



# Planning a Genealogy Website

## Step by Step Guide

This contains a step by step guide to assist you in planning, organizing, setting up, publishing, and maintaining a genealogy website.

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# Planning a genealogy website?

If you are like me, you have a huge amount of data you have collected over the years, along with many file cabinets of documentation. Now you want to share what you've found with fellow researchers and family members. Or maybe you've just started researching your family and want to find new cousins by putting your names on line. Where do you start?

## Phase One: Gathering Information

The first step in planning your website is to gather some information. First ask yourself some questions:

- **Purpose of Your Web Site:**
  - What is the purpose of the site you are planning? Do you have one or more genealogy databases you would like to share with family or fellow researchers? Do you have family stories or photos you would like to share? Are you looking to do a single surname study? Or is it to track descendants of an individual or to present data on a particular region? **Determine the purpose before you do anything else.** Frequently you have to view the entire page of someone's web site to find out what the purpose of the page or site is. Or you may view the home page and still not know what the site is about. Tell your visitor what your site is about and what information they might find there.
- **Audience for your Web Site:**
  - Who is your audience - family and friends? Or are you trying to appeal to the beginning genealogists, seasoned genealogists, people who are only slightly interested in their family tree, or what? **What does your audience want?** Do they want compiled data, individualized records with source citations, or links to other web sites based on a surname? If you don't know what your audience wants and provide them with the information, you will have very few repeat visitors.
- **Content of a Genealogy Web Site:**
  - A typical genealogist, amateur or professional, is looking for data and does not want to waste time viewing large animated graphics that do not pertain to that data. Your visitor is also probably NOT interested in the music that you think is so great. This is especially true if they happen to be using a library computer or the computer at work. They want data, plain and simple. They want that page to come up in the fastest time possible. Know who your audience is. Some do want fancy stuff, but the MAJORITY of genealogists do not.

## Phase Two: Planning

Now that you know what the purpose of your site is, who your audience is, and what you might want in the way of content, it is time to plan your site. What you are really doing is developing a site map with your main topics and any subtopics. This will be your guide in developing both your content and your navigation system.

- **Organizing Your Genealogy Web Site**
  - Before you can begin the design your site, you need an organization plan. Will you drop all pages, images, and related files into one directory or folder? After a while it will be difficult to

find things. Organize your site just like you would your filing cabinet. Do it NOW rather than later to save yourself lots of headaches.

## Phase Three: Design

Now it is time to decide on the look and feel of your site. Choose your colors and perhaps design a logo for your site. Choose the template you will use or design a layout for yourself.

## Phase Four: Development

This is the stage in the process where you start actually creating your website. An understanding of writing valid [HTML](#), [XHTML](#) and [CSS](#) code that complies to current web standards is an important part of this process.

- **Choose Your Web Editor**

- Whether you decide to use a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor or Notepad, you need some way to create your html code. The [resources page](#) will give you information on some of the HTML editors available both free and commercial. You may decide to use the [FreePages online editor](#) provided by Rootsweb BUT I would only recommend it for very basic pages.
- Create, validate, and test your site
- Customize your site

## Phase Five: Testing and Publishing

- **Testing Your Site**

- It is important that you test your site before publishing it for the world to see. Make sure everything works as it is supposed to including any forms or scripts you are using. Check your pages to see how they render in the various browsers and at various resolutions. For me, this is an integral part of actually creating my pages. Make sure your links work.

- **Hosting your site**

- Before you can publish your site, you will need to know WHERE you are going to host it. Your choices will depend on what information you are posting and whether you are going to use free hosting or buy a domain and use paid hosting.
  - [WorldConnect at RootsWeb](#) is where you can upload your family trees in the form of a GEDCOM file. Instead of trying to convert your database to web pages that may or may not validate, upload the file to RootsWeb WorldConnect and let it do the work for you.
  - [Free space at Rootsweb](#) offers several types of accounts available. Select the one that is right for your space. There is an agreement for how the space can be used. If you don't agree, you will not be granted space.
    - **Freepages Accounts** - personal web space. Choose a name for your site and write down the email address you use. You will need it in the future. Whatever name you choose will become part of the url of your site, so choose carefully. You cannot change it once selected. I used gearyfamily so my site address was <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gearyfamily/> which at the time reflected what my site was about. Example: [Monroe County New York](#)

[Records](#) The banner ads at top and bottom of pages are what allows you to have the free space.

