After You're Gone

Future Proofing Your Genealogy Research

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Introduction

Try as we might, we really have little control over what will happen to our possessions, even our bodies, after we die. Yes, we can draw up legal documents, we can express our wishes to family members and more; however, there are no guarantees when it comes to these matters. The best we can do is prepare, plan and communicate now.

When it comes to years of genealogy research and material that you have accumulated, what plans have you made to ensure that this legacy does not die with you? In ***After*** *You're Gon****e: Future Proofing Your Genealogy Research***, you will find valuable advice on creating a realistic plan to get your "genealogy affairs" in order. Make sure that the next generation of researchers can benefit from your years of hard work and following your passion.

The Perils of Inaction: Lost Genealogy

To gain some insight as to what could possibly happen to all your genealogy stuff, simply read the haunting story *Cleaning Mother's House* by genealogist Michael John Neill. As you read the words, just imagine one of your children or grandchildren being in the same situation and not knowing the importance of your genealogy research.

Cleaning Mother's House

It has been nearly a year since fictional genealogist Barbara passed away. Her daughter Charlene reflects upon that year in a letter to her friend Karen. Charlene truly has been busy. Barbara is probably rolling over in her grave.

Karen,

As usual, my cards are late. It has been a busy year.

We spent much of the year settling up Mother's estate. The house sold well, but cleaning it took longer than we expected.

You are probably the only person who did not know Mother was a genealogy buff. She told practically every human she encountered. I'm convinced that genealogy "nut" was the most accurate phrase. The stuff was all over the house. The inheritance would have been enough to pay for my new Mercedes had she not insisted on spending money on that blasted hobby. I don't know why she couldn't be more like Tom's mother. Nadine spends her day doing needlepoint and watching reruns of 50s television shows. Tom just does not realize how lucky he is, but men never do. My mother had to run off to cemeteries and courthouses. She even went to a conference in Davenport, Iowa, last year! Can you imagine? Davenport, Iowa! After she got back, she was so excited about all that she had learned and all the fun she had. She was planning on going to another one in California this year. Well the grim reaper took care of that.

Because of my promotion to head of knick knack sales at Garbageforless.com, I had not been home for several years. I was appalled to learn that Mother had converted my old bedroom into her family history "headquarters." My shelves of Teen Beat and other magazines documenting my adolescence had been replaced with old family photographs, copies of old documents, and something called family group sheets. She even got rid of the pants I wore to my first junior high dance. I cried at the thought.

I could not bear to go in the room and be reminded that my childhood had been stripped from me and replaced with an obsession with the past. I told the children that if they would clean the room and prepare the items for the garage (should I say "garbage"?) sale they could have the proceeds. I learned what true entrepreneurs they are.

Kenny stripped Mother's hard drive in under ten minutes. I kept hearing him say "GedCom is GedGone . . . GedCom is GedGone . . ." I have no idea what it meant, but the computer fetched a good price. Before he unplugged the computer, he erased all Mom's floppy disks and downloaded public domain games. He sold these at a nominal price.

Susan took the old photographs to a flea market and was able to sell many of them. Some special labels had to be taken off and we had to take them out of protective envelopes. Mother had written the names on the back of many of them. At least none of

those pictures of depressing old dead people had our last name written on them. I don't want to be associated with such sour people.

Mother had some type of old plat book -- whatever that is. Kenny tore out the pages individually and sold them separately on Ebay. It was so clever. His dad said he got much more than if he had left the book in one piece.

Susan didn't tear the bibles apart though. I thought that showed tremendously good sense. She's learning that not everything can be marketed in the same way. The 1790 bible brought her a good penny, but she couldn't get the one from 1900 to bring more than fifty cents. She donated it to a local church, and here is where I am so proud of her. We can write if off as a charitable deduction. Someone had written what they had paid for the bible on the back cover. Susan converted that to 2001 dollars and will use that for our tax deduction amount. I've already enrolled Susan in tax lawyer summer camp this coming August.

