



# FreeUKGenealogy

## Free UK Genealogy Internal Communications Survey July 2015

### Summary

Two-thirds of volunteers are happy with communication within Free UK Genealogy. A quarter would like more information to be shared, and concerns were aired about the lack of communication. 10% think things could be simpler or easier. Some people raised concerns about their own expertise, the bandwidth available in their location, and the cost of connectivity. A major concern was raised that there is no way for the Executive to communicate with all volunteers, and this will be addressed.

Currently, the most popular ways of receiving information about what is going on at Free UK Genealogy, and in communicating with others are Email lists and Direct Emails. Newsletters, dedicated forums, and the members' area of FreeREG2 are also used to a much smaller extent. Other means of communication are virtually unused.

Looking forwards, almost everyone is satisfied by emails (individual or group) or newsletters – so we will continue to use these, and look at making things simpler or easier for everyone. The use of forums was liked by others, as this enables them to see when a question has been answered and does not clutter their in-box. The development/enhancement of forums-with-email is therefore recommended. A very few people find none of these ways suitable for them. We'll look at ways of meeting their needs, too. One specific instance of a communications failure was given: we will work to minimise these in future.

## Recommendations

The above summary should be placed on the Free UK Genealogy blog. This report (excluding the appendix of anonymised questions and observations) should be available to download from the blog.

All volunteers should be contactable via email. A system should be used to ensure that the personal data of volunteers is kept confidentially, and that emails are sent out to targeted groups (e.g. FreeBMD transcribers or volunteers in Yorkshire) rather than broadcast, whenever possible.

All volunteers should be able to receive newsletters from individual project(s) on an opt-in basis. These might typically be monthly. The FreeCEN newsletter should be revived, at least during the period of FreeCEN2 development.

All volunteers should be able to opt-in receive newsletters from the Executive. These might typically be after each Executive meeting.

Volunteers should be invited to join email groups/forums which may be of use to them / where they may be of use to others. Ideally, the same messages will be available to view as emails or on a forum website. Descriptions of the groups/forums and how to join should be on the Free UK Genealogy website.

Social media is probably used mostly, and has greatest potential, for engaging researchers and the wider public – including potential volunteers – at this stage.

Opportunities for members of the Executive to be present at regional or specialised meetings and other events (such as WDYT YA) should be considered.

Options for making face-to-face meetings accessible to more people should be explored: for example, presentations could be videoed and shared, questions to the speaker could be asked via Twitter.

## Detailed Findings

### Does communication need improving?

One respondent observed that the Executive lack the means to contact all volunteers, with present communication systems being entirely opt-in. This is a known weakness and known risk.

Overall, a large number of people are happy with the way things are. For those who would like to see improvements, the main request is for more information, and for it to be simpler or easier to communicate. As one person commented “Gets too complicated and takes the time away from doing the day job of getting the Census online”. Several people told us that they had limited connectivity in either speed or volume or both, and several people thought that the survey was indicating that Free UK Genealogy was proposing a shift from traditional forms of communication to social media, which they would find excluding.

One specific communications breakdown was the failure to put a notice on the FreeBMD site prior to moving server, or to warn CCs/Transcribers beforehand. Going forwards, the Engagement Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring that communication plans are written and implemented for work that may have a significant impact on volunteers.

One person noted that they would like more social contact (not specifying through what media), and another observed “Skype sounds interesting, mainly perhaps to put a face to someone”.