- **County, State, World Project Accounts** - USGenWeb, WorldGenWeb, ALHN, AHGP, other locality-based projects, etc. Example: [Montgomery County Virginia GENWEB](#) As of 2008, many of the GenWeb Projects have moved to their own servers.
- **Genealogical/Historical Society Accounts** - includes lineage societies, libraries, museums, etc. Example: [Massanutton Chapter NSDAR](#)
- **Paid Hosting** - there are many choices. I use [1&1](#) web hosting NOW but for years used RootsWeb FreePages. You can read a [review of 1&1 hosting](#). Sites are as low as \$2.99 per month which includes one free domain name. While it is recommended that you register your domain in one place and host your site in another, this will give you the opportunity to try out some of the things you cannot do on a free site and there is no advertising. My [Family Genealogy site](#) is hosted by 1&1. [NameCheap](#) is a good place to register your domain name if you choose to go that route. They quite often offer discount coupons. Remember that these will be ongoing expenses for your site.
- **Blog Your Family History** - You could choose to use a [genealogy blog](#) to document your family history search. A blog, short for "web log," is basically an online journal. You can add text, graphic images and allow others to add comments as part of your Blog. You can either sign up for an account through a Weblog host like [Blogger.com](#), or run a blog publishing system on your own Web server such as WordPress. If you already have your own domain hosted on a server, you might be interested in [Launching a WordPress Blog](#), a FREE EBook by Tina Clarke and Pat Geary, both Microsoft MVP's - FrontPage. This is a step-by-step tutorial for launching your own WordPress Blog. You can also request a free WordPress Blog to be hosted on the [WordPress](#) site. All you need is your name and an email address. If you already have a blog elsewhere and would like to move it over to WordPress.com, they provide several import options that can import posts and comments.

- **Publishing Your Site**

Before the world can view your site, you will need to Publish or Upload Your Site to a server either by using an ftp program or publishing from your web editor.

## • Phase Six: Maintenance

- Once your site is published your work is not finished. If you want your viewers to return, you need to provide fresh, new content. You will also need to perform regular Maintenance on Your Site.

## Additional Articles

[How to Design a Genealogy Web Page](#), by David J. McCallister,

[Common Genealogy Web Site Problems](#) by Cyndi Howells of Cyndi's List.

[How to Publish Your Family Tree Online](#) by Kimberly Powell.

## **FreePages Resources**

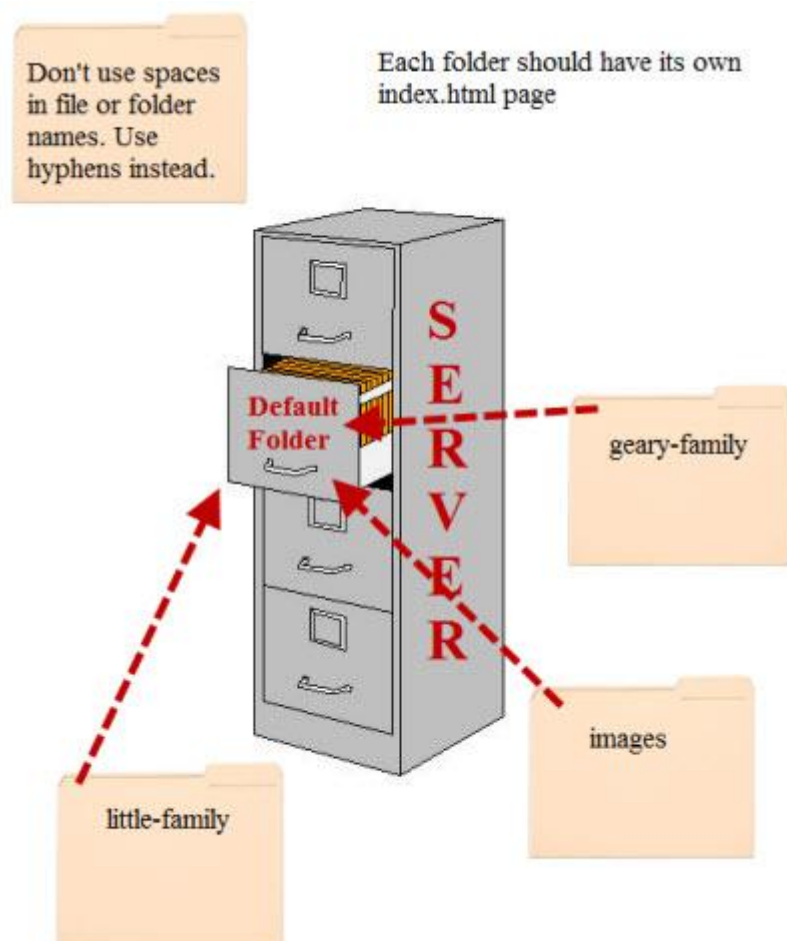
[Cheri Zuber's Genealogy Computer Tips](#)