There was some old large certificate of written on heavy paper. The silly thing wasn't even in English, so why would Mother keep it? Kenny used the other side to keep track of the things he had sold. Waste not, want not. When we were finished we put the paper in the recycling bin.

The kids put an old wedding dress from the 1870s in the washer to get the stains out. It was terribly filthy. The worthless thing didn't even survive the extra long cycle and the half-gallon of bleach. It's doubtful we can even use it for cleaning rags.

The dress was in some kind of old trunk. I'm not certain what it was for, but it had a name stenciled on the front in huge letters along with the name of a town. Susan gave it a good coating of red paint and sold it as a toy box.

The filing cabinets were emptied of their contents, as were the three shelves of binders. Kenny got the bright idea to shred the paper and sell it in bags as New Year's confetti. The file folders were too heavy to shred.

The baby did not react well to any of this. She cried and fussed almost the entire time. Kenny thought she wanted tea, which made no sense to me at all. As she cried, it sounded like she was saying "family tee." She can't even talk yet and I think Kenny was hearing things. The baby does look exactly like my mother though, it's the oddest thing. The fussing didn't stop until she spit up an entire bottle of strained prunes on my junior high jeans, which we did find in the basement. They were ruined -- it was the one real loss. Now my past has really been taken from me -- magazines and all.

Charlene

Whether you have a child like Charlene or not, have you thought about what might happen to your genealogy collection upon your demise?

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Who Knows Your Research Best?

Knowledge of your genealogy research is one of the most important aspects of preserving and future proofing that research. Who knows your research and your collection better than you do? If a family member were to go through your books, your binders, your photos, your maps, would they really understand what is in that collection? Would they have the knowledge necessary to find the right library or genealogy society for a possible donation?

This is why it is important for you to review your genealogy research now; there's no better time to do this. You know the most about your research, especially since you are the one likely to have gathered the material. Spend time now to inventory your research, to label important items, and to make sure your family members are not left playing a guessing game.

What Might Happen to Your Research

While the story *Cleaning Mother's House* is fictional, it could very likely become a reality with your own genealogy research. Could you imagine your son or daughter throwing out boxes of genealogy material that you so meticulously gathered over several years? What if your family sold your items at an estate sale: would they really understand the value of genealogy books, original records, letters, diaries and similar items? And what about your computer, your digital files and other items that might be located on a hard drive or even in "the cloud?" Are your genealogy files even organized in a way that they are easy to find? On the other hand, do you have them scattered over several folders, directories and even hard drives?

You have a responsibility to safeguard your research and to make sure it is passed on properly. If you do not act now, someone else will act on your behalf.

Action Plan Options

No matter how you decide to use the information in this book, you should establish an action plan for what to do with your genealogy research once you are gone. First, realize that “inaction” is actually an action plan in and of itself, believe it or not. So if you do not want to do anything about the future of your genealogy research, then that is your action plan and frankly, you really do not need the information in this book.

What is more likely: you purchased this book because you are haunted by the idea of having years of genealogy research pitched in the trash. Review the Action Plan options in the chart below and use it as a checklist for how you want to handle the disposition of your genealogy and family history research. Also, make sure that this checklist is a part of your estate planning papers and that someone in your family has a copy!

Click **HERE** to download the Excel spreadsheet version of the Action plan or visit https://abundantgenealogy.com/actionplan

Getting Organized

Entire books exist specific to the topic of organizing genealogy research materials, including the use of color-coded filing systems, scanning and digitizing documents and photos, and more.

Before purchasing any book, let alone organizing supplies, visit these two valuable sites that offer solid advice on organizing your genealogy:

- **Organize Your Family History**: Janine Adams offers many tips and tricks at her site **Organize Your Family History** (http://organizeyourfamilyhistory.com/). Sign up for her mailing list to get the latest news on staying organized.

- **The Organized Genealogist**: To access a community of like-minded genealogists struggling with staying organized, visit **The Organized Genealogist Facebook** (http://www.facebook.com/groups/organizedgenealogist/). Once you join, either review the latest issues genealogists are having with organization skills, or post your own query.

