

Biographical data

The data in this spreadsheet has been compiled principally with reference to the Electronic Enlightenment and the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. I searched the ODNB for entries on each of Locke's correspondents, and where entries existed only for relatives of the correspondents I was often able to extrapolate biographical information about them. I also relied on biographies of Locke and published editions of Locke's letters for supplementary information.

Locke ID: (Numeric/Unique): A unique identifier I generated to distinguish individual correspondents. Each string is unique.

Entity ID (Numeric/Unique): A legacy ID string from the Electronic Enlightenment project. This was the primary ID string throughout my analysis.

Vernacular Name: (Nominal/String): This attribute displays a correspondent's name in its vernacular, most commonly-used form.

First Name (Nominal/String): A correspondent's first name as I was able to deduce it from correspondence.

Last Name (Nominal/String): A correspondent's surname as it was most commonly used or as other data sources (ODNB, VIAF, EE) record it.

Alias (Nominal/String): A correspondent's other recorded names; including aliases, maiden names, and titles. Some aliases were names given by Locke himself. Where there are no recorded variants, this column displays the same value as "Vernacular Name".

Title(s) (Nominal/String): These titles largely denote the tier of aristocracy on which a correspondent stands. This field has been stripped of specificity to show only the general strata. The possible values in this field are:

abbé, archbishop, baron, baronet, bishop, countess, dean, duke, earl, knight, lady, laird, viscount, (blank)

Title full (Nominal/String): This field shows the full title held by a correspondent, as for example "Lady Masham" or "Countess of Shaftesbury".

Gender (Binary/string): M/F. Seven correspondents have no gender, either because like “anonymous” and “unknown” no gender is ascertainable, or because like the “Commissioners of Excise” they have no gender.

Birthdate: (Number/Date): In YYYY or YYYY-MM-DD format, this field captures the birthdate of a correspondent as accurately as possible. Where no day was given, the first of the month was selected. Where no month was given, the first of January or just YYYY was selected.

Birth Location (Nominal/string): The place of a correspondent’s birth in text format.

Deathdate: (Number/Date): In YYYY or YYYY-MM-DD format, this field captures the birthdate of a correspondent as accurately as possible. Where no day was given, the first of the month was selected. Where no month was given, the first of January or just YYYY was selected.

Enriched Metadata

Relationships (Entity IDs, comma separated): Since all members of the dataset are correspondents with Locke, this category is primarily composed of those individuals for whom there is a written record of their having communicated with one another in writing. All correspondences with other members of EE have that correspondence tagged, but where reliable sources indicate a correspondence (or where a correspondence or a collaboration can be reliably inferred, as in an author-printer relationship) that is also reflected in the tagging.

Leaves (Binary/String): Yes/No. “Yes” indicates that the correspondent has no relationships with other members of the dataset. “No” indicates that the correspondent has a relationship with at least one other member of the dataset.

Religion at birth (Nominal/String): Records the religion of a correspondent as accurately as can be gauged from their parentage, upbringing, public statements, or publications. Membership of public office after 1689 was taken as implicit evidence of Anglicanism since it necessitated swearing the Oath of Allegiance to William and Mary. The values in this field are:

Anglican, Caballist, Calvinist, Camisard, Catholic, Church_of_Ireland,
Church_of_Scotland, Episcopalian, Freethinker, Huguenot, Jesuit, Lutheran,
Presbyterian, Puritan, Quaker, Remonstrant, Reformed, (blank)

This might seem to be an excess of discrimination between faiths that we might now consider scarcely dissimilar from one another. But in Locke’s lifetime, these religious affiliations connoted membership of communities to a tremendous extent – those individuals who converted from the Church of Ireland to the Church of Scotland were, within their milieux, making a significant change to their circumstances, their prospects, their declared political loyalties.

Since over this period thinkers began to explore non-denominational faiths, and since those faiths in particular defy definition and are often shifting, ephemeral in nature, I devised the unsatisfactory but necessary category of ‘freethinker’ to cover those individuals whose faith became a matter of their own independent determination. This lacks in granularity – to describe Newton as a freethinker from 1670 onward does nothing to capture the particularities of the complex shifts in Newton’s mysticism, latitudinarianism and alchemical cabbalism between that date and his death in 1727. But the nature of this project is macro rather than micro, and its strengths lie in its capacity to make new insights from generalities, rather than pursuing particulars as scholars have to this point.

Converted to (Nominal/string): This field records to which religion a correspondent converted. The values are the same as “Religion at birth”. If no conversion is reported, this field is blank.

Date of conversion (Number/Date): in YYYY format, this field records the best date ascertainable for the date of a conversion. Where a correspondent is noted as having had a religious conversion, as in 27 cases, the conversion is dated to its earliest surviving historical record. Failing all else, I took dates of published statements of religious faith as a reliable terminus a quo. I verified publication dates in EEBO and ECCO where possible. Where individuals went through repeated conversions, I recorded each with this method, separated by commas.