Pat Asher has some excellent tutorials. Everything from [Naming Web Page files](#) to [Very Basic HTML](#) to [Getting Started With FTP](#). Make sure you explore all the pages on this site. Lots of your questions will be answered.

[Elsi's Tutorials](#) written specifically for the FreePages Community at RootsWeb.

# Organize your genealogy website -

Before you can begin to design your pages, you need an organization plan. Will you drop all pages, images, and related files into one directory/folder? If your site is very large, after a while it will be difficult to find things. Organize your site just like you would your filing cabinet. [Cheri Zuber](#) has done an excellent job of explaining this using FreePages as an example.



The most important thing to remember when organizing your site is to do it in a way that makes sense to you. You are the one who is going to have to maintain the site and keep track of where you put things. If everything is in one drawer/folder/directory of your file cabinet/server, things will quickly get lost. Reorganizing a website that has not been well thought out and planned can be a very time-consuming and tedious job. Sit down with a paper and pencil and spend some time thinking about the organization of your site.

- The file cabinet is your server space – With a paid server you may have one initial drawer public\_html or in the case of [1&1](#) where you can host multiple domains, the name you have given the folder where a particular domain resides. In my case, I chose genealogy for my domain [family-genealogy-online.com](#). This domain, genealogy-web-creations.com, resides in a folder genealogy-web-creations. With Rootsweb and the FreePages server, you have a number of communities you can use.



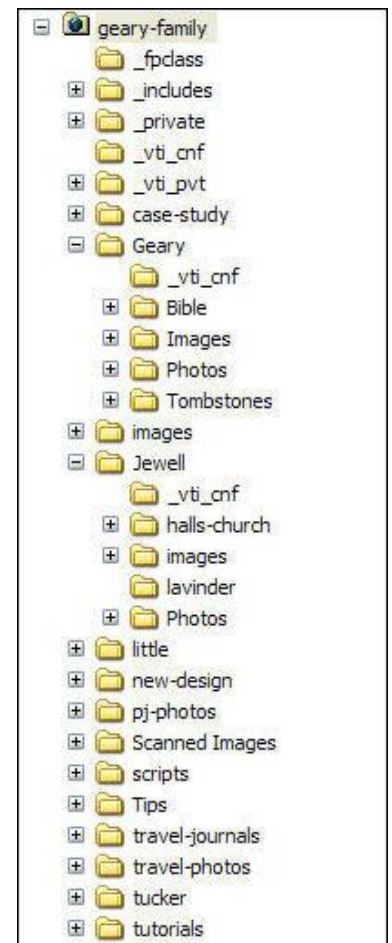
- With each drawer, you can stuff everything in one drawer or organize it by using loose papers (pages), folders (subdirectories) with paper (pages) inside. Again, spend some time thinking about this.
- You may even want folders inside of folders. Each folder/directory should have an index.html page. It may have content on it or it may be blank. The index.html file created like the one at <http://www.genealogy-web-creations.com/images/> will keep the viewer from seeing a list of the actual files in that directory.