Taking Inventory

How can you create a plan for the future of your genealogy research without knowing what you have? The first step is to create an inventory of ALL of your genealogy items.

There are many different ways to take an inventory; you need to find a system that works for you. Perhaps you should start with pencil or pen and paper, especially if you are not computer savvy. Alternatively, you may want to use a spreadsheet or some type of table in a digital document format such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Google Drive or similar programs.

One option that many people do not consider: using a voice-to-text program such as Dragon Naturally Speaking. You can actually install Dragon Mobile Apps on a smart device such as an iPhone and use it to dictate inventory notes as you are going through your research. This is an easy and efficient way of doing inventory instead of having to review an item, stop and type information, and then go back and do cleanup and formatting of the text.

Labeling Items

When taking inventory, it is important to label each item or include a note with the item. Remember that the person cleaning out your possessions may not be a genealogist or be familiar with genealogy-related material.

So why is labeling so important? Here is why: you are the closest one to your genealogy and family history research, but after you are gone, someone who is not as familiar with your collection will need to go through the items and work on their disposition. You may be familiar with items such as plat books, but the person reviewing your collection may

not be. In addition, if you have family photos with different surnames on the back, your family members may not realize that they are related to the people in these photos.

The best approach is to use the KISS concept: “Keep It Simple. stupid.” This means not making any assumptions; it also means spelling out acronyms and not using lingo or slang that genealogists are familiar with in the genealogy field.

Remember to work smart and efficiently: instead of doing an inventory on the first pass and then going back to label items, consider performing both tasks at once. While this process may seem tedious and time-consuming, using a “one pass” methodology will save time in the end. In addition, before you get ready to take inventory, make sure you have everything in terms of supplies to label and identify items.

Inventory Form

Need a form? Here is a Personal Records Inventory you can download in PDF format.

Hard Copy Items

Most genealogists have copies of documents, photos, print outs and more, often organized in file folders and binders. Here are the types of items to track:

- Genealogy research binders, folders and stacks of paper.
- Genealogy books and magazines purchased over the years.
- Photos, slides, negatives, videos, and CD-ROMs.
- Technology items such as scanners, software programs, and flash drives.
- Miscellaneous items such as audio recordings, gadgets, etc.

Digital Items

As a genealogist, you may not realize how much digital information you have on your computer or smart devices and where it is all stored. The easiest way to organize your digital assets is to create three backups following the 3-2-1 rule: (3) different backups of the same data, using (2) different media types, and (1) backup located offsite.

- Genealogy database files.
- Scanned photographs and documents.
- Digital books, magazines and guides.
- Digital writings such as PDFs and blog posts you’ve written.
- Emails from family and other researchers as well as emails that you’ve sent.
- Any other items you believe are important including social media posts.

Online Profiles

More and more, genealogists are leveraging online websites, apps and social media for research purposes as well as to connect with others. While you may not have valuable information stored at these sites, at a minimum you should allow family members to disable or shut down your social media accounts. By doing so, your followers are informed and your family avoids having these accounts hacked or misused.

Create a list of website names, their URLs (addresses) and login credentials. Keep the list in a safe place. Print out and keep with estate planning papers or store online with a master password to access the list; make sure your executor knows the password.

Working with Societies, Libraries and Archives

One of the items on your action plan for the disposition of your genealogy research may involve a donation to genealogical society, a library, an archive or a repository. Working with these institutions takes planning. Do not make any assumptions as to whether or not the organization will accept your donation. It is imperative that you work with the organization ahead of time and come to an agreement as to what items they will or will not accept and how the items are to be donated once you are gone.

Test Your Knowledge of Donation Policies

There are many "myths" about donating genealogy research to organizations:

- "You can donate any and all of your genealogy 'stuff' to the National Archives." ***False***: The National Archives is the archivist of record for the United States government; it does not typically archive personal items.

- "You can donate your genealogy to the Library of Congress." ***Partially true***: The Library of Congress does accept published genealogies and other items of importance.

