

An Exploration of the Integration of Social Networking Technologies into the Core Activities of Genealogical Societies

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Webmaster

Dallas Genealogical Society



Agenda

- Examine the role of the web site in one genealogical society
- Identify requirements for future success
- Examine a model for future web development
- Roadblocks
- Identify some possible resources
- Discussion

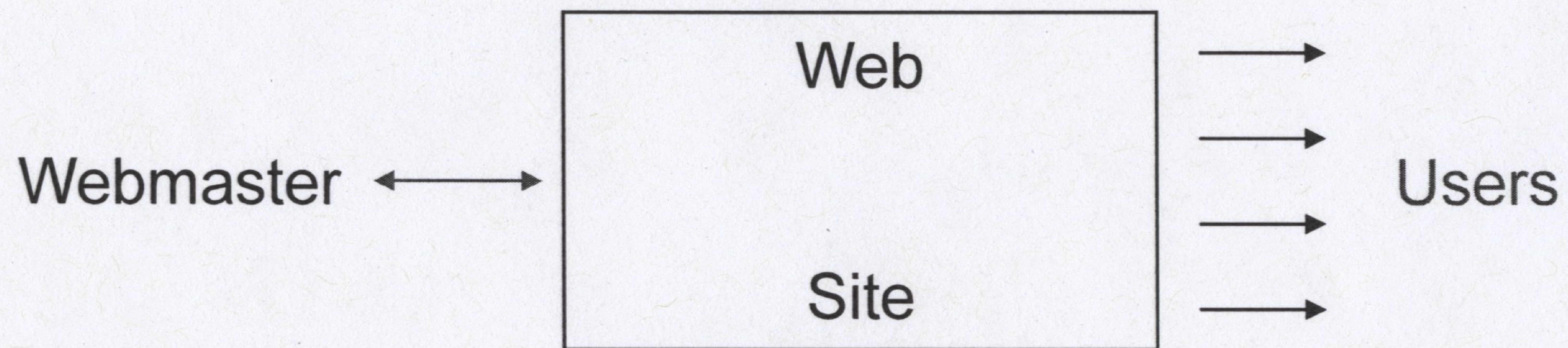
Who am I?

- Involved in Genealogy since 1999
- BSEE, MS (Telecommunications)
- Engineer for AT&T
 - PC's
 - Unix
 - Database Management
 - HTML, CSS, Perl, PHP