My genealogy site is about our family genealogy so I need a folder/directory for each family lines - two for my husband and two for me. In my root directory, I put all the pages that pertain to the entire site: index.html for the site introduction; site-map.html for the map of the entire site; about-us.html to tell a little about my husband and me. I create a folder for images and one called \_includes (more on that later). I also create an image folder under each of the family folders.

I end up with something that looks like this as the outline of my site and the image on the left shows the site as it looks on my computer.

- genealogy (folder where files are uploaded)
  - index.html
  - about-us.html
  - site-map.html
  - geary-family
    - index.html
    - images
  - jewel-family
    - index.html
    - images
  - little-family
    - index.html
    - images
  - tucker-family
    - index.html
    - images
  - images (for all images that are used on all pages)
  - \_includes

The time you spend **organizing your site** BEFORE you start developing your pages will save you time in the future. You are much less likely to have to go back and reorganize. Now that you have your site organized, decide how you are going to develop your site. What editor will you use?



A good article on [organizing a website](#) can be found at GNC Web Creations.

# Creating a New Website

## A few things to remember before we get started:

- Every page should start with a doctype statement
- Be consistent in the extension you use for your pages - htm or html - either will work.
- Use lowercase letters to name your pages. Unix servers see INDEX.HTML and index.html as two different file names.
- Your home page should always be named "index" or the default for your server. **Don't use spaces in file and directory names!** Windows operating systems do allow spaces but UNIX operating systems (which run most servers) have problems with them. The Web server interprets the space as a "%20" character and <http://www.family-genealogy-online.com/geary family.html> will look like this <http://www.family-genealogy-online.com/geary%20family.html>. If you use gearyfamily.html the search engines see it as all one word, use the underscore geary\_family.html and the search engines still see one "scrunched" word. geary-family.html is seen as two separate words.

## Genealogy Templates and Graphics

If you are using graphics from a site that offers them, make sure you read the terms of use and give credit to the designer. If you don't want to design your own, some good templates are:

- [Rhio's Sampler](#)
- [CSS based Layout Templates](#) by Pat Geary
- [Fixed Width Templates](#) by Pat Geary
- [Free Expression Web DWTs and other Samples](#) by Cheryl Wise
- [Free Expression Web DWT's](#) by Pat Geary

Remember, not all templates are created equal. If you find one you like, make sure it is one you can work with and that it validates without a lot of tweaking. Also check to see how it renders in more than one browser. And check the requirements for using the template. Linkbacks may be required.

## Create a new website

Cheri Zuber's [Genealogy Computer Tips](#) is a great resource for the FreePages Community in creating a website. Pat Asher's [Your Genealogy Website](#) is also an excellent resource.

If you choose to use the RootsWeb Online Editor to create you site, you may find [Using RootsWeb Online Editor](#) helpful.

I use Expression Web (the successor to FrontPage) to design and maintain my sites - [Create New Website in Expression Web](#).

[Creating a new FrontPage Web](#) is an excellent step-by-step tutorial by Cricket Walker of GNC Web Creations complete with screen shots. If you follow this tutorial, you will now have a fully validated index.html page.

It looks pretty plain, so let's add some style to it. My recommendation is to learn how to use external style sheets. Cricket's [External CSS FrontPage Tutorial](#) will give you a start adding an external style sheet to your site. The tutorial includes how to create the style sheet without using FrontPage.

You now have the beginning of a style sheet you can add to and change. A change in the style sheet will change all pages it is attached to. Check the [Resource](#) page for additional links on learning how to use style sheets.

You might want to create a template to base each of your pages on. If you are using FrontPage 2003 or Expression Web, you can use a DWT - Dynamic Web Template. [DWT - Dynamic Web Template FrontPage 2003](#) by Tina Clarke available for FREE download. Tina also has one available for [Expression Web](#).

