

Customised Dynamic Web report

Researcher, September 2021

I have been using the Gramps Narrative Web report to generate my web site but have recently looked at the Dynamic Web report again. I now prefer its use of tabs rather than the linear but longer flow of a narrative report page. Also, Dynamic Web has a search box. I thought I might look at enhancing it, to better suit me, and the changes might be useful to others.

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My tree is an average family tree of mostly related people. I started with my own grandparents but moved on and added my wife's family as well. There are also some people who are not direct relatives, such as friends on the next farm and so on.

Tracking box

When you are looking at someone in the tree, it's nice to know how they are connected to you.

I added a 'Tracking' concept. It's like showing a link to an Active person, but multiplied. You can have as many tracked relatives as you like, or none. In my tree I use 4 tracking relations, my two parents plus my wife's two parents. Because, if you're on my wife's side of the family looking at the tree you would like to see how people are related to her parents, it might be a great-great aunt on her side.

Set up

First, tag individuals in your tree. I use a tag I called Tracking, but you can use any tag name.	Rabbit, Bunny 1	
	Title: <input type="text"/>	Nick: <input type="text"/>
	Given: <input type="text" value="Bunny 1"/>	
	Surname: <input type="text" value="prefix"/> <input type="text" value="Rabbit"/>	
	General	
	Gender: <input type="text" value="male"/>	ID: <input type="text" value="I0016"/>
		Tags: Tracking

Select your tracking tag in the report options when you create the report. It is on the Advanced options page.

☐ Suppress Gramps ID

Tracking tag: Tracking

Report

The tracked relations are shown on the Report home page

In this case I am Tracking two people

If there are no people in the report who have the tracking tag attached, then this table does not show

Family Tree

Click a category to see a list

Category
Surnames: 10
Individuals: 26
Families: 9
Sources: 5
Media: 3
Places: 7

Tracked relations

Relationship tracking will show connections, if any, to these individuals:

- Old Mrs Hare [10018] (b. ?)
- Ralph Rabbit [10016] (b. ?)

Person to search for

For each person in the report the Tracking box is shown in their header

This person is related to two of the tracked individuals, so two tracks are shown

If there are no relationships to any of the tracked individuals, then the Tracking box is not displayed

Peter Rabbit [10013]

Birth Name	Peter Rabbit
Gender	Male
Life span	2 - 2
Tracking: I am the	father of Bunny 1 Rabbit <small>[10016] (b. ?)</small> son of Old Mrs Hare <small>[10018] (b. ?)</small>

The Tracking tag is optional; if you no longer want to show Tracking, then select the blank row in the tag option before re-generating the report.

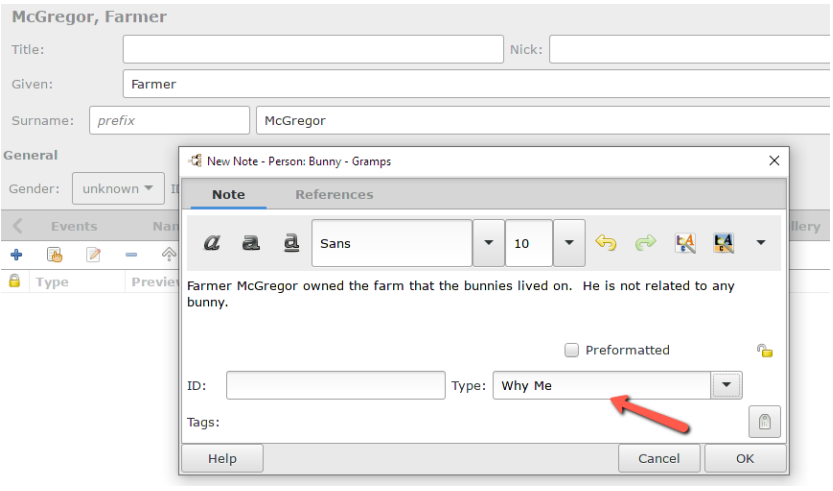
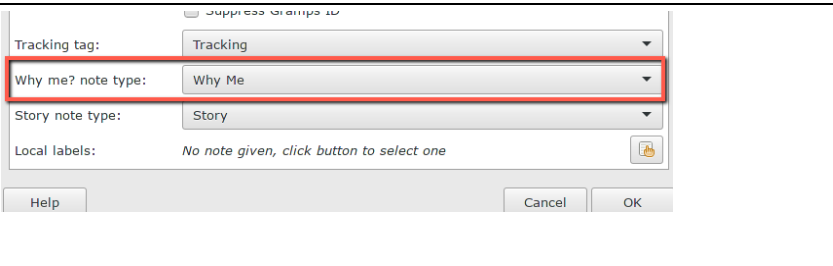
Why Me box

