



# Collaborative Genealogy

## The Genos Project

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# Genealogy Today



- ◆ There are a vast number of tools available to the modern day genealogist
  - Data maintenance tools
  - Websites
  - Census records
  - Etc...
- ◆ As a result, it is *relatively* easy to gather large amounts of data

# Data Issues



- ◆ As genealogists amass more and more data, they typically run into several problem areas:
  - Storing and maintaining different types of data
  - Representing that data in coherent ways
  - Finding new data and new ancestors

# Examples of Problems



- ◆ Storing and Maintaining Data:
  - Some tools don't support images or other multimedia
  - Some tools don't support the complex relationships in today's families and elsewhere
  - Some tools support only limited customization of genealogical records
  - Other tools have other limitations as well

# Example of Problems



- ◆ Representing the complex data that you have amassed:
  - It is difficult to decipher many of the existing tools and how relationships are defined
  - As stated previously, many tools don't allow certain customizations
    - Others allow more customizations, but simply don't provide a logical way of viewing such data

# Example of Problems



- ◆ Finding new data and new ancestors:
  - Anybody who has followed their family tree back several generations realizes the difficulty in locating generations further and further back in time

# Genealogical Data



- ◆ Why are these issues important?
  - Genealogy is all about data
    - Genealogists don't build things, don't make things, they gather data
  - If the genealogical data isn't what it could be, it hampers the work

# Genos



- ◆ Genos is an internal development project created by students working with employees at Northface University in South Jordan, Utah
- ◆ Some details about Genos:
  - Not meant to be the end-all, be-all genealogical tool
    - meant to be a potential solutions to the issues listed above
    - as well as provide students a great learning development environment
  - Open source tool written in C# and Java using SQL Server and in the future, Cloudscape



# Data Customization



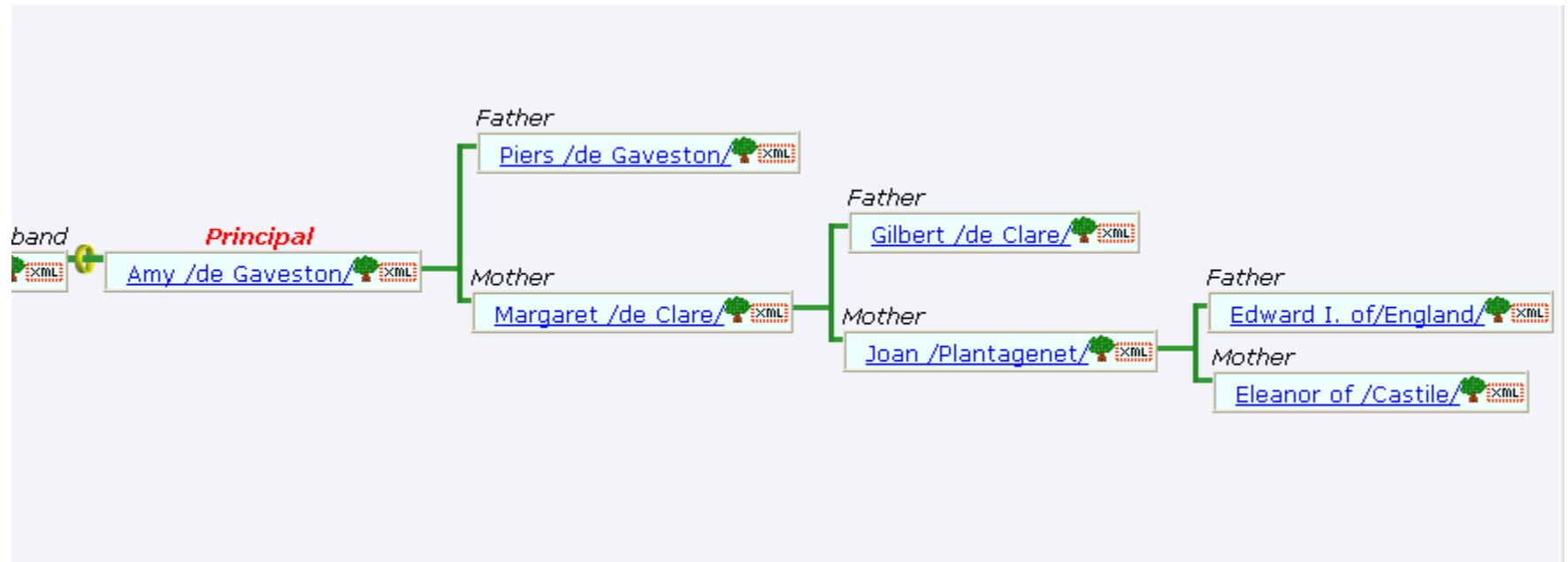
- ◆ Genos is founded on the idea that anything can be represented with a combination of people, places, and events (PPE)
- ◆ Genos data is based on an XML specification (developed at Northface University) known as PPEXML
- ◆ As such, PPEXML can represent virtually any data type, data relationship, and data formats are completely open