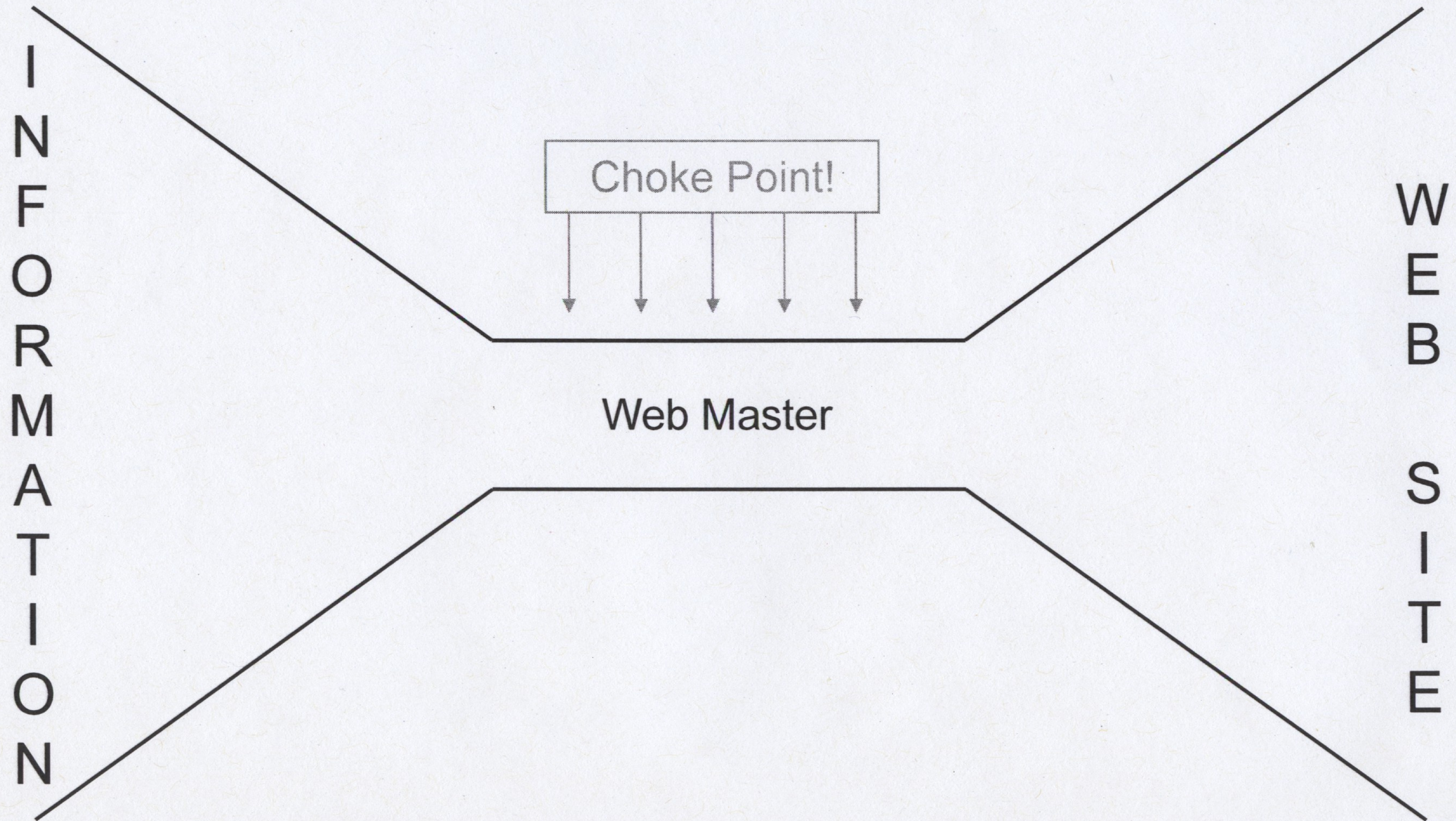
Dallas Genealogical Society

- Webmaster - Since February 2010
- Inherited a site partially migrated from the old web site
- Also inherited an architecture that had already been designed
 - Content Management System (Joomla)
 - Membership & Financial Management service (Z2 Systems Neon)

Traditional Web Site



Web Master as Road Block



Proposition #1

To be successful, we need to find a way to allow users to create and submit content

Then Our Site Was Hacked

- The perfect storm....
 - Management of the site was still in transition
 - I was out of the country
 - It was several days before I arrived home and found out what had happened
- Things could not have been worse...
 - Until I discovered that we had N☹️ backups

Mixed Blessing

- We had a lot of material from the old web server
- I was able to start fresh without worrying about hurting the feelings of the previous webmaster

Proposition #2

Maintaining backups and implementing defensive security steps is absolutely vital

Changing Base of Users

- Local Membership
 - Core membership of the organization
 - They probably have already accessed your records (and are hanging out on somebody else's web site looking for records)
 - Are likely to be infrequent visitors to your web site
- Recent DGS Survey revealed:
 - 84% of the membership used the societies web site 'Rarely', 'Monthly' or 'Never'

Changing Base of Users

- Not so Local
 - Can be from anywhere in the world
 - May only visit your site a few times
 - Has a very different set of interests
- Google Analytics Results (past 6 months)
 - Users from 47 states, 30 countries
- 36% of the visitors were referred from Search Sites
 - Google, Yahoo, Bing

Increased web traffic is good, right?

- Yes, but it is not benefiting the society
 - Our model (annual membership fees, monthly meetings, local seminars) does not take web-only visitors into account
- Designing the site to meet the needs of both groups is more of a challenge

Proposition #3

Your web site needs to appeal to local, 'frequent' visitors as well as users who may only visit your site once.

Genealogical Society Profile

- Declining memberships
- Increasing membership age
- Some resistance to receiving society information via the internet
- Declining participation at meetings, Special Interest Groups and seminars

Locally Created Records

- We have a storeroom full of publications
 - Not creating new ones
 - Don't want to digitize and make available for free 'yet'
 - Not selling many of them...

Proposition #4

The things that have 'always' worked and made money for the society are not working so well any more

Genealogy is Very Popular...

- "Who Do You Think You Are" has generated even more interest
- The Internet has made it much easier to get started
- There are a lot of people surfing the net looking for information

50M People = Opportunity

- 79% of all adults have used the internet (Zickuhr, 2010)
- 27% of them have used the it to research their families history or genealogy (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2010)
- Based on the 2010 US census, that is almost 50 million people!

