

# Sharing a Hosting Plan (Many Websites – One Hosting Plan)

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Note – This article explains how to share a hosting plan among several websites. Sharing a hosting plan has the advantage that the cost of each individual website is prorated and there's a central control point of the shared websites. For a complete explanation of creating a genealogy website, see the book "Getting Started on Your Genealogy Website" available from the [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com) website.

Sharing a web hosting plan means setting up multiple, independent websites on one standard web hosting account at [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com). A hosting plan can be shared by the websites of any alliance of people such as a club, a group of friends, or members of a family. Also, sharing a hosting plan is perfect for institutions who want to sponsor member websites cheaply but maintain central control. In each case, a single hosting plan is purchased and shared among the websites in which an administrator coordinates and controls the alliance. Sharing can be setup under both the "Deluxe" and the "Premium" hosting plans at [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com). Both of these plans have huge amounts of disk space and the necessary bandwidth to support numerous websites.

To implement the sharing of a hosting plan, all that is technically required is that the administrator of the sharing alliance creates a subfolder in the base hosting account for each of the member websites. Then each member registers a domain name independently at [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com) (note – see the article "Stake Your Claim with a Domain Name" available on the [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com) website) and sets up domain forwarding (note – see the article "Domain Forwarding (Have your Cake and Eat it Too)" available on the [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com) website). Once these simple steps have been completed, then the members are on their own to setup and maintain their individual websites. The result is that each individual website is independent of the other websites as if it were setup under its own hosting account. We will cover the setup in detail in a moment but first we must answer a basic question.

## Why Share a Web Hosting Plan?

For the modest yearly fee of a domain name and the prorated sharing of expenses of a hosting plan, each member of the alliance can have a permanent website (in addition to their permanent e-mail address that comes with their domain name as discussed in the article "Your Lifetime Email Address (How to End Email Chaos)" available on the [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com) website). At the same time, there is one control point which can enforce any rules, restrictions, or conventions of the shared-hosting alliance. In this way, each member of the alliance could tryout a genealogy website at a very low cost

and to do so as a member of an alliance of like-minded associates. Technical information or insights not to mention genealogy know-how could be shared among the members as they pursue their individual website projects. Later a member's website could be moved to a permanent hosting account if desired with no disruption to the public website access (or the e-mail address).

## How it Works

It's simple to implement the sharing of a hosting plan at [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com):

- There must be one base account at [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com) with at least one web hosting plan. That is, there must be an actual main website setup in the base account. It doesn't have to be functional since its use will be to house the subfolders for each of the member websites. The "Deluxe" hosting plan and the "Premium" hosting plan are eligible to have multiple websites at [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com).
- To keep it simple, each member should have their own account at [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com). This will keep the members financially independent except for their prorated share of the base hosting account (an agreement they make on their own independent of [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com)).
- Each member must purchase their own domain name which they register and administer on their own independently of the other members.
- Each of the members will have a subfolder on the main website where they put the files and folders of their website (more in a moment). The subfolders are allocated by the administrator of the shared hosting alliance. For example, the administrator will setup a main website of, for example, [www.centralwebsite.org](http://www.centralwebsite.org). Then a member's subfolder for his or her website of for example [www.memberwebsite.org](http://www.memberwebsite.org) would be setup by the administrator as, for example, [www.centralwebsite.org/memberwebsite](http://www.centralwebsite.org/memberwebsite). Each subfolder will be assigned a password which is only known to the owner of that subfolder (as well as the administrator).
- Each member must setup domain forwarding to forward his or her domain to his or her corresponding subfolder. This requires each member to modify his or her account settings on their own. Each member's domain name of, for example, [memberwebsite.org](http://www.memberwebsite.org) would be forwarded to the URL of his or her subfolder of, for example, <http://www.centralwebsite.org/memberwebsite>. Domain forwarding is a simple function to set up using the member's Account Manager "Manage Domain Forwarding" dialog. The forwarding would use "masking" in which visitors to [www.membername.org](http://www.membername.org) would not be aware that they had been forwarded to [www.centralwebsite.org/membername](http://www.centralwebsite.org/membername).

We have explained in detail how setup domain forwarding in the article "Domain Forwarding (Have Your Cake and Eat it too)" available on the [www.genealogyhosting.com](http://www.genealogyhosting.com) web site.