- "You can donate your genealogy to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City." ***True***. FamilySearch, which operates the Family History Library, has a set of donation guidelines. Click **HERE** to download.

Once you have come to an agreement with an organization as to donations, make sure you inform both your family members and the executor of your estate. There should be no surprises on either end. You do not want the organization to call your family two or three weeks after your death and say where is our stuff? Nor, do you want the institution to receive a call out of the blue from a family member saying “We are ready to donate Mom’s genealogy research, where should we send it?”

Case Study: The Newberry Library

To gain some perspective on how an organization such as a genealogical library handles donation requests pertaining to personal genealogy research, here is an overview of how the Newberry Library in Chicago deals with such requests:

- It is immensely helpful for an organization to be in contact with potential donors prior to the time of donation. This allows for a constructive dialog covering issues of what items will be accepted, what formats are most useful, and to establish a time frame for donation.

- Some donors speak to us even years in advance, and the subsequent donations always end up being the most valuable collections for researchers, because we work with the donor to "shape" their collections to meet our researchers' needs.

- Every institution has its own set of organizational preferences and desired materials, so by contacting us early, we can also help donors identify the right institution for their papers if it is not the Newberry.

- The absolute worst situation, for several reasons, is being contacted about a donation after the original creator has passed away. Not only are family members generally time-pressured to dispose of the materials, in addition they generally do not have the same understanding or appreciation of the collection to pass on to us. This is vital information we need in order to appropriately process and prepare the materials for use by future researchers. Sadly, there are some cases in which we have had to turn down donations because we do not have the staff resources to retrace the years' worth of effort on the part of the original creator.

- Processing materials, i.e., organizing them in a way that is compatible with our guidelines, and making them visible via our catalogs and finding aids, is often a time-intensive process. Of course, the better labeled and organized the materials are when we receive them, the easier a task it is, but every institution has systems and formats to which it must adhere.

- At the Newberry, for genealogical donations, we first review the materials (either on-site at the donor's home/office, or at the Newberry) for appropriateness at the Newberry in terms of geographic areas covered, time frame, family lines, and size of collection. We advise the donor on what formats we prefer and then work with them on a time frame and a deed of gift.

- We also discuss what processing the Newberry will need to do to the materials to make them accessible. If it is a particularly large collection, we involve our collection development committee for their input and approval/denial.

- Once we receive a donation, staff reviews it to make sure that we received what we expected. We then review the organization of the files and either retain that organization or create a new one. Materials are almost always rehoused in archival-quality materials for long-term preservation.

- Duplicates are discarded (or returned to the donor, per their request), loose-leaf pages are generally discarded as well, photographs are labeled if needed and known, and computer printouts (i.e., census printouts) are often discarded as well. Any bound books are removed for separate cataloging.

- Once organized in this manner, an inventory of the collection is prepared, i.e., a listing of its contents. That inventory is then uploaded to our catalog and website and several entries are made in library-wide finding aids to reflect the new collection. The material is then cataloged, either at the collection- or folder-levels, and then is physically housed in our stacks building, where it awaits retrieval by researchers.

- The cost of processing varies widely, but a good rule of thumb is that every linear foot of material is likely to require eight to ten hours of staff time to process. Sometimes there are materials costs as well (transferring items to acid-free folders and archival boxes, for instance), not to mention all the indirect costs of operating a library.

- If a donation comes with a financial gift to support its processing, we are able to prioritize the processing of that material. Otherwise, its processing is dependent on staff availability. The cost to process a collection will vary widely by size, nature of material, level of staff expertise required, and by institution, but it would not be wrong to use $50 per linear foot as a minimum, at least in The Newberry's case. Again, though, collaborating with curators in advance will cut down on the work and time that has to be done at the institution.

Thanks to Matthew Rutherford, Curator of Genealogy and Local History at The Newberry Library for his valuable insights and offering an inside look at how donations of genealogy research are handled by an organization.

Which Organization Should I Select?

