

Five Ways To Connect With Your Living Kin

GENEALOGY IS ALL about making connections. Most of the time we're trying to link one ancestor to another through the names, dates and places we uncover during our research. But just as important are the connections we make with living relatives or other researchers who may be on the hunt for the same data we're trying to track down. But you can't do this with your head buried in a database or hiding behind a microfilm reader. If you want to find, and be found by, living kin, here are five steps to follow to increase your chances.

1. WEAVE A WEB PRESENCE

Set up your own personal or family website. Check with your Internet Service Provider (ISP), or take advantage of free space available on Google, www.google.com (account required), RootsWeb, <http://accounts.rootsweb.ancestry.com>, or consider setting up a collaborative workspace on Microsoft Office Live Workspace, www.officelive.com (for details on how to do this, consult the August/September 2010 issue of *Internet Genealogy*). Sharing your family history or research adventures on a blog is another surefire way to find kin. The Geneabloggers website, www.geneabloggers.com, lists more than 1,200 blogs about family history and genealogy and offers tips for how to get started and how to keep going. Check out the Blog Resources section, www.geneabloggers.com/blog-resources, and be sure to view the Genealogy Blog Primer prepared by webmaster, Thomas MacEntee, www.geneabloggers.com/genealogy-blog-primer. Popular blogging themes, such as "Surname Saturday" and "Tombstone Tuesday" offer weekly chances for you to actively use the web to help others find you.

If you prefer a more visual approach, use YouTube for video tributes to your family, or as a way to share some aspect of your genealogy search. Not only could it go viral and make you an overnight Internet sensation, but it may be viewed by that long-lost cousin in Ireland you never knew about.

www.genealogywise.com, and Twitter, www.twitter.com, to search for relatives, advertise their surname searches and share family history or genealogy gems. Family tree building and sharing websites let you combine the tasks of uploading a family tree and networking in one place. Ancestry.com, <http://trees.ancestry.com>.



Members of the Alzo family at a luncheon in Vranov, Slovakia, June 2010. Standing: Ján and Emilia Alzo, Robert and Renata Calfa. Sitting: Helena Alzo Bidlen.

I've had several such experiences of having others find me thanks to my website, www.lisaalzo.com, or blog, www.theaccidentalgenealogist.com, including a recent connection with a third cousin whom I met for the first time this summer during a trip to Slovakia.

2. BE A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

With social networking all the rage, many genealogists have turned to sites such as Facebook, www.facebook.com, GenealogyWise,

www.geni.com, and MyHeritage.com's Family Tree Builder, www.myheritage.com/family-tree-builder, are popular programs, however, there are many other resources. See the June/July 2010 issue of *Internet Genealogy* for a review of Family Tree Builder 4.0 and other family tree building sites included in the "130 Best Genealogy Websites" article.

3. SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW

With Web 2.0, the Internet is no longer a static place where geneal-