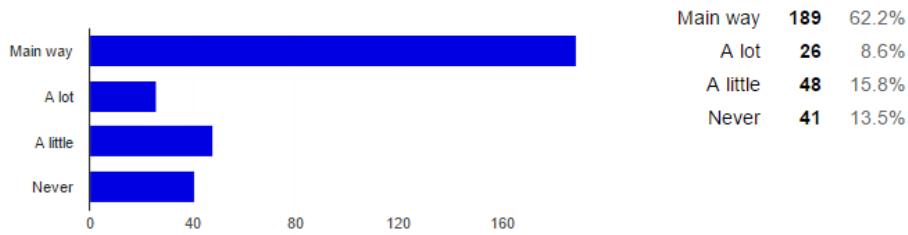
**Does communication between others in FreeUKgenealogy and yourself need improving?**



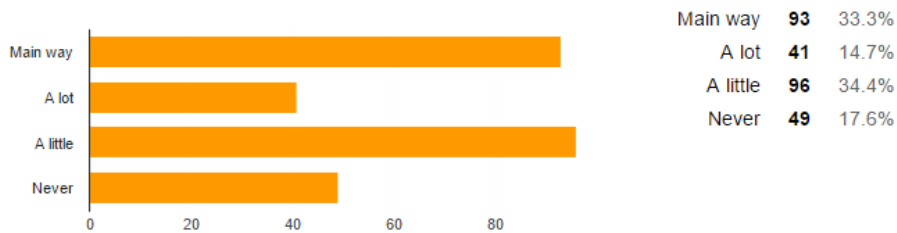
### Current ways of receiving information from Free UK Genealogy

The most popular ways of receiving information are email lists, with over 67% of volunteers using them as the main way, or a lot, and individualised emails, with 42% using them as the main way, or a lot. 24% use Newsletters, and 10% dedicated forums. Other forms of communication including meetings, phone calls and social media were rarely used (at most by 2%).

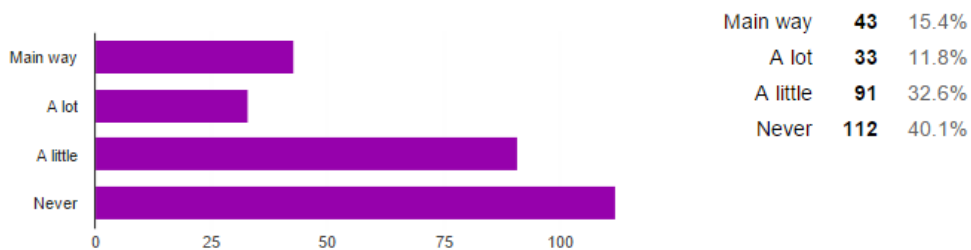
**Email lists [At the moment, how you find out about what is going on at FreeUKGenealogy?]**



**Individualised emails [At the moment, how you find out about what is going on at FreeUKGenealogy?]**



**Newsletters [At the moment, how you find out about what is going on at FreeUKGenealogy?]**



**Current ways of communicating with others**

59% use individualised emails as the main way, or frequently, of communicating with others, and 44% use email lists. 9% use newsletters. Dedicated forums and the members' area of FreeREG2 are used by 4%. Other means are used by less than 1%.

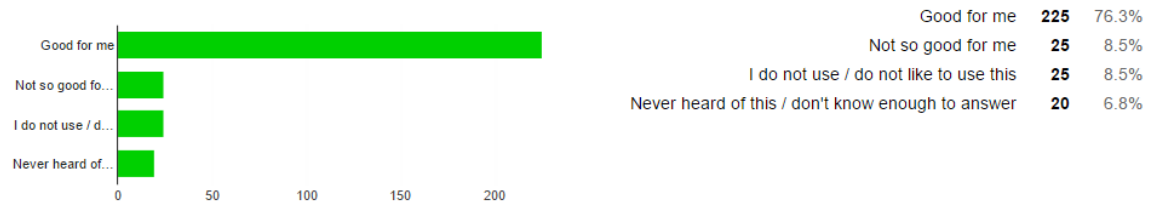
**Future ways of communicating**

Looking forwards, 78% said individual emails were good for them, 70% said group emails were good, and 68% said newsletters were good.

Continuing to use all three means of communication means that most volunteers are communicating in at least one way that is good for them. Only two people who found none of these ways good preferred to use something different: both found closed Facebook groups good (one of these two also found Twitter good). Another 9 people did not find any of the methods suggested to be good: however, of these, 7 said communication was fine as it is, and one said that too much information was shared. Unfortunately, those who prefer hangouts/social media were not among those who left contact information, so it is not possible to explore with them how to take their views forwards.