Zickuhr, K. (2010, December 16). *Generations 2010*. Accessed 25 January 2011 at <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Generations-2010/Overview/Findings.aspx>.

Pew Internet and American Life Project. (2010, September) *Trend Data: Online Activities, Total*. Accessed 25 January 2011 at <http://www.pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Online-Activites-Total.aspx>

Your Sites Competition

- www.FamilySearch.org
- www.Ancestry.com
- www.RootsWeb.ancestry.com
- <http://www.EllisIsland.org>
- www.CastleIsland.org
- www.FindAGrave.org
- www.Genealogy.com
- www.yoursite.org

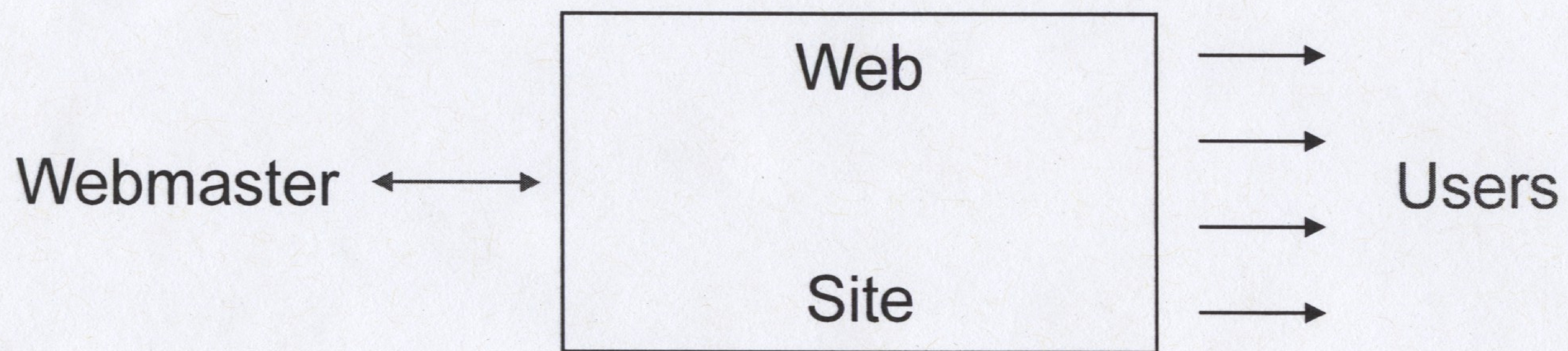
Proposition #5

Your site is competing with every other web site in the world. Competing with them requires a skill set that is hard to find in an all volunteer organization.