When it comes to selecting an organization to receive a donation of genealogy research, take time to select the best organization matched to your collection. You may want to consider several organizations, especially if your research covers many different topics or areas such as German genealogy, Huguenot genealogy, etc. For this reason, creating an inventory is so important. When taking inventory you may find it helpful to denote the type of research or the category of research for each item.

- **Genealogy Libraries**: Contact nationally known libraries with substantial genealogy collections; determine if they are interested in your research. Realize that the nearest library may not be a good fit, especially if your ancestors migrated from another part of the country.

- **University Libraries**: A university library might be interested in your genealogy materials if they could assist in research on a specific topic. Again, you may need to "shop around" for the right library for your specific research area.

- **Genealogical Societies**: Some genealogy societies have their own libraries that will gladly accept materials. Your local society would be more interested in general materials while a regional society would want specific materials related to their particular area.

- **Historical Societies**: Like museums, most historical societies are interested in artifacts more than research materials. If you have unique items such as military artifacts, letters, rare documents, etc., a historical society is a good candidate for these items.

- **Museums**: If you have artifacts that can help strengthen an existing collection, a museum is your best bet. It helps the organization if you can provide background information and research related to the provenance of the item.

Dealing with Rejection

Despite all your efforts to catalog and document your genealogy research, you will likely receive a polite "no thank you" or a "good luck" response from an organization. Do not let this deter you; make sure you have a list of five or six organizations to target for your donation.

Moreover, even after weeks or months of trying to locate the right repository, you may not find an organization willing to accept your collection. You may need to change your action plan and focus on somehow keeping the research in the family after you are gone.

Remember to Communicate

Once you have come to an agreement with an organization as to donations, make sure you inform both your family members and the executor of your estate. There should be no surprises on either end. You do not want the organization to call your family two or three weeks after your death and say "Where's our stuff?" Nor, do you want the institution to receive a call "out of the blue" from a family member saying. "We are ready to donate Mom's genealogy research, so where would you like it delivered?"

Tips for Working with Repositories

If you plan to donate anything related to your genealogy to an archive, a library or a genealogy society, here are some tips from those who have worked with organizations open to receiving donations of genealogical research:

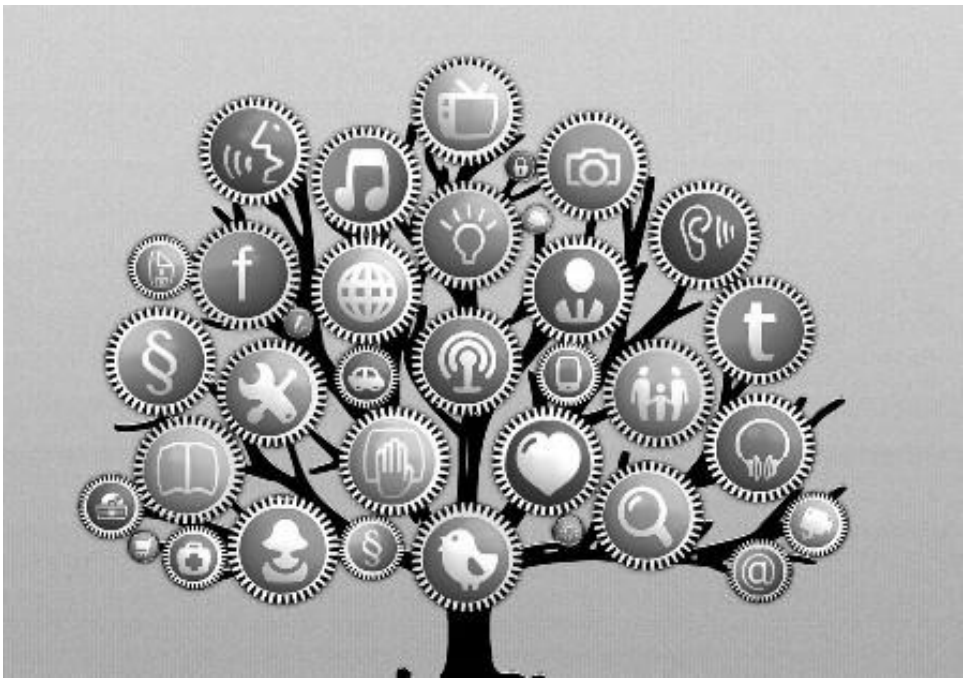
- **Contact the organization**. Always check a repository's policies before making a donation or directing your executor to make a donation.