If you would like some basic layouts to start with, try [CSS Based Layout Templates](#). Both the html coding and the external css validate. If you would like to change the color, do so on the style sheet. All templates are available as a zipped file, including sample images. Some of the templates use include pages. Additional templates are available for [Expression Web](#).

## Before publishing your site

Before you publish your site, you should check the following:

- Check how the page looks at several different screen resolutions. Many people still have smaller monitors 800x600 resolution. How will your site look to them?
- Check how the page looks in several different browsers. Check them at least with Firefox and Internet Explorer. You can check at [AnyBrowser.com](#) if you do not have multiple browsers downloaded.
- Validate the HTML code. Before you can test an HTML document you need to make sure it includes a document type declaration (DOCTYPE) and character encoding to each Web page. The [W3C Markup Validation Service](#), is a free service that checks Web documents in formats like HTML and XHTML for conformance to W3C Recommendations and other standards. I choose the extended file upload interface and tick the show source so I can easily find the problem if there is one. If the page does not validate, go back and fix the problems one by one and recheck. Downloading and installing the [web developer toolbar](#), will allow you to validate your pages easily from your own computer.

Once you have validated and tested your site and the corresponding style sheet, you are ready to publish/upload it to your web server space.

# Customizing Your Web Site

There are a number of things you can add to your website or pages to customize them or to make the site easier to maintain. Some of the items listed below apply to any host. Some will only work with a paid hosting account like 1and1.

Thinking of adding a no right click script to your page to protect your images or code from being downloaded? Think again. For the reasons why not visit [James Huggins' Refrigerator Door](#).

## Using custom 404 pages

If your visitor arrives at a page that does not exist on your site, what will they see? A [generic 404 error page](#)? The 404 page is the page displayed if someone tries to reach a page on your website that does not exist. Most of the time, it's because the visitor mistyped the URL or maybe you renamed a page. Because 404 pages are just simple HTML pages, you can change the default 404 page to a page that displays anything you want. So instead of the generic "this page does not exist" message that tells your visitors nothing, you can put up an informative page that will help them find what they are looking for. For help in creating a custom 404 error page, check out the links listed below. You can [view the custom error page](#) I created for my family genealogy site. This option is NOT usually available for a free hosting account.

- <http://www.plinko.net/404/custom.asp>
- [Custom Error Pages](#) by Susan Emerson
- [Creating a Custom Error Page](#) for use 1and1 servers

## Use include files for repeating content

Any time you have a lot of repeated content in a website - things like page headers, page footers and navigation menus - you can use includes. Include files are separate pages of plain text or HTML code that contain things like the items just mentioned; things that are intended to be used on many different pages. The top and bottom menus on this site use FrontPage includes. The right sidebar index to articles and tutorials is also an include page. It can be inserted on any page I want to use it.

- [Using FrontPage Includes](#) by Tina Clarke
- [FrontPage Includes Tutorial](#) by GNC Web Creations
- [Server Side Includes Tutorial](#)
- [Expression Web Design Time Includes](#) by Pat Geary

## Create a site map

A site map is essentially a categorized page of links to all your websites' pages - a table of contents of your site. Some users may go straight to your site map to navigate through your site. A site map can make a difference in the number of pages that are indexed by the search engines.

- [Create Site Map Using Anchor Text Links](#)

## Include a consistent footer

Some suggestions to include in your footer would be your contact information: email address and phone number. Also your privacy policy and copyright information. If you are using a javascript menu system or a graphics menu, you should include a text-only navigation menu in your footer.

## Use a consistent navigation system

Adding navigation to your website is a MUST! The more complex your site, the more important good navigation is. Make your navigation easy to use. Remember, your navigation is the road map to your site and people will not always enter via your "front door." A search engine could take them anywhere within your site. Will they be able to find there way around?

- [Creating Site Navigation](#)
- [Creating a Navigation Menu](#)

## Add a Search Box

If you have a large site, you want to consider [adding a search box](#) to your site. There are a number of free ones available or if you are using paid hosting, there may be one available through the host. The free ones I have used are listed below. Each is customizable to reflect the "look" of your site.

