

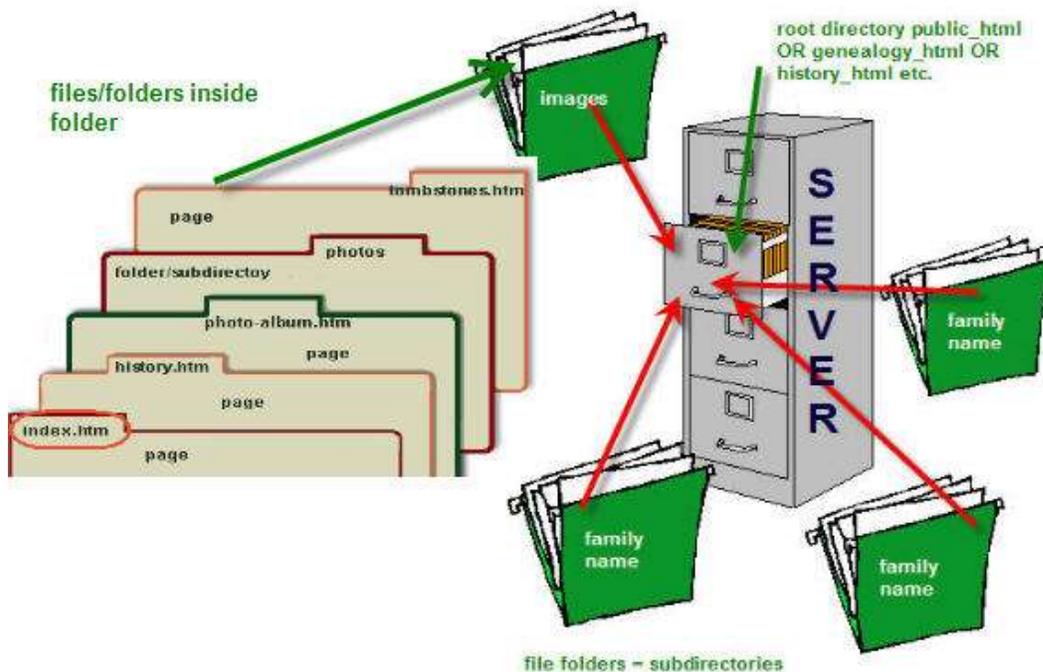
Planning and Designing a Genealogy Website

Introduction - The idea for this project came from Cheri Zuber's excellent site, Creating A Genealogy Website - <http://freepages.misc.rootsweb.com/~zuber/gentips/newsite/> I wanted to be able to offer parts of it for download in pdf format to be printed out. I was not able to contact her for permission to offer her site so I have revised the information, added my own drawings and published to pdf format. Please be sure and visit her site.

How to Organize Your Website -

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 of your file cabinet, things will quickly get lost. Reorganizing a hastily thrown together Web site can be a very time-consuming and tedious job. Initial planning is probably better done with pen and paper than with the computer.

- The file cabinet is your server space – either RootsWeb or a paid host . With a paid server you will have one initial drawer public_html or whatever it is called. With RootsWeb there are several drawers for you to use (genealogy_html, history_html, military_html, family_html, and misc_html.)
- With each drawer, you can stuff everything in one drawer or organize it by using loose papers (pages), folders (subdirectories) with paper (pages) inside.
- You may even want folders inside of folders



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What is the purpose of your site?

Are you trying collect info on a single surname? Are you tracking the descendants of one or more individuals? Are you sharing information on a region? State your purpose so the viewer can decide if the site is of interest to him. Read David J. McCallister's article

<http://www.members.tripod.com/~McCallisterD/webpages.htm>

Who is the audience? What do they want?

If people come to your Web site expecting to find genealogical information, it is up to you to design the site so they can easily find it. A genealogist is looking for data – plain and simple DATA. They don't care about fancy graphics and music. They want the page to load quickly and they want to be able to navigate through the site easily and find the info they are looking for.

What will you include on your site?

What do you plan on including on your site - family sketches, photographs, census records, and/or histories. Decide what you want to present and then organize it. Allow for future additions.

Sit down with a paper and pencil and make an outline of what you want to present and how it will be presented.

- My root folder would contain information that pertained to the entire site and all lines. Those would be individual pages.
- I wanted to include information on both my husbands and my maternal and paternal lines – four folders there. I had already decided to post my GEDCOM files on the WorldConnect project so I would be including other types of information and linking that info to my WorldConnect databases.
- I decided to put all images that pertained to the entire site in an images folder. I was going to use includes – more on that later- so I created an _includes folder (note underscore).
- I created a folder for scripts for any that I might want to use on my pages.
- Each of the family folders would include images and folders so subfolders or directories were created.
- This is a screen shot of my rough draft notes -

Taking the time to plan now can save you time in the long haul. If you start with a good basic setup, it will be easier to add folders and files as you go along.