- **Inform family members**. Let your family or friends know what your plans are involving the organization.

- **Include a monetary donation**. It costs money to process donated materials no matter how well organized those items may be. If possible, make sure you include a financial donation to the institution. Another option is to direct your executor to sell off specific items to raise money for preservation of the collection.

- **Donate items NOW**. You can always donate items while you are still alive rather than after your passing. By donating now, you have more power to direct how the items will be used and which organizations can benefit from those items. You also may be eligible for a tax benefit!

Technology to the Rescue



As with other industries and even hobbies, genealogy has moved into the digital realm, for better or for worse. Advantages include the ability to preserve fragile items through scanning and digitization as well as the ability to share items with other researchers. Disadvantages include the ability to mistakenly delete items with the touch of a key or failing to update technology such as migrating from floppy discs to flash drives. In addition, there is the fear of having your digital items stolen or "hacked."

Scanning and Digitizing

For many genealogists, before we can take inventory, we need to get our research materials organized. In addition, that can mean scanning and digitizing documents, photos and other items. While years ago the flatbed scanner was the only option available to genealogists, technology now provides a variety of options.

Scanners – Documents and Photos

- **Flatbed scanners**: Most genealogists either have their own flatbed scanner or have access to one. Many "all in one" devices bundle a flatbed scanner with a printer and fax machine. Some even have sheet feeder attachments for large groups of documents. One main drawback of a flatbed scanner is the lack of portability.

- **Wand scanners**: While wand scanners are popular due to their size and portability, many libraries and archives prohibit their use. The reasons? Most wand scanners use a very strong light source and user must "drag" the scanner across a document. Both of these practices can damage documents.

- **Flip Pal mobile scanner**: One of the newest gadgets used by genealogists is the **Flip Pal mobile scanner** (https://www.genealogybargains.com/flip-pal). The battery-operated, portable scanner can handle small items up to 4 x 6 inches. For larger items, simply remove the lid and "flip" the scanner over, then scan the item in overlapping sections. Once finished, the free stitching software that comes with the Flip Pal will create a perfect image.

Scanners – Photo Media

- **Jumbl scanner**: If you are sitting on a collection of slides, negatives, home movies as well as photographs, a flatbed or wand scanner just will not provide the scan quality or efficiency needed. Consider a multi-media scanner such as the **Jumbl** (https://www.genealogybargains.com/amazon-jumbl) that allows you to convert many types of photo media to digital files.

Scanners – Apps

- **CamScanner**: Another scanning app for smart phones is **CamScanner** (http://www.camscanner.com) offering basic scanning capabilities. A big plus is the ability to scan a document of typed text and then convert the text via OCR (optical character reading) to a text file.

Scanners – Services

- **Larsen Digital**: There are times when the "do-it-yourself" approach to scanning and digitizing items just does not work. Various third-party service providers exist, including FedEx Office, UPS Store, Wal-Mart, Costco and other local stores. **Larsen Digital** (https://www.genealogybargains.com/larsendigital) is a vendor based in Salt Lake City, Utah, that has worked with many genealogists to digitize large collections of items. Also, use the promo code **Thomas2015** to save 10%!

A highly recommended resource for anyone attempting to scan and digitize photos as well as documents is ***How to Archive Family Photos*** by Denise May Levenick. Click **HERE** for more information.

Family Sharing Sites

Another idea is to utilize one or more websites that offer a digital archive for items including photos and documents. Once such sites popular with genealogists is **FOREVER** (http://www.forever.com) since it is easy to use and allows you to invite other family members to participate. What sets FOREVER apart from other archiving

websites is that it guarantees the preservation of uploaded files for the user's lifetime plus one hundred years.