- [FreeFind](#) Here you sign up to "Add a search engine to your site." You will need to enter your page URL and your e-mail address.. Your password and setup instructions will be e-mailed to you. [My Family Genealogy](#) site uses FreeFind.
- [PicoSearch](#) Here you sign up for your search engine. You will need to set up all the requested information. You'll then see the web page from which you manage and customize the Picosearch tool for your website. I have used this in the past.
- [Atomz](#) Search is now a part of WestSide Story Search. Just fill in your email address and you will receive instructions via return email. The website for the [Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harrisonburg Virginia](#) uses Atomz as the search engine.

## Link to your Genealogy Database at WorldConnect

You can provide a link to your genealogy database at WorldConnect by using a straight text link as I have done by adding a hyperlink with the text Search the Database included in my Navigation Menu (see example below). You can also add one of the graphic images from RootsWeb to link to your site. I have shown the smallest one available below.





# Publishing your Genealogy Website

Now that you have created, validated and tested your genealogy website, you are ready to publish to your server.

## Publishing to RootsWeb or FreePages servers

If you are publishing your site to Rootsweb or the Freepages server and you are using FrontPage, you can use the [FrontPage Publish](#) via ftp feature.

If you have used Dreamweaver to create your site, see Pat Asher's [Uploading with Dreamweaver](#). You can also use a [stand-alone ftp program](#) to publish to the Rootsweb servers.

You may also use the RootsWeb File Manager feature to upload/publish your site. If you wish to use the RootsWeb.com file manager, make sure you select the correct file manager for the type of website you have at RootsWeb.com.

- [Freepages file manager](#)
- [WWW file manager](#)
- [Homepages file manager](#)
- [Virts file manager](#)

## Publishing to a Server with FPSE - FrontPage Server Extensions - Installed

If you have created your site in FrontPage and your host has FPSE installed, you need to use the Publish feature in FrontPage to upload your site to your server space. If you choose to use an ftp program, you may "break" the server extensions. All screen shots are using FrontPage 2003. If you are using a different version, your screen may look different.

**Step 1** - Open your site in FrontPage.

**Step 2** - Make sure and [check your settings](#) before you try to publish/upload your site.

**Step 3** - Choose File | Publish Site

**Step 4** - In the dialogue window that pops up, choose the "Remote Web Site" tab. Tick the button beside "FrontPage or SharePoint Services" and then enter the correct information in the following fields: "Remote Web Site Location" - put in your site url - <http://your-site.com/>



 [View Screenshot](#)

Then click on the "Publishing" tab at the top and check Publish | Changed Pages Only - Changes | Determine changes by comparing source and destination - Logging | Log changes during publish (gives you a log entry to review if you have problems uploading)

 [View Screenshot](#)

**Step 5** - When you click "OK", you will get a window to input your ID and password. Be sure to type them EXACTLY as they were given to you - including capitalization. The first time you upload your site, you may be asked for two separate usernames and passwords. Your server space may have one username and password and FrontPage another.

 [View Screenshot](#)

**Step 6** - You will see your website (on your computer) in the left window. The server space file you're publishing to is shown in the right window.

 [View Screenshot](#)

Local to Remote should be checked then Click the Publish Website Button. This is the one I use most often as it compares all files and uploads those that have changed. If you have deleted files from you site on your hard drive, a box will pop up to ask if you want to remove them from the remote site.

- You could also choose only one or two of the files and click on of the arrow keys to transfer just those files Local to Remote.
- If the site on your hard drive became damaged or was inadvertently deleted, you could create a new web on the hard drive and use this same process to reverse publish your site on the server to your hard drive. Check Remote to Local | Click Publish Website Button
- Synchronize compares the site on your hard drive and the one on the remote server and moves the data back and forth until they match.

**Step 7** - If you use the "Publish web site" button, when complete you will get a message that your file is finished uploading. You are then given a choice to View Your Remote Site.

