

# HOW TO START A FAMILY HISTORY BLOG & WHY YOU MIGHT WANT TO

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## TYPES OF ONLINE GENEALOGY CONTENT PROVIDERS

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- Traditional Blog (private and public)
- Podcast
- Vlog (Video-Blog)
- Micro-Blogs (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, etc. (See also RT5219 - *Microblogging: Share Your Family History Online Without a Blog*)

## TYPES OF BLOGGING PLATFORMS

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- Free and user-friendly platform, such as Wordpress.com <https://wordpress.com> & Blogger <https://www.blogger.com>.
- DIY platforms, such as Weebly <https://www.weebly.com> and Square Space <https://squarespace.com>
- Niche platforms, such as Medium <https://medium.com>
- Self-hosted, such as WordPress.org <https://WordPress.org>

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WordPress comes in two "flavors."

WordPress.com is "vanilla;"

WordPress.org is the "ice cream sundae"

Note: WordPress.com offers "premium features" for a fee, but you might want to consider other platforms, such as self-hosted Wordpress, instead of purchasing the upgrade.

## FINDING THE RIGHT TECHNICAL FIT WITH A BLOGGING PLATFORM

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- In general, there is a trade-off between user-friendliness and functionality and control.
- Finding "the right fit" means balancing your content, your comfort with technology and your personal preferences.
- CONTENT IS KING. When you choose what kind of blog you want, remember, the most important part of blogging is your content — your stories, memories, and research.

## COMPARING CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AKA BLOGGING PLATFORMS

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- User-friendly and fee options: (Wordpress.com and Blogger.com)
  - Provide hosting (server space); beginner friendly
  - Limits to functions and customization
- DIY solutions such as Square Space and Weebly
  - Still user friendly and provide hosting, aren't always free
  - Subscriptions range in price, some include customer service
  - The more you pay, the more customization and functionality
- Niche Platforms: Make sure you know all the pros and cons, such as readers' ability to subscribe and branding opportunity loss.
- Self-hosted CMS Systems such as WordPress.org
  - Require a hosting agreement and more technical know-how
  - Open-sourced means lots of tutorials and plugins.
  - Easy to "migrate" to WP from other platforms

## CREATING CONTENT/GENERATING IDEAS

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- Collaborate with others
- Your lineage, surnames, family and ancestor stories, family diaries, papers, photos,
- Your research: hurdles, brick walls, recent finds
- Geographical area expertise, records, archives, one-place studies
- Product Reviews, Information on new digital data sets, industry trends
- "Cousin-bait"

## WRITING VERSUS BLOGGING

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- Informal, personal style
- More white space, shorter paragraphs
- Connectional writing

## BLOGGING INSPIRATION

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- Genealogy Prompts
  - *GeneaBloggersTRIBE* Genealogy Prompts & Content Sparks at <http://GeneaBloggersTRIBE.com/genealogy-prompts>
  - *Genea-Musings* "Saturday Night Genealogy Fun" weekly prompts at <http://geneamusings.com>

- *My Descendant's Ancestors* “Genealogy Blog Party” monthly challenges at <https://MyDescendantsAncestors.com>
- *Amy Johnson Crow* – “52 Ancestors in 52 Weeks” weekly prompts at <https://www.amyjohnsoncrow.com/52-ancestors-in-52-weeks>
- *Family Locket* – “Family History for Children Blog Link Up” <http://familylocket.com/family-history-for-children-blog-link-up>
- Help with personal and family storytelling
  - Storytelling prompts and advice at <http://TreasureChestofMemories.com> and <http://evalogue.life>.
  - Go through scrapbooks and photo albums, old movies/films
  - Interviews and other first-person accounts

## IS BLOGGING FOR YOU?

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- Are you comfortable with technology?
- Interested in sharing?
- Audience interested in reading blogs?
- Would you enjoy it?

## FAMILY HISTORY BLOG LISTINGS

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- *GeneaBloggers TRIBE* – Add your blog to the listing of 3,200+ genealogy blogs <http://geneabloggerstribе.com>
- *Cyndi's List* – Blogs for Genealogy <https://www.cyndislist.com/blogs/personal>

## BLOGGING RESOURCES

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- *Tonia's Roots* – “31 Weeks to a Better Genealogy Blog” <https://www.toniaroots.net/2011/06/26/31-weeks-to-a-better-genealogy-blog>
- *WikiHow* – “How to Start a Blog” <https://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Blog>
- *ProBlogger* – General blogging tips & resources <https://www.problogger.net>
- *WPBeginner* – “Beginner’s Guide for Wordpress,” but not just for beginners <http://www.wpbeginner.com>
- *Creative Commons* – Helps you protect and share your work <https://creativecommons.org>
- *Copyscape* – Find out if your blog has been plagiarized or “splogged” <http://www.copyscape.com>
- *The Legal Genealogist* – Posts about genealogy and copyright law

<https://www.legalgenealogist.com/category/copyright>

- Laura Hedgecock,  *Blogging for Family History: How to Launch a Blog and Make It Successful* (The Road Less Written: 2017)  
Kindle: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MTFFIZP>

## WRITING RESOURCES – GRAMMAR AND SPELLING MATTER!

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- Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, co, 2014)
- William Strunk, Jr., *The Elements of Style, Annotated and Updated for Present-Day Use*, (Middlebury, Vermont: Springside Books, 2013).
- *The Chicago Manual of Style Online*  
<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>
- *Grammar Girl* – “Your friendly guide to the world of grammar, punctuation, usage, and fun developments in the English language”  
<https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>
- *Grammarly* – Online grammar and spelling checker, also offers free browser or MS Office extension - <https://www.grammarly.com>
- *Dictionary.com* and sister site *Thesaurus.com* – Free, online dictionary, over 3 million synonyms and antonyms <http://Dictionary.com> and <http://Thesaurus.com>

## RECOMMENDED READING

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- *WPBeginner* - “Self Hosted WordPress.org vs. Free WordPress.com” (Infographic),  
<http://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/self-hosted-wordpress-org-vs-free-wordpress-com-infograph>
- *The We Tree Genealogy Blog* – “Jump Start Your Genealogy Blog. 52 ideas. 52 weeks.”  
Part 1: <http://wetree.blogspot.com/2009/01/jump-start-your-genealogy-blog-52-ideas.html>  
Part 2: [http://wetree.blogspot.com/2009/01/jump-start-your-genealogy-blog-52-ideas\\_06.html](http://wetree.blogspot.com/2009/01/jump-start-your-genealogy-blog-52-ideas_06.html)
- *Family Blog Tips* – “31 Fresh Blog Post Ideas”  
<http://www.familyblogtips.com/31-fresh-blog-post-ideas>
- Amy Coffin, *The Big Genealogy Blog Book: 201 Topics, Plus Tips and Tricks for Your Genealogy Blog* (Amy Coffin : 2011).  
PDF: <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/amycoffin>  
Kindle: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B006423MOO>
- Amy Coffin, *25 Great Topics for Genealogy Society Blogs* (Amy Coffin : 2011) PDF:  
<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/amycoffin>
- Laura Hedgecock, *Memories of Me: A Complete Guide to Telling and Sharing the Stories of Your Life* (Cedar Fort, 2014.) <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1462114539>.