Alternatively, create your own using **DropBox** or **Google Drive** since online services can and do go out of business from time to time (remember what happened to MyFamily.com?).

Internet Archive: Upload Content

One option available to you if your genealogy research exists in digital format is to upload it all to the Internet Archive. By doing so, you will add your research to the catalog of content available to all researchers who use this valued resource.

You will need to prepare, and as with any action related to your genealogy research, make sure your executor and/or your family members know your plan. Here are some considerations to keep in mind when working with Internet Archive:

- **Create an account at Internet Archive**. Get a "virtual library card" by clicking here and setting up an account at the Internet Archive website.

- **Only public domain OR your copyrighted content can be uploaded**. Again, inventory as well as provenance will be important for your plan to donate content to Internet Archive. Any public domain content is permitted as well as content that you own via copyright. If you have documents or photos about which you are unsure as to their copyright, it is better to omit them from the upload to Internet Archive.

- **Get a Creative Commons License**. In order to upload your own content such as research notes, written narrative, and photographs, you will need to grant a license to Internet Archive. The easiest way is to get a **Creative Commons License** (http://creativecommons.org) for free before uploading content.

- **Work with Internet Archive staff**. Read the Uploading Content FAQ at the Internet Archive site and understand what file types can be uploaded. Realize that GEDCOM files, which are standard to the genealogy industry, may not be uploaded without the help of Internet Archive staff; they will want to understand the file format and how it is used.

Digital Footprint

Over the past five years, the genealogy industry has leveraged the power of social media to keep family historians engaged. While sites such as Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Pinterest and others have expanded our ability to connect with family and other researchers, it also has left a “digital footprint” that is not so easily removed once a person dies.

Some of the largest social media sites are beginning to recognize the need to manage the digital presence of a loved one after they die:

- **Facebook** (http://www.facebook.com) recently added a “legacy contact” feature allowing users to have another person manage their digital afterlife. Facebook also allows a user profile to be converted to a “memorial” page once notified that the user has died.

- **Google** (http://www.google.com) provides an Inactive Account Manager for someone to manage the Google accounts of a deceased family member or friend.

As concern grows over how to handle one’s digital footprint, look for the number of related sites and services to increase. Use **The Digital Beyond** (http://www.thedigitalbeyond.com) to track new programs in this growing industry and look for tips on the best way to manage your digital footprint.

Best Practices for Genealogy Future Proofing

In summary, here are some tips of future proofing your genealogy research and making sure it is preserved for others to use for generations to come:

- **Take inventory**. Determine what you have and this includes hard copy as well as digital assets and online sites.
- **Include in estate planning**. Create a codicil to your will or make sure there is some form of instructions concerning your genealogy research.
- **Backup your data**. Backing up your genealogy data is a good habit for the living and it will keep all your info in one place for your executor.
- **Future proof your technology**. CD-ROM discs degrade over time. Negatives and movie film can fade and fall apart. Transfer items to digital ASAP.
- **Have that conversation with family**. Be very clear about where your genealogy research is located, why it is important, and what you want done with it.
- **Donate books and magazines to a book fair**. Most libraries and repositories will not want your back issues of APGQ or NGSQ or Ancestry magazine. However, some have an annual book fair OR they have a thrift shop where these items are sold. Call ahead and see if they will take your old magazines and books.
- **Contact organizations**. Determine which libraries, societies and archives will accept all or part of your collection. Donate items you do not need NOW.

- **Ask for suggestions**. If an organization decides to “pass” on your donation, ask for a referral to another organization that might be interested.

- **Post items online**. Consider starting a blog – even a private one – to preserve your family stories. Do the same with a family tree on Ancestry or one of the popular genealogy sites.

- **Read the TOS and have an exit strategy**. Whenever you sign up for a website or app where you are uploading data, read the Terms of Services agreement to fully understand what the site can do with your data. In addition, websites are known to shut down, sometimes with little notice. Make sure you understand how to export your data and transfer it to another site.

- **Do stuff NOW**. Tell your own stories NOW. Write that genealogy book NOW. Interview family members NOW.