## **Publishing to a Server without FrontPage Server Extensions - Installed**

If you have created your site in FrontPage and your host does NOT have FPSE installed, you can use the Publish via ftp feature in FrontPage to upload your site to your server space. You could also use a stand-alone ftp program to publish the site. The steps are basically the same as publishing to an http address. Some of the screenshots will look different when publishing via ftp.

**Step 1** - Open your site in FrontPage.

**Step 2** - Make sure and check your settings before you try to publish/upload your site.

**Step 3** - Choose File | Publish Site

 [View Screenshot](#)

**Step 4** - In the dialogue window that pops up. Choose the "Remote Web Site" tab. Tick the button beside "FTP" and then enter the correct information in the following fields: "Remote Web Site Location" - put in your site ftp location - ftp://genealogy-web-creations.com/genealogy-web-creations If you have included the full location including the ftp directory, you can leave the FTP Directory line blank. Check Use Passive FTP.

 [View Screenshot](#)

Then click on the "Publishing" tab at the top and check Publish | Changed Pages Only - Changes | Determine changes by comparing source and destination - Logging | Log changes during publish (gives you a log entry to review if you have problems uploading)

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**Step 5** - When you click "OK", you will get a window to input your ID and password. Be sure to type them EXACTLY as they were given to you - including capitalization.

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- Synchronize compares the site on your hard drive and the one on the remote server and moves the data back and forth until they match.

**Step 7** - If you use the "Publish web site" button, when complete you will get a message that your file is finished uploading.



If you have problems, make sure and check your username and password as they are case sensitive and the url you have inserted into the location.

Resources:

- [How to publish a FrontPage 2003 Web site to a CD-R or a CD-RW](#)
- [Page Options Settings FrontPage 2003 - Authoring](#)

## Using FileZilla to Publish to RootsWeb Servers

FileZilla is open source FTP software distributed under the terms of the GNU General Public License and available FREE from <http://filezilla-project.org/>

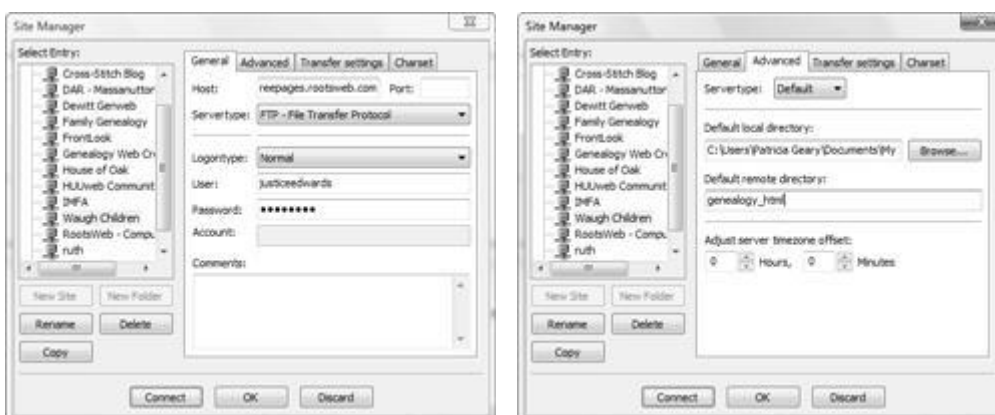
Download and install FileZilla. Before you can use it to upload your site, you will need to configure Site Manager.

### Configuring Site Manager

You will need the following:

- FTP Path - this is different for each of the RootWeb servers
  - FreePages server use ftp://users.freepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/
  - RootsWeb server use ftp://users.rootsweb.ancestry.com/
  - HomePages server use ftp://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/
  - **NOTE: The old settings used by RootsWeb before it became a subdomain of Ancestry.com appear to still work.**
- Username
- Password

Go to File > Site Manager > New Site



Click the New Site button and a new folder appears. Give it a name and add the site details.