There are a few reasons people might be in my tree. The new Tracking box in the individual's header shows the results from the relationship calculator, but if you are not the right kind of relative, or not a relative at all, then there is no result from that.

Why Me is a mechanism to answer the question – Why is that person in this tree? It shows a note in the individual's header.

It works using a custom note type. In my tree I have added a new note type of Why Me. But you can use any name you want for your custom note type. You select the note type to display in report options.

Set up

<p>Create a note on your person</p> <p>Here I created a note with a custom type named Why Me.</p> <p>You can use any name you like</p>	
<p>Select your note type in the Why Me note report options when you create the report.</p> <p>It is on the Advanced options page.</p>	

Report

Farmer McGregor [I0022]

Birth Name	Farmer McGregor
Gender	Male
Life span	? - - - ?
Why am I in this tree?	Farmer McGregor owned the farm that the bunnies lived on. He is not related to any bunny.

Notes Ancestors Descendants

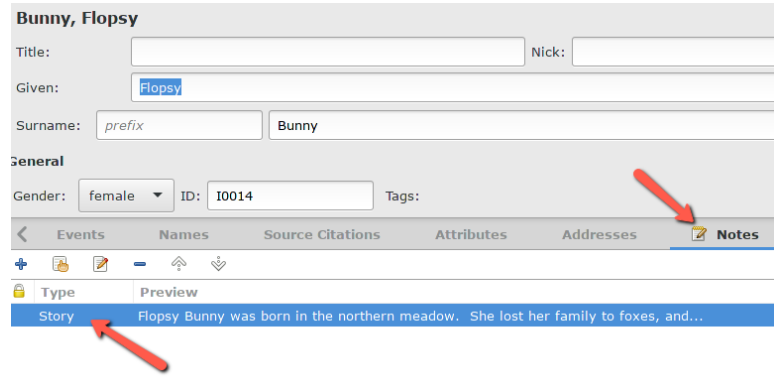
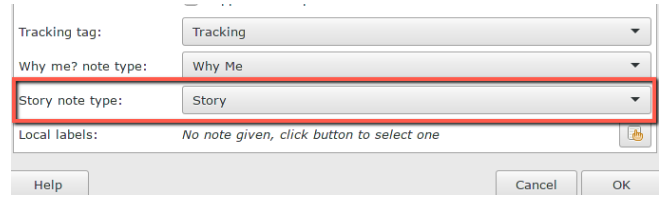
The Why Me box display is optional; if you no longer want to show it at the top, then select the blank row in the Why Me note type option before re-generating the report. Why Me notes are still notes, so they will show in the Notes tab for a person. The above also shows an example of what I call local labelling. I have changed the standard label (Why me) to a longer more informative label. Local labels are described in another part of this document.

Any person in the tree can have a Tracking result and can also a Why Me result. I have given almost every person in my tree a Why Me note, even those who I know will have a Tracking result.

Story box

When people cruise through a few pages they sometimes don't want to read a lot, just a bit about a person. This enhancement shows a brief story about the person at the top of their page.

Set up

<p>Create a note on your person</p> <p>Here I created a note with a custom type of Story</p> <p>You can use any name you like</p>	
<p>Select your note type in the Story note type option when you create the report</p> <p>It is on the Advanced options page</p>	

Report

Their story is shown in the person header. If there is no Story note for a person, then a Story box is not displayed.

