

# Using AI in Genealogy Program Recap

---

Genealogy Blog   NJSL Presents Blog   Research Library

October 10, 2024

*Andrew Dauphinee*

Thank you to Melanie McComb from [American Ancestors](#) for a wonderful exposition of how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is currently impacting the landscape of genealogy. AI has infiltrated many aspects of our lives, for better or worse, including the tools we use and how we conduct family history research. While AI can certainly help us summarize, synthesize, and even transcribe information, there are many important limitations that AI still has, including hallucinations. So let's dive into the many innovations that AI is bringing to our family history research.

## What is AI?

Artificial intelligence, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, is “the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages.” While the origins of AI began in the 1950s, it underwent significant advancements in the last 20 years.

Examples of AI currently in use include:

- Chatbots
- Translation tools
- Social media content creation
- Image generators
- Writing assistants

## Using AI in Genealogy

Artificial intelligence can be used in a variety of ways as it relates to genealogy research:

- Provide research assistance – Chatbots, [ChatGPT](#), [Claude](#), and [Gemini](#), can help identify and contextualize different types of records,

repositories, historical events, cultures.

- Summarize and extract information from text of a document – You can upload information, metadata, transcriptions, and other elements from a variety of sources to get a summary as well as extract information such as dates, names, and locations. You can even ask certain platforms to assume the role of a professional genealogist to provide more relevant parameters to your requests to help get the information you are looking for in a more digestible way.
- Colorize black and white photographs
- Translate records into other languages – Services like [Google Translate](#) and [Google Lens](#) can help translate text that is typed in, uploaded, or in pictures.
- Transcribing and indexing handwritten records – Services like [Transkribus](#) can create transcriptions of handwritten documents in other languages, which can then be put into a translator.
- Transcribing and indexing newspaper articles – Many services that provide digital access to newspapers have created transcriptions and indexes of those papers through the use of Optical Character Recognition(OCR), a form of AI. This allows for full-text or keyword searching and full transcriptions which can then be fed into other types of AI to summarize or extract relevant information.
- Create ancestor biographies – [MyHeritage](#) has a feature that will create a general biography of an individual based off of the information and associated records related to a specific individual for which you have created an entry.

## Limitations of AI

While it seems that AI can do almost anything, there are some limitations and concerns that everyone should be aware of, even when using AI outside the framework of genealogical research. First and foremost, AI will make mistakes! Be sure to review everything created by AI for accuracy, especially if any sources are cited; AI has been known to cite false, misleading, or completely fabricated sources. Information and content generated by AI cannot be copyrighted so it is important to create your own content if you can on publishing any of your genealogical research. In a similar light, be sure to inform others if AI has been used in your research or your presentation of information so that there is complete transparency.

Some other things that AI cannot do include:

- Replacing genealogy research – AI cannot search subscription sites or extract data from images or data on those sites automatically. While there have been major advancements, some AI platforms are not connected to the Internet to get real-time data so there may be some information that is not present in it's operations.

- Organizing your genealogy files
- Analyzing DNA results

## More Information

If you would like more information about AI in genealogy, please visit the “AI Developments in Genealogy” blog post from FamilySearch at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/ai-developments-genealogy> ↗. If you have any questions, you can contact Melanie McComb at [Melanie.McComb@nehgs.org](mailto:Melanie.McComb@nehgs.org). You can download a copy of the “Using AI in Family History Research” handout at <https://www.njstatelib.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Using-AI-in-Family-History-Research.pdf>.

🔖 Artificial Intelligence   Genealogy   National Family History Month   NJ State Research Library   NJSL Presents   Research   SLIC   Webinar

---



Education and learning are passions of mine. Lifelong learning is a core part of who I am and I strive to pass that desire for information on to everyone I meet. As the Instruction and Outreach Librarian, it is my goal to provide quality, informative, and relevant programming to meet the diverse needs of our patrons. Please contact me regarding programming at [adauphinee@njstatelib.org](mailto:adauphinee@njstatelib.org).

[View all posts by Andrew Dauphinee →](#)

---

< [Strength Through Healing: The NJ Office](#)   [Introduction to Medicare Program Recap](#)   [of Resilience Program Recap](#) >

### CATEGORIES

[About NJSL](#)

[Genealogy Blog](#)

[Library](#)

[Development](#)

[Bureau](#)

[Marketing Blog](#)

[New Books Blog](#)

[NJSL Presents](#)

[Blog](#)

[Publications](#)

[Research Library](#)

**Services for  
Libraries  
Spotlight  
Talking Book and  
Braille Center  
TBBC Blog**