Communities (Nominal/String): This field denotes the general social, practical, and professional communities within which each correspondent moved. The values in this field are:

church_official, clergy, family, FRS, landowner, military, politician, professional, RCP, row_college, scholar, secular_official, servant, soldier, titled_nobility, (blank)

“FRS” (Fellow of the Royal Society) and “RCP” (Royal College of Physicians) are two of the narrowest categories. They simply denote that the individual was a member of the Royal Society or of the Royal College of Physicians. Similarly, “family” marks that the individual was a member of Locke’s family. “Clergy” is self-explanatory, whereas “church_official” indicates official involvement in Church politics and governance. Deacons, Deans, Canons, Bishops, Archbishops and their equivalents outside Anglicanism qualify for “church_official” status. “Row_college” marks the small scholarly community that Locke built around him to discuss his ideas and to advance them in the House of Commons. “Servant” and “landowner” are also self-explanatory. “Politician” and “secular_official” overlap but are separate categories: customs officials qualify to be “secular_official”, whereas Members of Parliament are both.

The three most elastic categories are “titled_nobility”, “professional”, and “scholar”. “Titled_nobility” seems self-explanatory except for the fact that the category is especially vulnerable to the collapsing of time that the chronological span of the dataset brings about. Those individuals who were elevated to Dukedoms, Baronetcies, etc, during their lifetime have the tag applying to their whole life, and their children have the same tag despite their title being for them a hereditary acquisition.

“Professional” indicates that the individual was involved in any trade or profession. Though most of the professionals in the data were doctors, lawyers, and bankers, there is a significant minority of traders of all stripes, stock jobbers, turkey merchants, apothecaries, carpenters, scriveners, notaries, and so on. Professions are often specified in the expertise tag.

“Scholar” is the most elastic category since it covers all kinds of study, but also a simple one since its definition is fairly stable: the scholar tag applies to anyone who devotes a significant proportion of their time to the pursuit of knowledge in any form. Whether philosophers, chemists, biologists, alchemists, linguists or theologians, all have the scholar tag. The scholar tag is also always accompanied with an explanatory tag in the expertise field. It is the only community tag which always has an accompanying expertise tag.

Expertise (Nominal/String): This field is the most qualitatively rich, and least quantitatively useful, of the categories, and therefore has the highest number of classes. To limit the variety, however, tags were conservatively assigned according to what my research sources indicated. The values available in this field are:

administrator, alchemist, amanuensis, anatomy, anti_catholic, antilatitudinarian, antiquary, arabist, art_history, artist, astronomer, banker, banking, barometers, biographer, biologist, bonn, book_collector, book_seller, botanist, censor, chemist, China, classicist, collector, cologne, colonist, controversialist, courtier, diarist, diplomat, economics, editor, education, espionage, estate_manager, farmer, finance, foreign_customs, forwarder, france, gardening, general, geologist, goldsmith, governor, grocer, hebraist, historian, housekeeper, india, interpreter, inventor, journalist, judge, landowner, latinist, latitudinarian, lawyer, leibniz, letter_writer, librarian, linen_drapier, linguist, longitude, mathematician, mechanics, mercer, merchant, mill owner, missionary, munich, natural_history, natural_philosopher, natural_scientist, naturalist, netherlands, newton, numismatist, optics, orientalist, pamphleteer, patient, patron_arts, patron_letters, patron_sciences, philanthropist, philosopher, physician, physics, playwright, poet, poison, political_advocate, political_theorist, politician, professional, publisher, pupil, rhetorician, sea_captain, shepherd, smallpox, spy, steward, surgeon, surveyor, switzerland, tailor, tanner, theologian, translator, Turkey, tutor, vienna, west_indies, witchcraft, (blank).

Within these values you will notice the presence of both “espionage” and “spy”, or both “banker” and “banking”; in such cases, the abstract noun refers to an expertise evinced by the correspondent in their letters. The denotative noun refers to the specific occupation held by that correspondent. “Foreign customs” is a special case, since it usually applies to another tag in the same field. For example William Allestree’s entry records both “foreign customs” and “witchcraft”; he wrote to Locke about the practice of witchcraft abroad.

Notes (Text/string): This field includes the notes I took while researching the dataset. I have included it here to give other researchers an idea of the dirty, frustrating, and complex research challenges of trying to discern the identities of ambiguously or commonly named correspondents at some historical distance. This field might contain notes, references, or suggestions for further

reading, as well as many disambiguations to help researchers locate the specific figure in question (e.g. “not related to x”, “not to be confused with y”).