Flopsy Bunny [I0014]	
Birth Name	Flopsy Bunny
Gender	Female
Life span	? - - - ?
Tracking: I am the	mother of Bunny 1 Rabbit [I0016] (b. ?)
Story	<p>Flopsy Bunny was born in the northern meadow. She lost her family to foxes, and was taken in by her Aunt Jemima.</p> <p>After working in the fields, she went to school, and then married Peter Rabbit. She has never been very far away from the meadow.</p>
Notes	Ancestors
Descendants	

The Story box display is optional; if you no longer want to show Stories at the top, then select the blank row in the Story note type option before re-generating the report. Stories are still notes, so they will still show in the Notes tab for a person.


If you have a long story, this is probably not the best place for it – you can use standard Gramps notes formatting, but if it is long, it requires the user to scroll down the page. My stories for display are only a

few sentences or paragraphs. I save any long stories as a PDF document, where I can use all of Word's document capabilities, headings, images etc, save as a PDF and then put that in Gramps and link to it just like other documents. It's a choice.

Life Span box

To save me the effort of looking down through events (some people have many events), I added a Life span box in the person's header.

Set up

Tick the Life span option It is on the Advanced options page	Story note type: <input type="text"/>
	Local labels: <i>No note given, click button to select one</i> 
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Print life span
	<input type="button" value="Help"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/> <input type="button" value="OK"/>

Report

Birth Name	Othero Windsor
Gender	Male
Age at death	about 45 years, 10 months, 21 days
Life span	Abt Jan 1955 - - - 22 Nov 2000

Life span display is optional; if you no longer want to show Life span at the top, then un-tick the 'Print life span' option before re-generating the report. The option is on the Advanced options tab.

Multiple Family clarity

One of my reasons for not using the Dynamic Web report in the first place was the display of unusual families when the option to display half and step siblings is ticked. The average family is fine, there is a box for parents, and a box for siblings.

But it was hard to follow if there were two or three families, it was just a list of boxes for parents that were somehow related to the person, and the children in those families. The reader had to puzzle out what was going on. The Narrative Web report has a simpler display, but I don't know enough yet to put a similar thing into the Dynamic Web report.

I added extra information to the parents and siblings boxes to make it more obvious who was a birthparent, and a foster child and so on. I make use of the birth status that has been recorded in Gramps. It does not do any calculations.

I nested the siblings display into their parents. The connection is more obvious, and if you collapse a parent box then parents and siblings will both collapse.

Ancestors tab

Lulu Bunny [10023]

Birth Name	Lulu Bunny
Gender	Female
Life span	1 Sep 2020 - - - ?
Tracking: I am the	half-sister of Ralph Rabbit [10010] (b. ?)

Events

Parents & siblings

Spouses & children

Parents: Family of unknown Bunny and Flopsy Bunny [F0008] Union: Unknown

unknown Bunny [10025] (b. ?)

Flopsy Bunny [10014] (b. ?)

Parental relationships to Lulu - Birth by this mother , Birth by this father

Siblings

1. Lulu Bunny [10023] (b. 2020-09-01)

2. Bella Bunny [10024] (b. ?)

Relationship to Father: Unknown

Parents: Family of Peter Rabbit and Flopsy Bunny [F0004] Union: Married

Peter Rabbit [10013] (b. ?)

Flopsy Bunny [10014] (b. ?)

Parental relationships to Lulu - Not in this family (it is another marriage/union of a parent)

Siblings

1. Ralph Rabbit [10010] (b. ?)

Now I can see that Lulu Bunny was born to Flopsy and an unknown other Bunny. Later, Flopsy married Peter Rabbit, but Lulu was never part of that family (left home when Flopsy married I suppose).

As an aside, the Tracking box at the top shows that Ralph Rabbit is a half-sister of Lulu (which is correct, they have the same mother) but lower down for Peter and Flopsy the parental relationships are none to Lulu. Which is also correct because Lulu was never added as a child in the Peter and Flopsy family editor. This shows that Lulu's ancestral and social connections are different.