Resources

Articles and Books

- **4 Things To Do Before You Donate Your Genealogy**
  https://abundantgenealogy.com/gendonate1
- **Cleaning Mother's House**
  http://rootdig.blogspot.com/2010/11/cleaning-mothers-house.html
- **Donating Your Personal or Family Records to a Repository**
  http://www2.archivists.org/publications/brochures/donating-familyrecs
- **Money Saving Resources for Preserving Family Photos, Slides and Home Movies**
  https://www.genealogybargains.com/moneysaving-scanning
- **What happens to your tangible and digital "stuff" when you die?**
  http://media.familysearch.org/will-essentials-what-happens-to-your-tangible-and-digital-stuff-when-you-die/

Forms and Templates

- **Genealogical Codicil to Last Will and Testament**
  http://www.geneabloggers.com/genwill
- **Personal Records Inventory**
  http://ftu.familytreemagazine.com/free-forms-personal-records-inventory/

Organizations Accepting Items

- **Allen County Public Library**
  http://www.genealogycenter.org/Donate.aspx
- **FamilySearch**
  https://abundantgenealogy.com/fsdonate
- **Library of Congress**
  http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/gifts.html
- **Mid-Continent Public Library**
  http://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy/donations
- **New England Historic Genealogical Society**
  http://www.americanancestors.org/support/donate-materials
- **The Newberry Library**
  http://www.newberry.org/donate-books-and-materials

Apps, Products and Websites

- **CamScanner**
  http://www.camscanner.com/
- **Creative Commons**
  http://creativecommons.org/
- **Forever**
  https://forever.com
- **Internet Archive – Upload**
  https://archive.org/about/faqs.php#Uploading_Content
- **Knotify.me**
  https://knotify.me
- **Larsen Digital**
  https://www.genealogybargains.com/larsendigital
- **Organize Your Family History**
  http://organizeyourfamilyhistory.com
- **The Digital Beyond**
  http://www.thedigitalbeyond.com
- **The Organized Genealogist Facebook Group**
  https://www.facebook.com/groups/organizedgenealogist/

Equipment and Gadgets

- **Flip Pal mobile scanner**
  https://www.genealogybargains.com/flip-pal
- **Jumbl Scanner**
  https://www.genealogybargains.com/amazon-jumbl

After You’re Gone: Future Proofing Your Genealogy Research.

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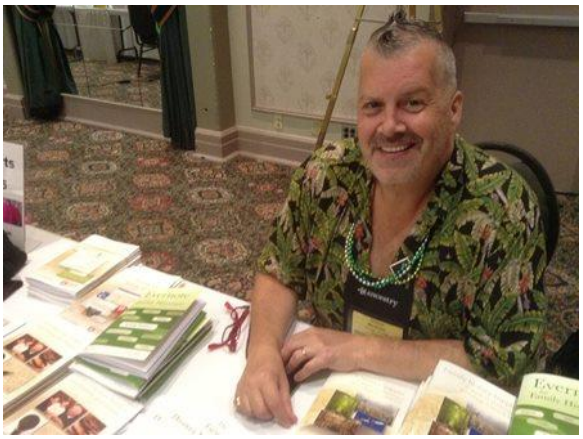
About The Author



What happens when a “tech guy” with a love for history gets laid off during The Great Recession of 2008? You get Thomas MacEntee, a genealogy professional based in the United States who is also a blogger, educator, author, social media connector, online community builder and more.

Thomas was laid off after a 25-year career in the information technology field, so he started his own genealogy-related business called High Definition Genealogy. Currently Thomas shares many of his articles and videos for free at Abundant Genealogy and also runs the popular Genealogy Bargains and DNA Bargains websites!

Thomas describes himself as a lifelong learner with a background in a multitude of topics who has finally figured out what he does best: teach, inspire, instigate, and serve as a curator and go-to-guy for concept nurturing and inspiration. Thomas is a big believer in success, and that we all succeed when we help each other find success.

Check out Thomas’ author page at http://geneaguides.com