



Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Genealogy in 2026

Coalition for Responsible AI in Genealogy Mission Statement:

To guide the genealogical community in the responsible and ethical use of AI, ensuring accuracy, transparency, and privacy while maximizing the benefits of AI for genealogical research.

About

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in genealogy has inspired the creation of the Coalition for Responsible AI in Genealogy and the development of essential *Guiding Principles* to navigate these changes responsibly.

Recent advances in AI have been extraordinary. Since the introduction of Transformer architecture in 2017, groundbreaking tools...have reshaped what's possible. By late 2022, AI became accessible and widely adopted, profoundly impacting fields like genealogy. While these tools open up new avenues for research and discovery, they also introduce ethical questions and risks we must address.

Following the rapid expansion of generative AI, discussions at the 2024 RootsTech ethics panel emphasized the urgent need for a framework. Our coalition engaged in a collaborative effort throughout 2024, refining the principles through thoughtful deliberation and extensive community input.

These *Guiding Principles* ensure responsible AI use in genealogy, addressing essential areas such as accuracy, disclosure, privacy, education, and compliance. For a full description of these principles, please visit <https://craigen.org>.

Responsible AI use builds public trust and maintains the integrity of genealogical research. As AI technology continues to evolve, these principles offer a solid foundation for ethical innovation within our community.

Guiding Principles for Responsible AI in Genealogy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming genealogy by offering powerful capabilities alongside new challenges and risks. These principles aim to guide the responsible use of AI within the genealogical community—including casual and professional researchers, societies, and supporting companies. The responsible use of AI will maximize its benefits while mitigating risks to the quality and trustworthiness of the work it generates.

Accuracy

AI can generate false, biased, or incorrect content. Therefore, members of the genealogical community verify the accuracy of the information with other records and acknowledge credible sources of content generated by AI.

Disclosure

Acknowledging the use of AI enhances trust. Therefore, members of the genealogical community disclose, as context requires, when AI materially influences the creation or modification of content.

Privacy

AI usage can lead to unintended data exposure, putting private information at risk of being publicly disclosed. Therefore, members of the genealogical community take reasonable measures to safeguard private information when using AI.

Education

The use of AI creates new opportunities and risks. Therefore, members of the genealogical community educate themselves about AI to maximize its benefits and minimize its risks to their work.

Compliance

Adherence to legal and contractual obligations is essential for the ethical use of AI. Therefore, members of the genealogical community comply with contracts, terms of service, intellectual property laws, and data privacy regulations when using or creating AI tools.

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Organizational Support

Guiding Principles for Responsible AI in Genealogy is formally endorsed by the following organizations. This endorsement is limited strictly to the *Guiding Principles*. Other materials available on the Coalition for Responsible AI in Genealogy (CRAIGEN) website are the sole responsibility of their respective authors and are not subject to review, approval, or endorsement by the supporting organizations.

Associations, Societies, Non-Profits, and Professional Credentialing Bodies

- [Association of Professional Genealogists \(APG\)](#)
- [Board for Certification of Genealogists \(BCG\)](#)
- [Family History Guide Association](#)
- [International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists \(ICAPGen\)](#)
- [International Society of Genetic Genealogy \(ISOGG\)](#)
- [National Genealogical Society \(NGS\)](#)
- [ProGen Study Groups](#)

Commercial Businesses

- [GEDmatch](#)
- [Genealogy Bargains](#)
- [The Genealogy Guys Podcast](#)
- [Legacy Tree Genealogists](#)
- [The Single Leaf](#)

For more information about CRAIGEN:

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Protecting Trust in Historical Images

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A Position Statement on Image Generation and “Photo Restoration” by the Coalition for Responsible AI in Genealogy

Scope: Images of deceased persons, historical photographs, and record images, addressing both generated and modified images.

Our Position

- AI can help and harm. Tools marketed or used for image alteration—commonly referred to as “photo restoration”—sometimes alter or fabricate facial features and other important genealogically relevant characteristics. Such alterations risk misleading researchers and families about identity, time, or place.
- We are setting simple, neutral practices that preserve trust across tools and platforms, grounded in the Coalition principles: Accuracy, Disclosure, Privacy, Education, and Compliance.
- Three guidelines are recommended for everyone to follow:
 1. Always Label. Provide a visible, human-readable label stating that the image was modified or generated.
 2. Always Cite. A minimal citation is recommended, noting the original source and that the image was modified or generated. For greater clarity, a more detailed, layered citation is encouraged, recording the process and specific edits.
 3. Use as Illustration, Not Evidence. Treat modified or generated images as illustrative only. Do not use them to prove identity, time, or place.

What This Means in Practice

- Researchers can see what changed at a glance and can still find and evaluate the original.
- Users can share helpful enhancements without overstating what an image proves.

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