Collaborative Genealogy
The Genos Project

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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

[Diagram showing family tree with names and relationships]
People Event Graph

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.

Principal: George /Spencer/

Scale Image Height: [Select]
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:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Date:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Date:</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouses:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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.

| 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.
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>haydan</td>
<td>I think you might be able to help me,...</td>
<td>3/17/2005 9:35:53 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haydan</td>
<td>My grandfather's grandmother...</td>
<td>3/17/2005 9:35:21 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>areed</td>
<td>Martha Reed -- Are we related?</td>
<td>3/17/2005 9:32:01 AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chat - Screenshot

**Channel mode is +nt**
<areed> Do you happen to know where he lived?

Yes... well, at least where he was born.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>public</th>
<th>#Alfred_Whitier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>private</td>
<td>Status</td>
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</table>
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?