# Data Representation



- ◆ Genos offers two extremely flexible data views which allow for very coherent visual representation of data
  - Family tree view
    - XML-based view with a lot of flexibility
  - People Event graph
    - A visual representation of a person's life and all the significant events
  - Future data representations
    - Encompassing open source as well as internal student development, Genos is continually under development
      - With the open-endedness of the data format, more helpful views are soon to follow

# Family Tree View



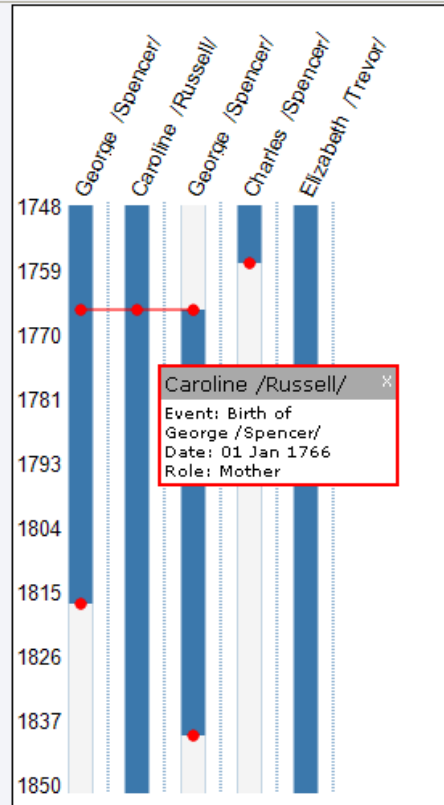
# People Event Graph



genos  
Person / Event Functionality

Principal: [George /Spencer/](#)

Scale Image Height:



Unrendered Data

Unknown Date: Birth

- Charles /Spencer/
- Birth

Unknown Date: Birth

- George /Spencer/
- Birth
- Charles /Spencer/
- Birth Father
- Elizabeth /Trevor/
- Birth Mother

Caroline /Russell/  
Event: Birth of  
George /Spencer/  
Date: 01 Jan 1766  
Role: Mother

Legend:

Red circle: [●] Birth or Death event.

Red triangle: [▼] Marriage event ; [▲] Divorce Event.

Yellow circle: [●] An event that happened on a specified date.

Yellow triangle: [▼] The start of an event ; [▲] The end of an event.

# Finding New Data



- ◆ Perhaps one of the best resources available to Genealogists may also be the most underused
- ◆ What is it?
  - Other genealogists
- ◆ Why use other genealogists to gather information?
  - Genealogists gather large amounts of data relatively quickly. Within the genealogical world, you have a nearly endless resource
  - Genealogists are people. This makes them much easier to work with and much more user-friendly than a website, a book, or any other data format

# Collaboration



- ◆ So the question then becomes.... How do we find other genealogists and how do we work with them?
  - Genos provides an ancestor search function which provides the genealogist with tools to locate other genealogists who potentially may be able to help them
  - Genos then offers a large number of collaboration tools which make working with genealogists much easier – no matter how far apart they are geographically

# Common Ancestor Search



- ◆ To locate other genealogists with potential helpful information
  - You select a member of your own ancestral tree
    - Typically immediate family members of a missing person in your tree
  - Run searches on other genealogist's public data to identify potential matches
  - Run the common ancestor search tool to identify the likelihood of them being a match

# Ancestor Search



- ◆ The search is based off of a series of weights which will rate other records as a certain percentage match to your own data:

Collaborate

1. Choose First Seed
2. Choose Second Seed
- 3. Configure Scoring Weights**
4. Perform Search

First Seed:  
*Lawrence Washington*  
Owner:  
*presidents*

Second Seed:  
*Lawrence Washington*  
Owner:  
*presidents*

Assign weights for the criteria used for matching. The total must add up to 100. By giving a higher or lower weight to a criterion you can customize matching process to fit the available data.

