequently updated index and list of the various locational and subject groups you can join offered in English. *https://moonswings.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/genealogy-on-facebook-list-jun-2017.pdf*

**Create Your Own Group**

**Ideas for Using Social Media in your Family History Efforts**

1. Post where the kids are: Snapchat, VSCO, and Instagram (just to name a few)
2. Private Facebook Group
3. Family Pinterest Board
4. Family Hashtags (#HansonHistory #FaustFamilyFacts #PedersonPeople)

What is a hashtag?

A hashtag is a combination of the pound sign and a word or phrase (with no spaces). For example: #genealogy or #familyhistory are both hashtags. They're used in social media to help people find content on a specific topic. (They're also added sometimes as a way to express a feeling. I might add #IAmSoTiredOfWinter on a tweet about below zero temperatures)

As a reader, you can search for specific hashtags on social media.

Hashtags are a great way to follow along with projects and events.

Use hashtags to get people to follow your genealogy.

**What is a Blog?**

A blog (shortening of "weblog") is an online journal or informational website displaying information in the reverse chronological order, with latest posts appearing first. It is a platform where a writer or even a group of writers share their views on an individual subject, in our case genealogy.

Difference between a Blog and a Website:

1. Blogs need frequent updates
2. Blogs promote reader engagement while websites are static.
3. Blogs can be stand alone or part of a website.
4. Blogs have publishing date, author reference, categories and tags

Free Blog Sites (from Themeisle, contributed by Adelina Tuca)

1. WordPress (www.wordpress.org)

   Best for…people who want to 100% own their blog and customize it. It's perfect for setting up a serious website that you plan to work on long-term.

   On the opposite side, there's WordPress.com, which is the other face of WordPress – a platform used mostly for personal blogs because it's easy to set up and free (if you're okay not having a custom domain name). However, you're also quite limited in the way you can customize the site.

2. Wix (www.wix.com)

   Best for…non-techies who want some "regular website" functionality along with a blog.

3. Weebly (www.weebly.com)

   Best for…non-techies who want some "regular website" functionality along with a blog (yes – just like Wix!)

4. Medium (www.medium.com)

   Best for…people who just want to write, are looking for access to a built-in audience, and don't care about having their "own site".

5. Ghost (www.ghost.com)

   Best for…people who need something simple (simpler than WordPress, for instance) but offering a modern vibe at the same time.

6. Blogger (www.blogger.com)

   Best for…people who want to write and aren't concerned about owning their own site…but also wouldn't mind making a little pocket money!

7. Tumblr (www.tumblr.com)

Best for…people who are into more short-form, image-focused content and don't need any "regular website" functionality.

8. Joomla (www.joomla.org)

Best for…people who want to launch a simple personal blog, but care about details such as having a custom domain and being supported by a host. Moreover, if you're more into old-school, basic website designs, Joomla will offer you that.

9. Jimdo (www.jimdo.com)

Best for…people who are more comfortable editing the content directly on the front-end of the site. That, plus: you do not need a blog of a high complexity.

Websites for finding Genealogical Social Media networks

*https://www.cyndislist.com/social-networking/*

*https://moonswings.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/genealogy-on-facebook-may-2019.pdf (by Katherine R. Willson  SocialMediaGenealogy.com)*