

Enabling Emerging Family History Technologies through Open Data

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(Submission for Developer Talk at FHTW 2019)

The Open Genealogy Data project (opengendata.org, sponsored by Historic Journals) releases data under open licenses, and encourages others to do likewise. The goal is to enable and streamline the development of data-driven family history technologies by eliminating the hurdles involved in gaining approval to use public-domain facts and data “owned” by large organizations that have business incentives to restrict or control how the data is used. Our current project uses a combination of automatic handwriting recognition and crowd-sourcing to transcribe and geolocate the U.S. Census. Plans for future projects include an open media commons for linking digital artifacts, the release of additional databases of historical records, an open people-and-relationships database with both family and historical social network connections, and a database of links to other information sources. We invite others to collaborate in providing these open data resources, which new technologies can be built upon without restriction.

Bio: Doug received his PhD in Computer Science at BYU under Dr. William Barrett. He currently runs Censcript AI and Historic Journals, and also occasionally does consulting. He has prior experience at Motorola, Microsoft, and Lockheed Martin.