Enter the weight (out of 100%) you wish to assign to each of the scoring criteria. Also enter the minimum score (0 - 100%) that you wish to be considered a match. If the datasets you are comparing have mostly incomplete data, it is suggested that you set a lower match threshold and assign most of the weight percentage to the criteria that you think will be most common.

Criterion	Weight
Name:	<input type="text" value="25"/>
Birth Date:	<input type="text" value="25"/>
Death Date:	<input type="text" value="25"/>
Father:	<input type="text" value="10"/>
Mother:	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Spouses:	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Children:	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Total:	<input type="text" value="100"/>
Minimum Score:	<input type="text" value="60"/>



# Ancestor Search Results



- ◆ Genos then provides you with a list of potential matches indicating these data sets may belong to people who could help you with your own research

Collaborate

1. Choose First Seed
2. Choose Second Seed
3. Configure Scoring Weights
- 4. Perform Search**

First Seed:  
*Lawrence Washington*  
Owner:  
*Claire Jones*

Second Seed:  
*Lawrence Washington*  
Owner:  
*Bill Johnson*

Here are the results of the search. If there are several good matches then you have found a new collaboration partner. If there are poor or very few matches, reconfigure the weights for the matching process. Be sure to assign the most weight to criteria that is most likely to be present and adjust the minimum match score appropriately.

To see the detailed view of a matched person's information, click on his/her name. To go back and reconfigure the search click on previous. If you wish to see a side by side comparison of the potential matching people, click on the compare link next to the names you wish to compare.

Compare	Ancestor from Claire Jones	Ancestor from Bill Johnson	Score
<a href="#">Compare</a>	<a href="#">Lawrence /Washington/</a>	<a href="#">Lawrence /Washington/</a>	61
<a href="#">Compare</a>	<a href="#">John /Washington/</a>	<a href="#">John /Washington/</a>	61
<a href="#">Compare</a>	<a href="#">Robert /Washington/</a>	<a href="#">Robert /Washington/</a>	61

3 potential matches found: Page 1 of 1

[Previous](#) [Next](#) [Finish](#)

# Collaboration



- ◆ Now that you've found genealogists who may potentially help you, you need to be able to contact them and work with them
- ◆ Genos provides a number of tools for this purpose:
  - Internal notes (work much like email)
  - Genos Chat
  - Instant Message
  - PPE Forums
  - General Forums

# Notes - Screenshot



Genos :: Birth, Gender, Kin - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://localhost/Genos/listNotes.aspx> Go Links

msn Search Highlight Options Pop-ups Allowed Hotmail Messenger My MSN

>> MENU >> [MyGenos](#) | [My User Preferences](#) | [Forums](#) | [Search](#) | [DataSets](#) | [Logout](#) | GENOS

### Notes

From	Subject	Date
<a href="#">hayden</a>	<a href="#">I think you might be able to help me....</a>	<a href="#">3/17/2005 9:35:53 AM</a>
<a href="#">hayden</a>	<a href="#">My grandfather's grandmother...</a>	<a href="#">3/17/2005 9:35:21 AM</a>
<a href="#">bjones</a>	<a href="#">What about Gregory Jamison Jones?</a>	<a href="#">3/17/2005 9:34:11 AM</a>
<a href="#">bjones</a>	<a href="#">re: Thomas Jones (New York, 1954)</a>	<a href="#">3/17/2005 9:33:43 AM</a>
<a href="#">areed</a>	<a href="#">Martha Reed -- Are we related?</a>	<a href="#">3/17/2005 9:32:01 AM</a>