## GENERAL TAB:

- **Host** - users.freepages.rootsweb.com/ OR users.rootsweb.com/ OR homepages.rootsweb.com/
- **Servertype** - leave the default FTP
- **Logontype**: Normal
- **Username**: from your RootsWeb welcome letter
- **Password**: from your RootsWeb welcome letter. Since your password is case sensitive, you may want to use cut/copy and paste from your e-mail program to make sure that you don't mistype it.
- **Comments**: Add details if you want

## ADVANCED TAB:

- Default Local Directory: Your website on YOUR hard drive
- Default Remote Directory: genealogy\_html or one of the communities OR public\_html

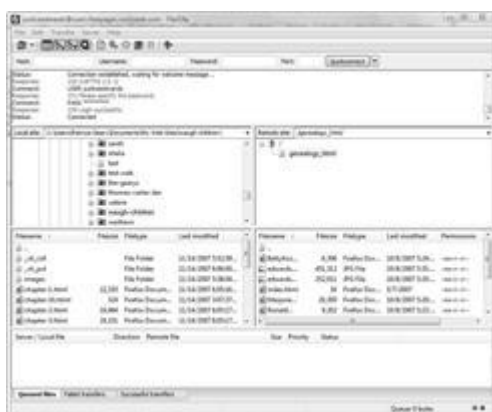
## TRANSFER SETTINGS:

- Default OR Active OR Passive (Choose Default or Passive - RootsWeb servers now REQUIRE a Passive Connection)

## CHARSET TAB:

- Autodetect

Click the Connect button and make sure your connection works. The files on the server will show in the Remote Pane and the files on your hard drive will appear on the Local site Pane.

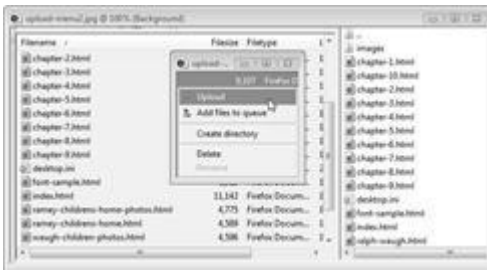


# Publishing Using FileZilla

## Connecting to the Server

File > Site Manager > Double click the site name in the left hand pane.

Select the files on your hard drive. In the 'Local Pane' select the first file/folder with the mouse, hold down the Shift key and scroll down while still holding the shift key and select the last of the files/folders. This will select all the files, right click and press upload.



Your files will proceed to upload and when completed you should see the new files in the right pane.

## Additional Resources

- [FileZilla Setup Screen Shots](#) by Barry Carlson

# Maintaining Your Genealogy Website

Now that you have published your genealogy website to a server, you need to think about maintaining your site. Websites require regular attention to ensure that they remain up-to-date and in a operational condition. Maintenance means making sure that your files and directory structure are up to date and running properly, and that all your links are functional.

If you make changes to file names, directory names or change the names of your graphic images, and do not double check the links to those pages, your links may no longer work. If you make the changes from within FrontPage or Expression Web, your links are updated automatically. If it is a small site, maintenance might not take long. If it is a large site, you could be spending some time on maintenance. Remember at the beginning of each year to update the copyright date.

## Keeping Your Site Up-to-Date

Your genealogy website needs to be updated to make sure the information is kept current and is useful.

- Check the technical aspects of the site -
  - If you are using forms, do they still work?
  - Do your links still work especially those that link to outside sites?
- Did you remember to add new pages you create to the site map?
- Did you add any new sections to your navigation structure?
- If you are going to use Date Last Modified on your pages, make sure to keep them updated. Do you really want the date to show that you have not worked on the site/page for over a year?
- If you delete files or change the names of files, remove the old ones from your site. Same with graphic files you are no longer using. If you are hosting your site on a paid server create a [301 permanent redirect page](#) when you delete or rename pages. If you are hosting your site on a free server, creating a 301 redirect is **NOT** an option.
- Add a [custom 404 error page](#) if possible.

Nothing is more frustrating to a viewer than to click on links that go nowhere. Keep your website up to date and make sure your links work.

## Helpful Links

- [W3C Link Checker](#)
- [LinkChecker](#) - an add-on for the Firefox browser