If Ralph was not a Tracked person, then the half-sister connection would not be shown on the page. The Narrative web makes a calculation to determine some of these facts, which is why I think the Narrative web might be better in this area. The calculation could be done here as well (I think I could manage that bit) but it needs some tweaking around stepchild, stepmother and so on to take account of the birth relationships (I think). I have an old family in my tree where the father remarried, but the daughter NEVER regarded the new spouse as a stepmother, so it's not just a time of birth time of death calculation.

Visually, the tab has a fair bit of vertical empty space (that was already there) but is OK for the average family.

Descendants tab

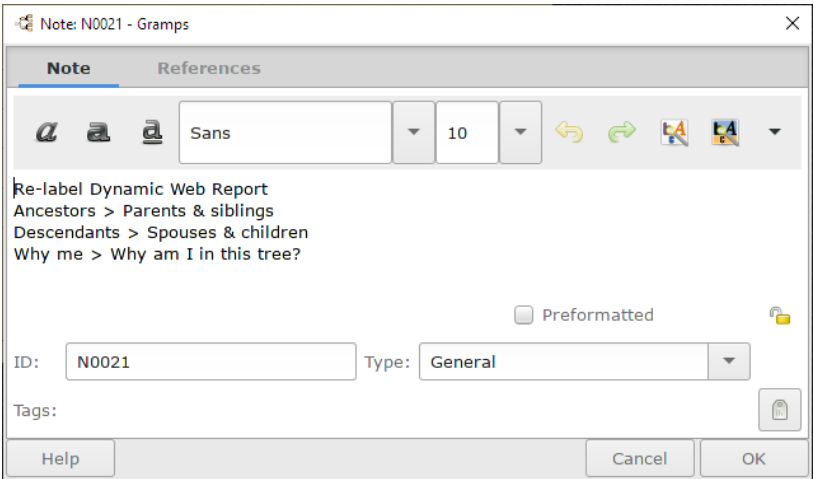
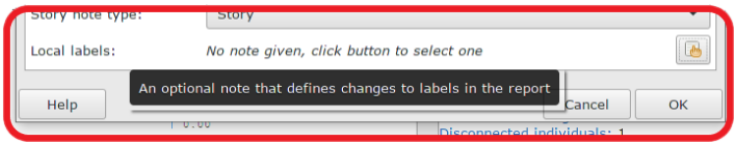

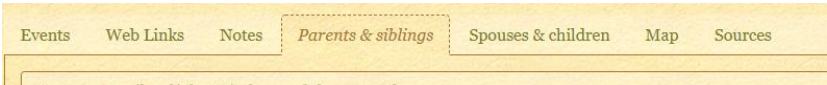
I have not changed that tab yet other than to add the marriage type onto the Family. I did fix a collapsing problem.

Local Labels

When working out the 'best' labels, I wanted an easier way to change the labels on the report, in place of having to edit the Python code. This is an easier way for the person generating the report to change labels, it's not a way for the final viewer or end user to change labels.

It works by reading a note. The note to use for local labels is selected as a report option. The option can be left empty, in which case nothing will change.

Example

<p>Example of a local labels note:</p> <p>It is just an ordinary text note. I used the General type.</p>	
<p>Selection:</p> <p>Local Labels option on Advanced options page:</p> <p>Click the note button and select your note</p>	
<p>Result:</p> <p>Before</p>	
<p>After</p>	