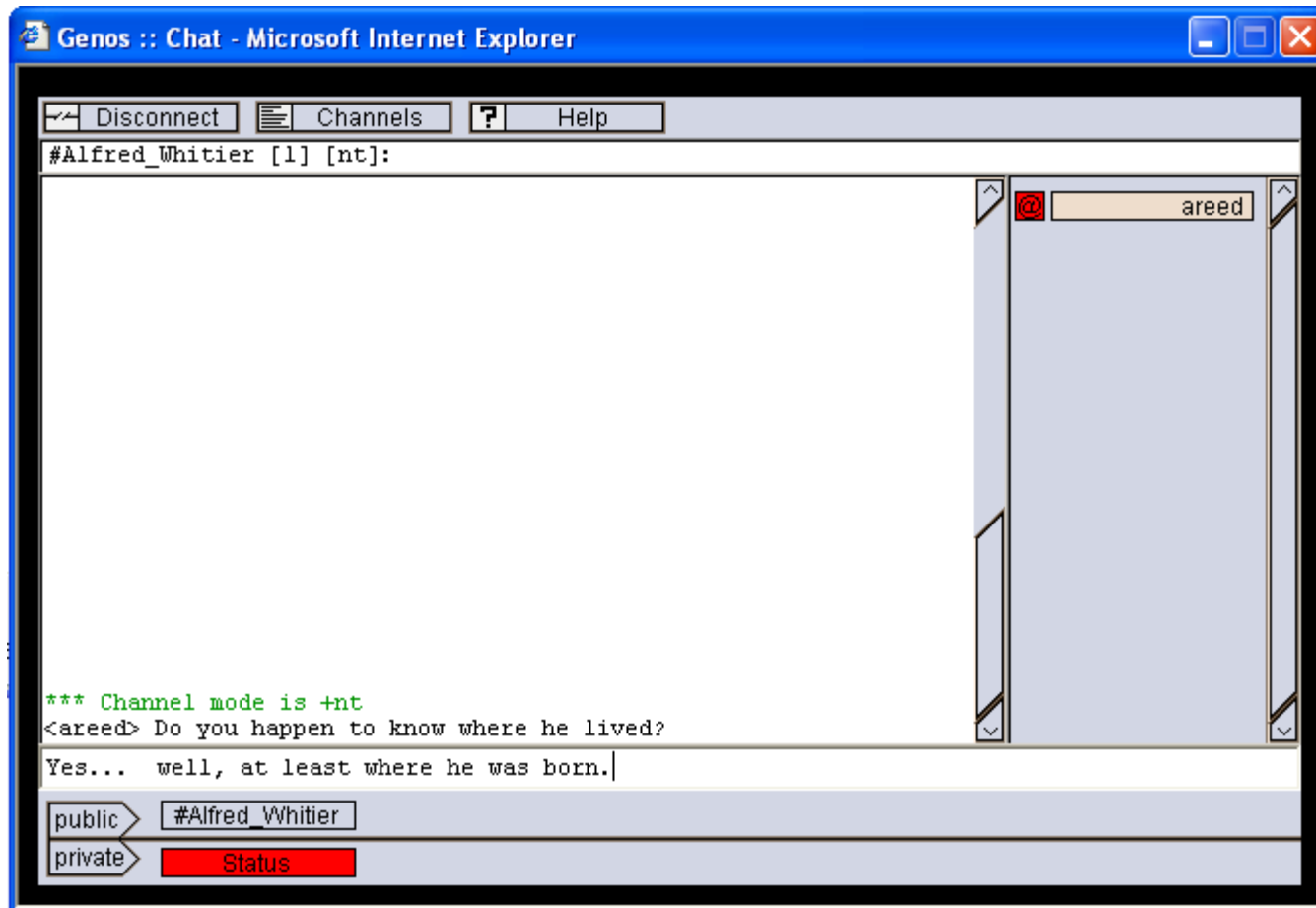
1

A DATA INTEGRATION IN SOCIAL HISTORY PROJECT

Welcome **areed** - Copyright © 2004. Northface University. NORTHFACE UNIVERSITY

Done Local intranet

# Chat - Screenshot



# Summary



- ◆ There are a lot of complications in the genealogical world which are compounded as data grows and research yields more and more results
- ◆ Again, Genos isn't the end-all, be-all solution, but rather aims at offering some solutions to the common problems discussed above
- ◆ As a student internal development project as well as an open source solution, Genos will continue to evolve and grow to meet more of these demands

# Questions



- ◆ Are there any questions?