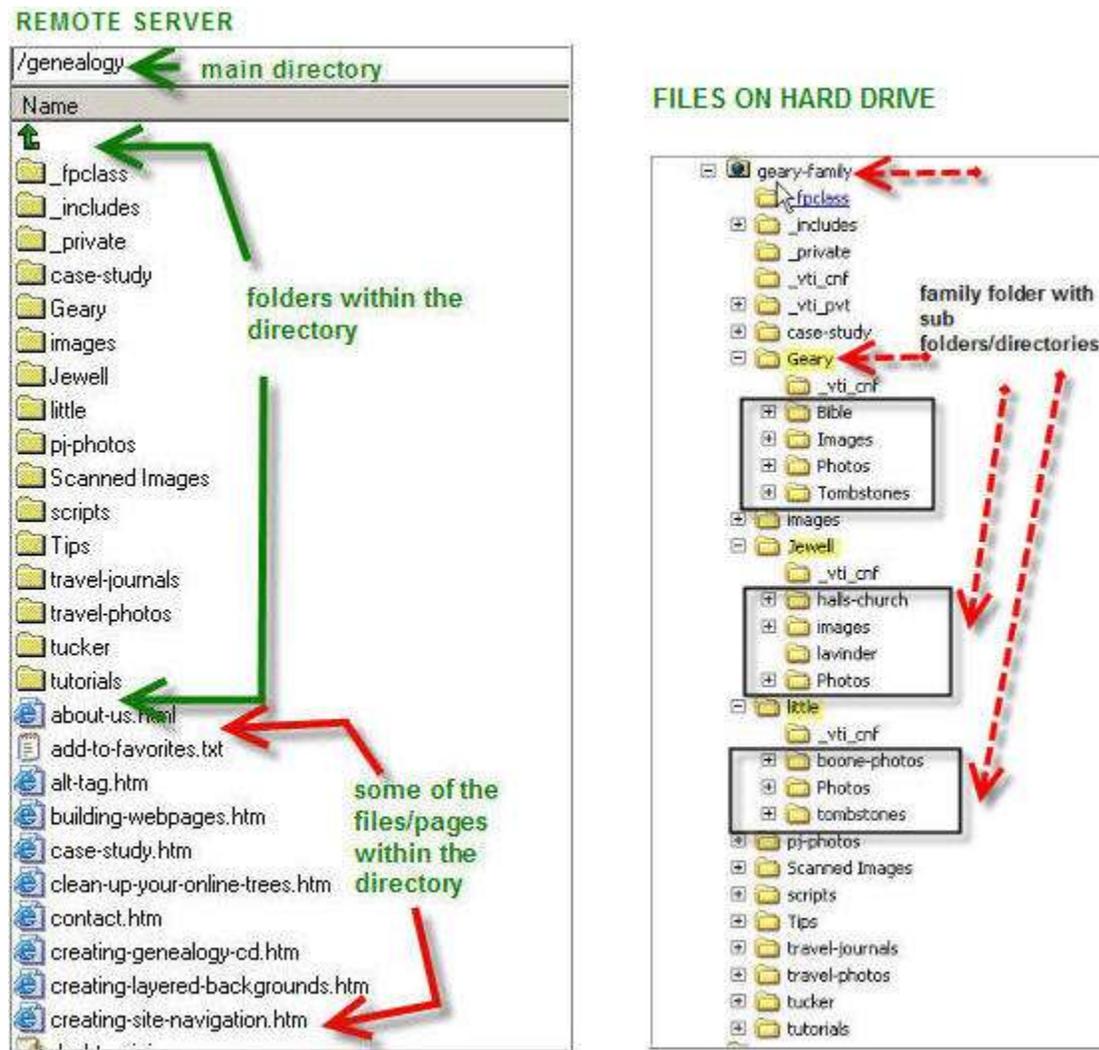
- I. **Rootsweb OR Your Server**
 - A. genealogy_html OR public_html
 1. images
 2. _includes
 3. geary
 - a. photos
 - b. tombstones
 4. jewel
 - a. photos
 - b. tombstones
 5. tucker
 - a. photos
 - b. tombstones
 6. little
 - a. photos
 - b. tombstones
 7. tutorials

Things to Remember:

create folder for each family line
folders for images and included pages
all files and folders lowercase letters
no spaces in file names - use hyphens
each folder has an index.html page to start

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As I actually started working on my site, files and folders expanded. This is what the file system of my site on my hard drive and the remote server look like today.



Additional links that may proved helpful in planning your site -

- National Genealogical Society's guidelines for publishing pages on the Internet
<http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/comstandweb.cfm>
- Hudson Valley Community College Websie Design
http://academ.hvcc.edu/~kantopet/old/site_design/index.php
- Hudson Valley Community College Page Design
http://academ.hvcc.edu/~kantopet/old/page_design/index.php
- Rod Neep's Web Pages Design and Structure
<http://freepages.computers.rootsweb.com/~neep/structure/index.htm>