Leveraging Tech Tools in Family History Research

Section 3: Using AI in Family History Research

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is a popular and growing field. The basic concept behind AI is that computers can perform complex tasks that humans do, including identifying different visuals, speech recognition, decision-making models, and language translations. AI has many practical applications in corporate environments, technology industry, as well as in genealogy.

Examples of AI Tools

- Chatbots
    - Conversational platform where you can ask questions of an AI tool
    - Provide instant responses to your questions, commands, etc.
    - Available 24/7
    - Personalized recommendations
    - Used for customer service in many industries
    - Ex. ChatGPT, Gemini (Google), Copilot (Microsoft), Claude (Anthropic), Perplexity, Grok (X), Leaf (Ancestry.com), and Eve (MyHeritage.com)
- Translation tools (ex. Google Translate, Transkribus, DeepL Translate)
- Social media content creation (ex. Buffer, Fedica)
- Image generators (ex. Bing Image Generator, DALLE (Open AI))
- Writing assistants (ex. Grammarly)

How Can AI Be Used for Genealogy?

- Provide research assistance
- Summarize and extract information from text of a document
- Colorize black and white photos
- Translate records into another language
- Transcribe and index handwritten records
- Transcribe and index newspaper articles
- Create ancestor biographies
- And more!

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Current AI Tools on Genealogy Websites

- Ancestry
  - AI Powered Hints (shaky leaves) - https://www.ancestry.com/cs/us/hints
  - AI Stories (audio narratives)
  - Image Transcription Tools
  - Face Match
  - Ask Ancestry AI
  - Ask Leaf - https://support.ancestry.com/
- FamilySearch
  - Computer-Aided Indexing - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/FamilySearch_Computer_Aided_Indexing
  - Full-Text Search - https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/full-text/
- MyHeritage
  - PhotoDater – under "Photos"
  - AI Biographer – under "Family Tree" > "My family tree" > "Select profile"
  - Other Tools - under "Photos" dropdown
    - AI Time Machine (see what someone looks like in different historical eras – 18th Century France, Ancient Greek, etc.)
    - Colorize photos
    - Enhance photos
    - Deep Nostalgia (animate photos)
    - LiveMemory (turn photos into video clips)

Can AI Be Copyrighted?

- August 2023 ruling by U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell said that "Only works with human authors can receive copyrights"

Tips for Using AI

- Be aware that AI can and will likely make mistakes.
- Don't rely on AI to do all your analysis. Review the results summary and make any necessary edits.
- Don't rely on AI to generate reports for clients.
- Identify where and when AI was used when presenting materials with others.
- Don't upload private information (including financial and medical data) into AI tools.

Publications

Busby, Lynn Zacny, *How Artificial Intelligence (AI) Can Help Genealogists to Research, Organize, and Document: With Contrasting Examples* (2024).

Heffernan, James. "How Artificial Intelligence Is Changing Genealogy," *American Ancestors Magazine*, Vol. 25, no. 1. Spring 2024. Available online at https://www.americanancestors.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/magazine-AAM-25-1-spring-2024-entire-update-6.14.24.pdf.

McComb, Melanie. "Prompt This: Using ChatGPT and Other AI ChatBots for Genealogy," *American Ancestors Magazine*, Vol. 25, no. 1, Spring 2024. Available online at https://www.americanancestors.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/magazine-AAM-25-1-spring-2024-entire-update-6.14.24.pdf.

Taylor, Maureen. "Perplexity: A New Type of AI Tool," *American Ancestors Magazine*, Vol. 25, no. 1. Spring 2024. Available online at https://www.americanancestors.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/magazine-AAM-25-1-spring-2024-entire-update-6.14.24.pdf.

Websites

AI Genealogy Insights Blog by Steve Little - https://aigenealogyinsights.com

American Ancestors – www.americanancestors.org

Ancestry – www.ancestry.com

ChatGPT – https://chatgpt.com

Claude - https://claude.ai

DeepL Translate - https://www.deepl.com

FamilySearch - www.familysearch.org

FamilySearch (Full Text Search) - https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text

Genealogy and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Facebook Group - https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogyandai

Google Lens – www.lens.google.com

MyHeritage – www.myheritage.com

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OCR Online - www.onlineocr.net

Perplexity - https://www.perplexity.ai

Transkribus - https://transkribus.ai