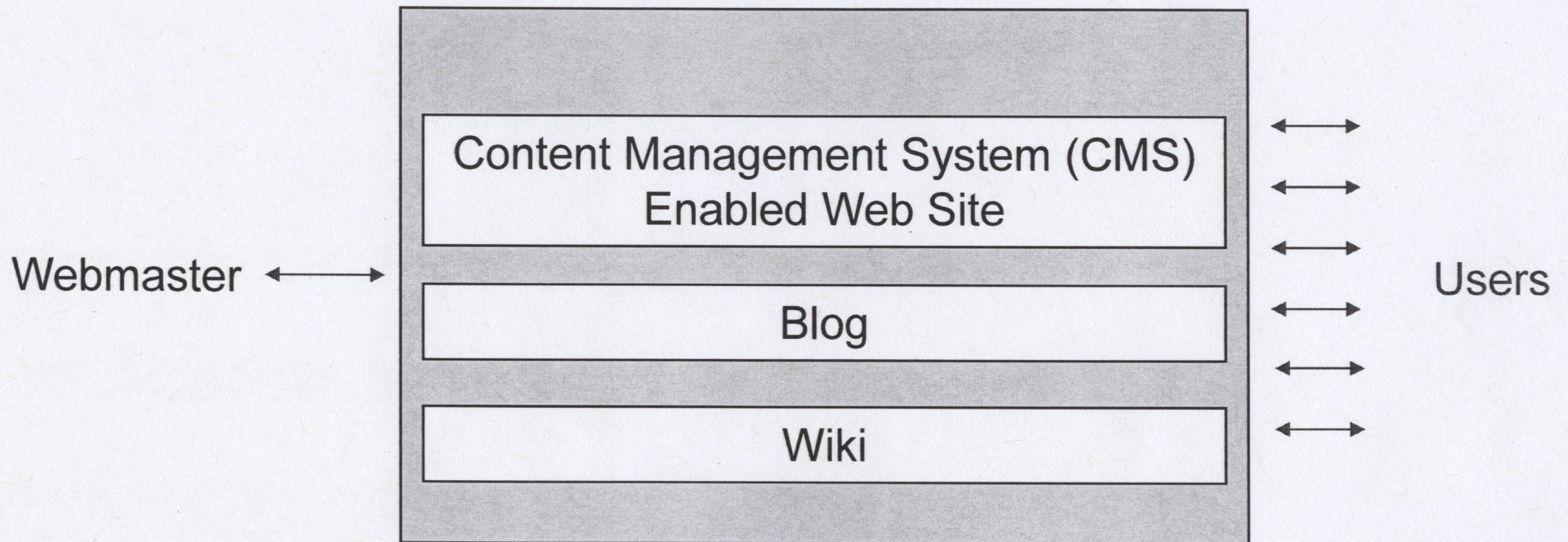
Requirements For Success

1. User generated content
2. Good security & Regular Backups
3. Value for members & other users
4. Contribute to the success of the Society
5. Supportable with available resources

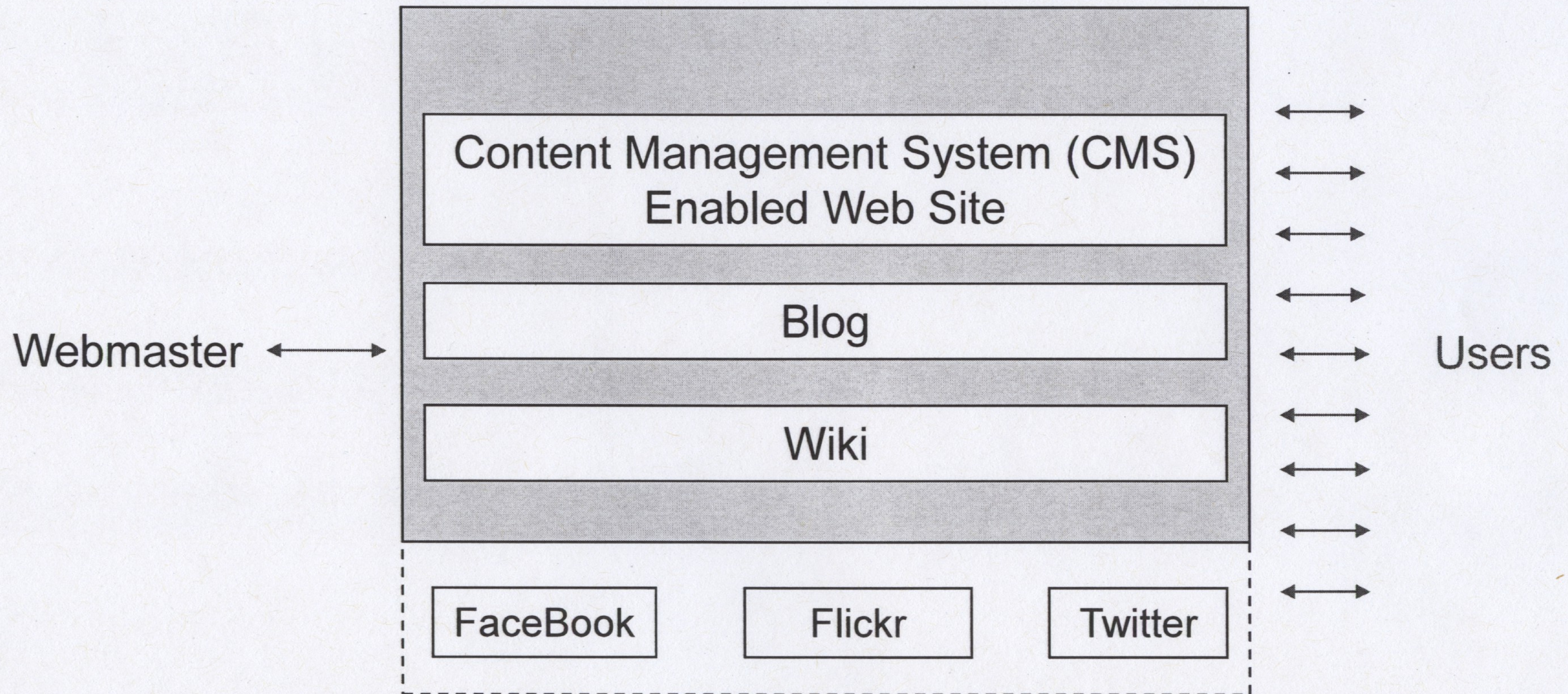
Traditional Web Site is insufficient



Presence in the Cloud



Expanded Cloud Presence



Proceed with caution...

