**Introduction**

I would like to develop a website focusing on beginning genealogical research. I want to tailor it as a blog, of sorts, providing information on local resources. I started looking at blogs that were similar in style and purpose. Two popular genealogical blogs are from Family Search and Find My Past. I focused on two specific blog pages from their websites.

**Compare and contrast the sites**

Both websites are simple in design and easy to navigate. Each has a modern look, colorful pages, and large font. They are set up in a similar way. The menus are up top, each having submenus. It seems that Find My Past’s blog page has more specific categories and navigation menus to choose from. I liked that Family Search’s blog page has a comment section; though it was missing resources that Find My Past offered.

**Identification of the strengths and weaknesses of each site.**

Family Search, *Beginning genealogical research the right way* (strengths and weaknesses): This webpage offers general key steps to beginning research. The blog isn’t too long and is laid out in an easy-to-read way. There are a lot of design elements (text, font colors, and layout) that make the page pleasing to the eye. There is a search bar to search for other blogs or topics along with menus that are easy to navigate. The menu bars at the top are static throughout. Regarding the blog page, there is a comment section which is great for asking questions/communicating with other beginners; however, there isn’t an obvious “contact” section. Its weaknesses, however, may outweigh the simple outline and guide/direction. There aren’t any obvious extra links to other resources. There isn’t any specific category of blog topics to choose from. Finally, although simplicity is good, this website may be too simplistic and generic in design.

Find My Past, *10 tips to help you on your family history* (strengths and weaknesses): This website has simple color and design. One side of the page has links to other blogs/resources that could help someone new to researching. The right side of the page offers tips or general steps to take while beginning genealogical research. The page isn’t overwhelming or messy. The blog section has different categories and topics to choose from. There were easy to find blog and help menu buttons. Also, there is a search option at beginning of the menu bar. A weakness I found was that the menu bar doesn’t stay static when choosing to go to the blog section. This website is missing “contact” and “comment” sections as well.

**Describe 2 scenarios (use cases) in which the website might be used by different people.**

Scenario one: A person could look to my website to find out what key records he needs to start research on his grandmother, for example. I hope to have a section on what records to gather first and where to find them, specifically in St. Louis. The St. Louis County Library holds many vital records such as birth records and church records. If the library doesn’t have them on microfilm, a person would have access to different databases such as Ancestry to find vital records.

Scenario two: A person may want to find out where to go to sign up for genealogy classes. I could provide information on class schedules provided by organizations within the community such as the St. Louis County Library or the St. Louis Genealogical Society. I’m unsure if this would be an issue, however, I think I could still list genealogical organizations around the region with contact information.

**Comments from classmates:**

-This is a stellar idea. For some reason (maybe our inherent desire to know ourselves), most people have at least some interest in their genealogy. If they are like me, they have no idea where to begin learning about where they come from. Would it be possible to include the first step or first couple of steps to uncovering your lineage on the blog itself? Kind of like the tied and true method of "the first one is free"? I'm imagining, right at the top of the homepage, a place for people to search their surname and find some tantalizing info on themselves which would, in turn, drive further interest?

-I agree with Brian that this is a good idea. I wouldn't know where to begin and may not be able to take a library class. On the Family Search website, I had to first find the link to the blogs and then search for the one you specifically mentioned. Once I found it, it was helpful. I think it's odd that the link to blogs is at the bottom of the page because there are a lot of blog posts that look helpful. The Find My Past website is well-designed with the same color scheme and a cool old photo on the home screen. After browsing each site, I can see even more why a site like yours would be necessary. It's clear that Family Search and Find My Past have a lot of info, but it's hard to know where to start. I think it would be interesting if your blog could follow along on your search for an ancestor. It may be helpful to show what you searched and why and what you did when something was a dead end.

-I agree with what you said about the strength of both of Family Search and Find My Past. I felt that I was well navigated when I was browsing these two websites. And Find My Past have its navigation bar fixed, which is convenient to use all the time. But the drawback is that the panel above the navigation bar is too large, which gives a small space for the actual content that the costumer is browsing. But you got two great websites with wonderful inspirations!