## Examples of Sharing a Hosting Account

Here are some specific examples of sharing a hosting plan. They are arranged in rough order of how formal the alliance is between the members from highest to lowest.

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### ***The Institution***

In this form of sharing a hosting plan at *www.genealogyhosting.com*, an institution would sponsor a website service for its members. In this case, an institution is any permanent non-profit organization or society devoted to a particular cause, program or topic especially activities centered around educating the public or promoting the cause of the institution. The institution will have a website at *www.genealogyhosting.com* (e.g., A "Premium" hosting plan) and the webmaster of the website will serve as the administrator of the shared hosting alliance. He or she would encourage and sign up members for individual websites and would help them get started. The members, in turn, would register their own domain names then go forth and create websites directly or indirectly focused on the various topics or interests of the institution.

### ***The Club***

In this form of sharing a hosting plan at *www.genealogyhosting.com*, several members of a club would each have their own website under the hosting plan. This is perfect for genealogy clubs, surname associations, genealogy special-interest groups, book clubs, research circles, or other groups of people. One person must be the administrator and the owner of the base hosting account (e.g., A "Deluxe" hosting plan) at *www.genealogyhosting.com*. However, unlike the institution example above, the administrator of the club's shared hosting plan will not have the same control or authority. This is because of the informal nature of the club compared to the formal nature of the institution. In particular, each member will be sharing a common resource and hence, each member must be voluntarily respectful of their fellow members. For this reason, there should only be a handful of members (at most 10 or so) and they must know and trust each other. Each member would register his or her own domain name and be responsible for his or her website contents.

### ***Family Websites***

In this form of sharing a hosting plan, members of a family (Mom, Dad, and the kids) could each have their own website. The family would purchase a hosting plan such as the "Deluxe" hosting plan. Then each family member would register one or more domain names and build their websites on their own. Thus, for the small cost of the hosting plan plus the modest yearly fee of the domain names, they could each have a website which Mom and Dad can control!

### ***Multiple Genealogy Websites***

In this form of sharing a hosting plan, one author could have several genealogy (or other) websites under one hosting plan. An ambitious author could have several genealogy websites each with a different domain name. The advantage is only one web hosting account is needed. Each website would be implemented in its own subfolder of the base web hosting account (e.g., A "Deluxe" hosting plan) and domain forwarding would be used to seamlessly and transparently forward network traffic to each website in its subfolder.

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## Responsibilities for the Sharing a Hosting Plan

All the examples of sharing a hosting plan listed above center around setting up a “private web hosting service.” That is, the shared hosting plan functions not unlike a commercial hosting service. In the private web hosting service, someone must be the administrator of the service. Normally the webmaster of the underlying master website would be the administrator. However, each member of the group will also have some responsibilities for administrative duties of their own individual website and domain name. Here is a detailed list of the various responsibilities for sharing a hosting plan.

- The administrator will always be on duty and must respond to trouble-calls from the members. Most of the time, the problems will be such things as lost passwords, technical questions about domain forwarding, or how to use FTP to upload the files and folders of a website.
- The administrator will allocate the subfolder for each member’s website. The subfolder will be allocated on the base website. A good folder name for the subfolder is the middle node of the website name (i.e., for a website of *www.mywebsite.org* assign a subfolder name of *www.centralwebsite.org/memberwebsite*).
- The administrator will inform each member of the FTP password of his or her subfolder on the base website. Each subfolder will have its own independent password known only to that member (and the administrator). The password can only be changed by the administrator since the administrator owns the underlying hosting account.
- Each member will set up their own account at *www.genealogyhosting.com*. The minimum they will need to purchase is their domain name. Notice that this will allow them to not only participate in the shared hosting plan but also they can have a permanent e-mail address based on their domain names.
- Each member will use their Account Manager to forward their domain name to their subfolder. Members will log on to their account and click on the “Manage Domain Forwarding” link. In the example above, *www.mywebsite.org* would be forwarded to *www.centralwebsite.org/mywebsite*.
- Each member must be cooperative and agree to any rules, restrictions, or conventions of the shared-hosting alliance. In particular each member must not exceed their disk space or bandwidth allocation. The administrator must enforce these allocations as necessary.
- Each member will be responsible for creating and maintaining their own website . Each member will use FTP to upload the files and folders to his or her website.