- Using some of the available tools (Blogs, Wiki's and CMS's) is deceptively easy
- You can subscribe to a web hosting service and turn any (or all) of these up in a few days
- You can be hacked even quicker...

Helping Each Other

- We all need to work together to learn how to adapt the new technologies to our needs
- The technical needs of the Genealogical community are somewhat unique
- We need to develop and utilize some resources that will allow us to help each other

Social Networking Technology Resources for Genealogical Societies

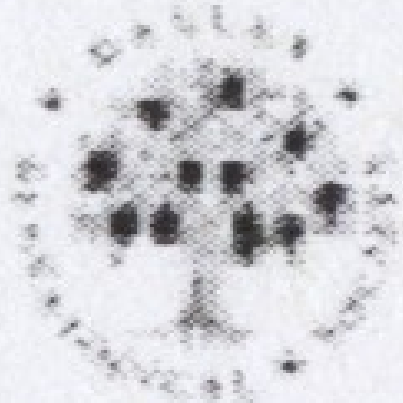
Edit This Page

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 - 3.2 Fundamental security issues
 - 3.3 .htaccess
 - 3.4 php.ini
 - 3.5 Backups
 - 3.5.1 cron
 - 3.5.2 tar
 - 3.6 Text Editors
 - 3.7 Terminal Emulation
 - 3.7.1 Putty
 - 3.8 Shell Programming
 - 3.9 MySQL

Adopt-a-wiki page




*This page adopted by:
Dallas Genealogical Society
who welcomes you to contribute.*


Adopt a page today

Search Learning & How-To's

Subject, Place or Keyword

BROWSE

 by country

 by topic

Add some information

Anyone can add information. You don't need to be an expert. Just tell us what you know. Add to an existing page, or create a new page.

Create a New Page

Social Networking Technology Resources for Genealogical Societies

<https://wiki.familysearch.org> Search for 'TC091'

- 1 Rationale
- 2 Purpose
- 3 Working in the Unix environment
- 4 PHP
- 5 CSS, XML and HTML
- 6 Google Analytics
- 7 Content Management Software
- 8 Wiki's
- 9 Blogs
- 10 Facebook
- 11 Twitter
- 12 Podcasts
- 13 RSS
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- 17 'Back End' Services
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Typical Entries...

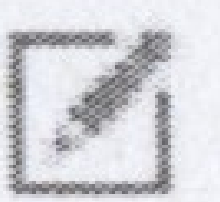
Fundamental security issues

Specific security needs will be different for every site, but there are some basic suggestions that are universal:

- Perform regular backups of your files and your MySQL database tables
- Keep current copies of your backups somewhere else
- Change your passwords frequently
- Keep your application software up to date. Hackers exploit security holes in older versions of software.
- Restrict access to known hacker sites using an .htaccess file
- Restrict known PHP exploits by using PHP.ini
- Schedule and review the output of the 'find ctime -l' command (lists files that have been changed recently, which may be an indication of malicious activity) daily
- If you have installed 'off the shelf' Wiki/Blog/CMS packages that creates tables in MySQL consider changing the default table names (refer to the individual packages documentation to see if this is possible or even recommended). This may fool malicious code that does find its way to your server
- If possible, disable displaying the version of your 'off the shelf' packages. This may throw off malicious software that is targeting specific versions of your software.

Typical Entries...

Joomla



An open source option. Some useful links are:

- [What is Joomla?](#) – Marketing hype on the main Joomla web site
- [Beginners Guide](#) (a.k.a. 'Absolute Beginners Guide to Joomla!', 'Novices' and 'What is Joomla') – where to go if you are contemplating installing and using Joomla
- [Joomla 1.5 Quick Start](#) – Free on-line videos explaining how to install and use Joomla
- [Discussion Forums](#) – lots of good help available here
- [Security Checklist](#) – an invaluable reference with excellent advice. Best read before your site is hacked. See the section titled '**The most important guidelines**' for instructions on how to subscribe to Joomla Security News (email or RSS) so you can receive notifications whenever critical updates are released.
- To see what a Genealogical Society web site created using Joomla looks like see the [Dallas Genealogical Society](#) and the [St Louis Genealogical Society](#) sites.