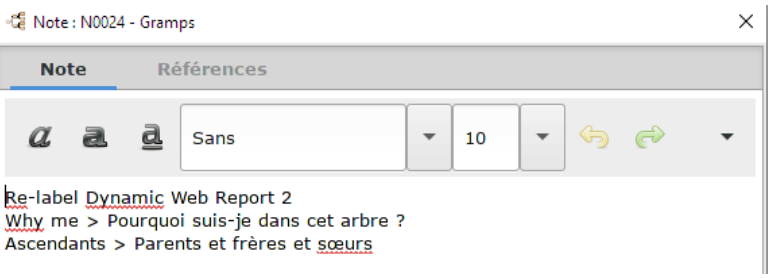
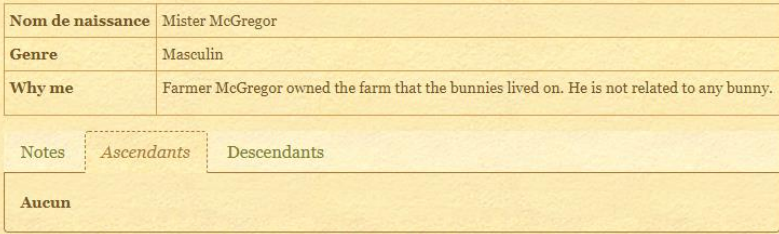
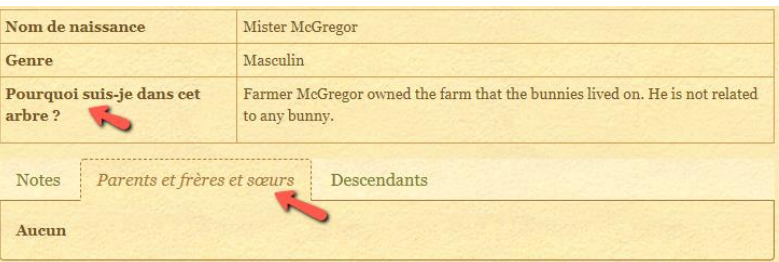
Any lines without the > separator, such as the first line shown in the example note are ignored; they can act as comments. And the first line is a useful description to help find the note when you are looking through a long list of notes to add into the report.

A line consists of the old label, separator, and new label. The old label must match exactly the label on the report that you want to change. It will be replaced by the new label. The separator is the righthand angle bracket >

The method does not permanently replace the originals, so if you decide not to use local labels the originals will still be there. In the Local labels option (in Advanced options), remove your note selection.

I have used a method that copes with other languages, as far as my tests go. I don't know much about internationalisation in Gramps and have only recently installed Gramps for one extra language (French), but I can see my labels were changed.

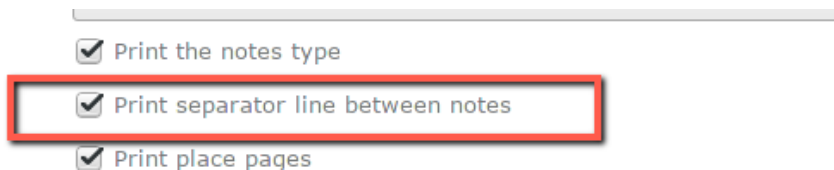
Example in French Gramps

<p>Example local labels note:</p> <p>I changed one new label and one French label (I got the translations from Google)</p>	
<p>Result: Before</p>	
<p>After</p>	

Note separator line

You can print a line to distinguish each note in the Notes tab for a person (and in the Story and Why Me boxes if there are more than one of the note types you used for them). Handy when reading through the Notes tab if you turned off the display of note type.

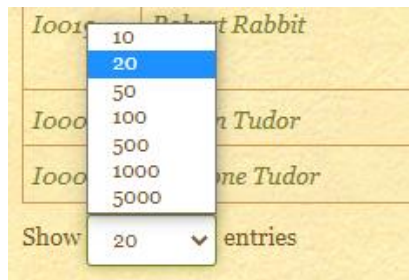
It is an option in the Options tab just under the existing Print notes type option.



Other bits

- **Note type** will never show in Why Me and Story boxes, even if you have 'Print notes type' turned on. Because you already know what kind of note they will be. Note type still toggles in the other places.
- Story and Why Me notes are shown in the person's Notes tab. It's **duplication**, but I left them there in case end users exploited that tab to copy/paste every one of a person's notes into somewhere else. If that never happens, I could suppress them in the notes tab.
- Put the **categories** list on the Homepage into a table so it looked useful.

- Added an option to enable 20 entries at a time in the **Show Entries** selector on a table page - 10 was too few and 50 was too big a step.