Group emails are on the workplan for FreeREG2. We should consider if a forum/emails interface is practicable and possible within the scope of FreeREG2.

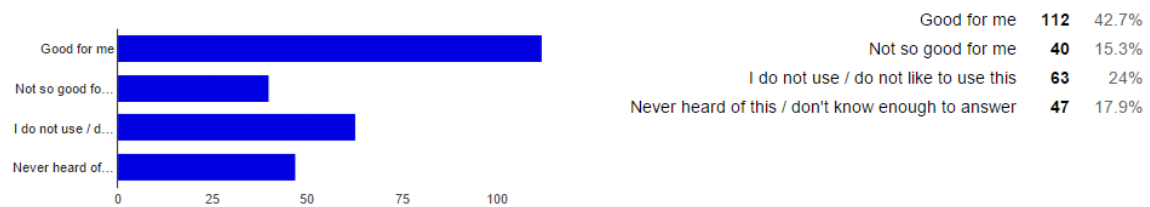
**Email lists [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



**Individualised emails [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



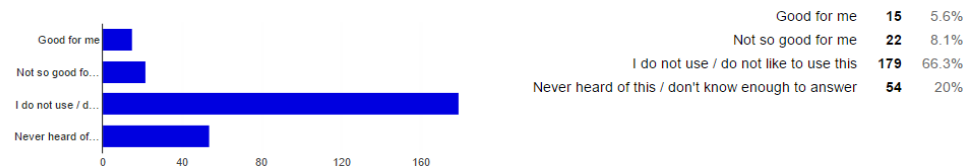
**Dedicated online forums [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



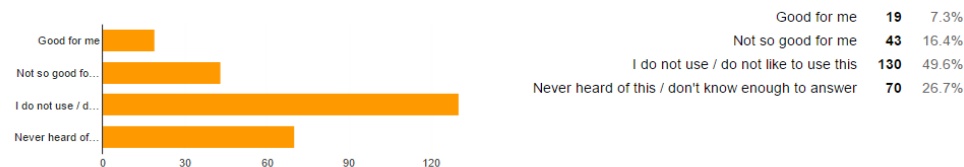
**Hangouts [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



**Twitter [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



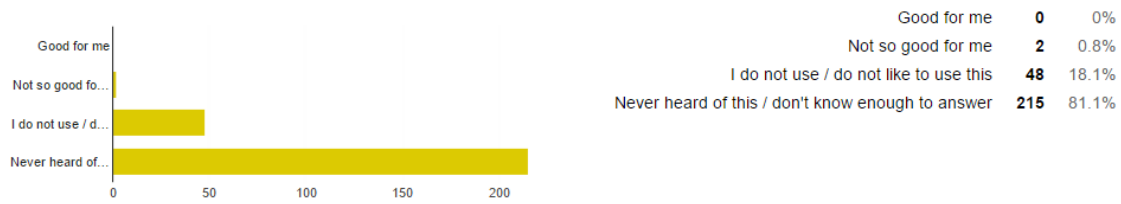
**Google+ [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



**Members' area of FreeREG2 (and other projects in due course) [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



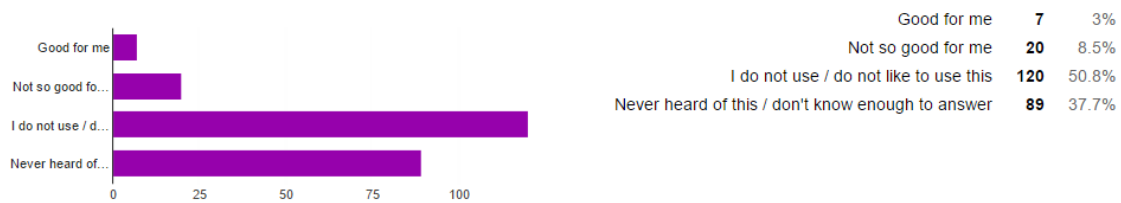
**Slack [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