Social Networking Technology Resources for Genealogical Societies

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Where Generations Meet

FamilySearch exists to connect families across distance and time. Every day we work to further that goal, enabling meaningful experiences of discovery and sharing for families around the world.

We have the world's largest repository of genealogical resources and a global network of research centers.

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Page Edit Discussion History

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Social Networking Technology

Resources for Genealogical Societies

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Editing Social Networking Technology Resources for Genealogical Societies

[Disable rich editor]

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for Wikitext, Undo, Redo, Bold, Italic, Underline, Text color, Background color, Bulleted list, Numbered list, Indent, Outdent, Link, Unlink, and Help.

Rationale

Today Genealogical Societies are learning that to survive, or to at least be relevant, they must embrace technology. Many Societies don't have the expertise to set up and manage their own websites. However, having an effective website is the first step. This discussion is for those who have some proficiency with computer technology and want to learn more about how to save their Society money by designing and maintaining the website themselves. All of this technology can be purchased (or found free from a variety of sources) but in doing so the Society gives up some portion of control over content.

Purpose

As might be expected, a search of the FamilySearch Wiki using terms like Unix, shell, vi and htaccess and other 'technological' terms does not result in too many hits. However, there is a need for a genealogy focused presentation of technical materials for members of Genealogical Societies to use to create and enhance their on-line presence.

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[Create a New Page](#)

Views

Page

Edit

Discussion

History

Twitter

Twitter is another tool that is probably under utilized by most societies.

The use of HashTags to post comments from events like conferences and seminars (like RootsTech) has become popular recently.

- See [Hashtags on Twitter: How do you follow them](#) on contentious.com for more information

Flickr

Flickr is a web site for pictures and images... there may be some great potential for using this to integrate images into a web site.

Podcasts

A podcast is an on-line audio recording. This could be a useful technique for getting original content on-line

Please note that all contributions to FamilySearch Wiki may be edited, altered, or removed by other contributors. If you do not want your writing to be edited mercilessly, then do not submit it here. You are also promising us that you wrote this yourself, or copied it from a public domain or similar free resource (see FamilySearch Wiki:Copyrights for details). **Do not submit copyrighted work without permission!**

Summary: Added entry for Flickr

This is a minor edit Watch this page

Save page

Show preview

Show changes

Cancel | Editing help (opens in

new window)

to an existing page, or create a new page.

Create a New Page

Views

Page

Edit

Discussion

History

Unwatch

Move

Toolbox

Community

Personal tools

9 Blogs

9.1 Popular Blogging Software

9.2 Related pages on Family Search

10 Facebook

11 Twitter

→ 12 Flickr

13 Podcasts

14 RSS

15 Creating Web-Based Presentations

16 Personal Digital Archiving

Other Possibilities

- As a community, we need to be able to ask questions, discuss ideas & exchange information
- We should investigate establishing:
 - Forum
 - Blog
 - ?????

User Name Remember Me?
 Password

[Register](#)

[Help](#)



[Community](#) ▼

[Today's Posts](#)

[Search](#) ▼

Welcome to the FamilySearch Forums - Beta.

Please be our guest to browse any topic listed below for helpful family history research and FamilySearch product information provided by experienced FamilySearch patrons. Simply select the forum of your choice to search for information, ask questions or offer answers to others. While registration is not required to view, ask, or answer questions, many additional [benefits](#) are available to those who do [register](#) and become members of our free community. If you have forgotten your user name or password, click [here](#).

Forum	Last Post	Threads	Posts
Research Advice Here you can ask questions about how to find ancestors.			
Localities Sub-Forums: <input type="checkbox"/> Africa, <input type="checkbox"/> Asia, <input type="checkbox"/> Europe, <input type="checkbox"/> Latin America, <input type="checkbox"/> North America, <input type="checkbox"/> Oceania, <input type="checkbox"/> United Kingdom and Ireland			
Other Sub-Forums: <input type="checkbox"/> General			
FamilySearch Support Here you can discuss and get help with family history centers and FamilySearch websites			

Questions & Discussion

Family Search Wiki

- **<https://wiki.familysearch.org>**
- Search for '**TC091**'

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