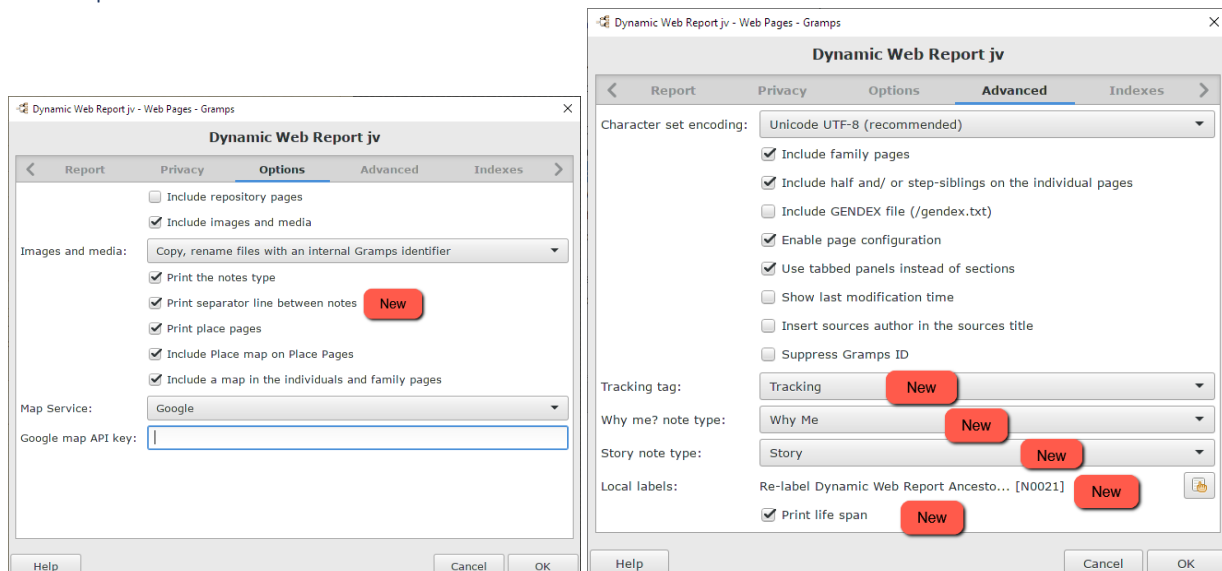
- Sorting** people by birth or death date can now be by earliest first, or latest first:



- The **help page** is hard coded in Python. I have not done anything about that yet – the existing report points it to the Dynamic Web report help page. I would need to adapt that at some time and point this to its own page.
- I think that the report's **CSS** ought to be changed so that clickable links look more like clickable links without having to mouse about, but haven't changed the CSS.

Report option tabs

New Options



I was not sure of the best page for the new options, ie whether they are Advanced or not.

I added them to Advanced, as it (originally) had more space at the bottom. Except for the note separator option, which seemed best under 'Print note type' on the Options page.

Running

I have about 800 people in my tree (research gets away from you). The enhanced report took about 40 seconds to generate on my three-year-old laptop, then about 20 seconds the second time.

Program code

I have used other languages but have never written Python or JavaScript until now. I have relied on a lot of cut and paste from other Gramps code, and Google, and trial and error (with quite a lot of error). Therefore, the code will not be perfect or meet standards and can be improved.

I don't know how a lot of the Dynamic Web report works yet. I have only modified the bits I wanted to work better for me.

I noticed in the code the bits that seem to allow other languages to be slotted in. So, I added values for most of my new report labels but may have missed some (and I don't know how languages work).

With the method, if two labels were originally translated to the same phrase, only one would be changed (because the methods looks for the output or label phrase), so that might be an issue, in any language.

For instance, in English if the word 'union' is transformed to the label 'marriage', and the word 'marriage' is transformed to the label 'marriage' (which it is as the default), and you then used this note method to alter the label 'marriage' to 'couple' the wrong one might change. If it's an issue in practice, it could be fixed with extra programming (eg, by offering a choice of which one, or both, to change).

Having started with just Notepad++, I now use an oldish copy of PyCharm as my programming environment. I probably use about 1% of its capabilities.

Have not looked at GitHub yet. Think I will need that to package the report.