**Facebook (closed groups) [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



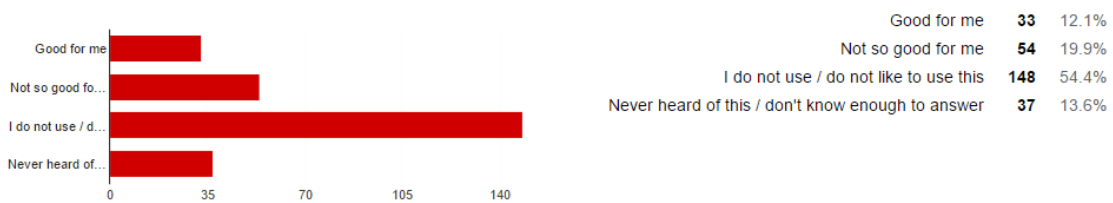
**Other social media (please specify below) [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



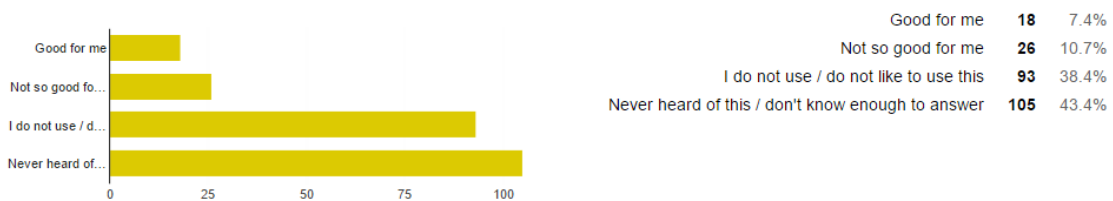
**Facetime [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



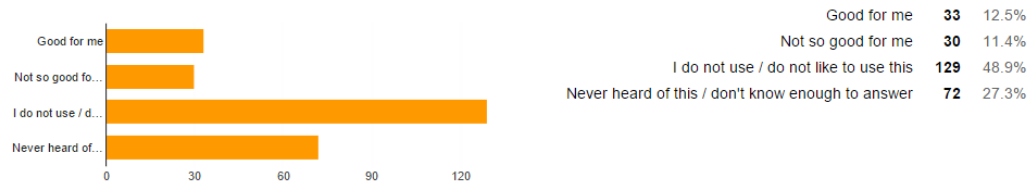
**Skype [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



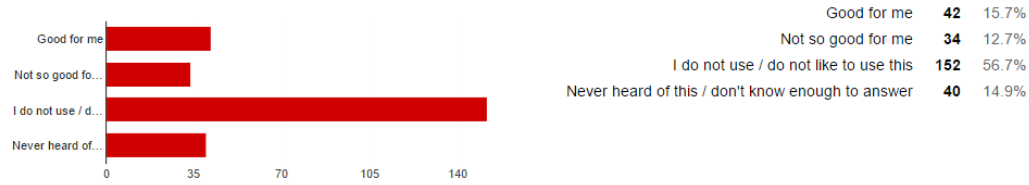
**External forums / lists (please specify below) [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



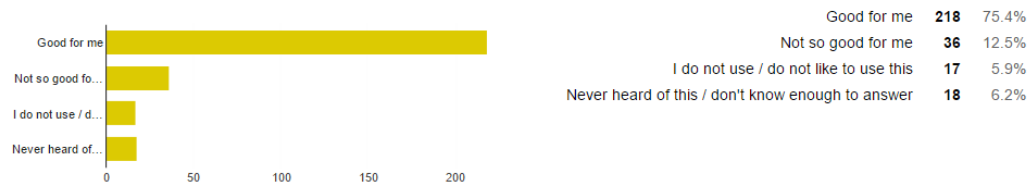
**Blog / blog comments [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



**Facebook (public page) [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



**Newsletters [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**



**Face to Face Meetings [Looking forwards, what communication methods would suit you best?]**

