HOW CAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ASSIST FAMILY HISTORIANS?

INPUT

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

AI-ASSISTED FAMILY HISTORY

AI PROCESSING

HUMAN VERIFICATION
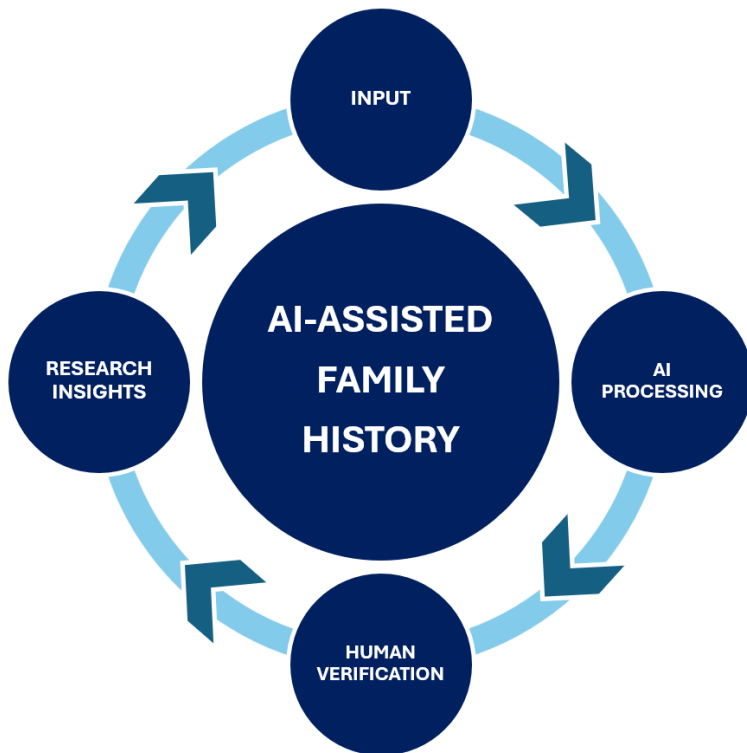
How can AI assist?

What small tasks can AI help me with?

Where does AI fit in my genealogy workflow?

Some AI Tools ...

ChatGPT

Google Gemini

deepseek

Microsoft

perplexity

Copilot

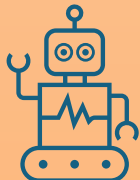Midjourney

Claude

Transkribus — Unlock the past

Apple Intelligence

HOW CAN WE USE A TOOL THAT WE CAN'T BELIEVE OR TRUST?

"By constraining it to work only with material we know to be true and explicitly telling it what we want it to do with that material. Once we understand this, the possibilities for using ChatGPT as your personal genealogy assistant
are truly exciting."

Laura Clark Murray, Family Locket Blog

THE HUMAN-AI PARTNERSHIP

Human	AI
• Critical Thinking	• Data Processing
• Ethical Judgement	• Pattern Recognition
• Intuition	• Multi-faceted Analysis
• Context	• Record Matching
• Social Networks	• Transformation
• Family Stories	• Speed

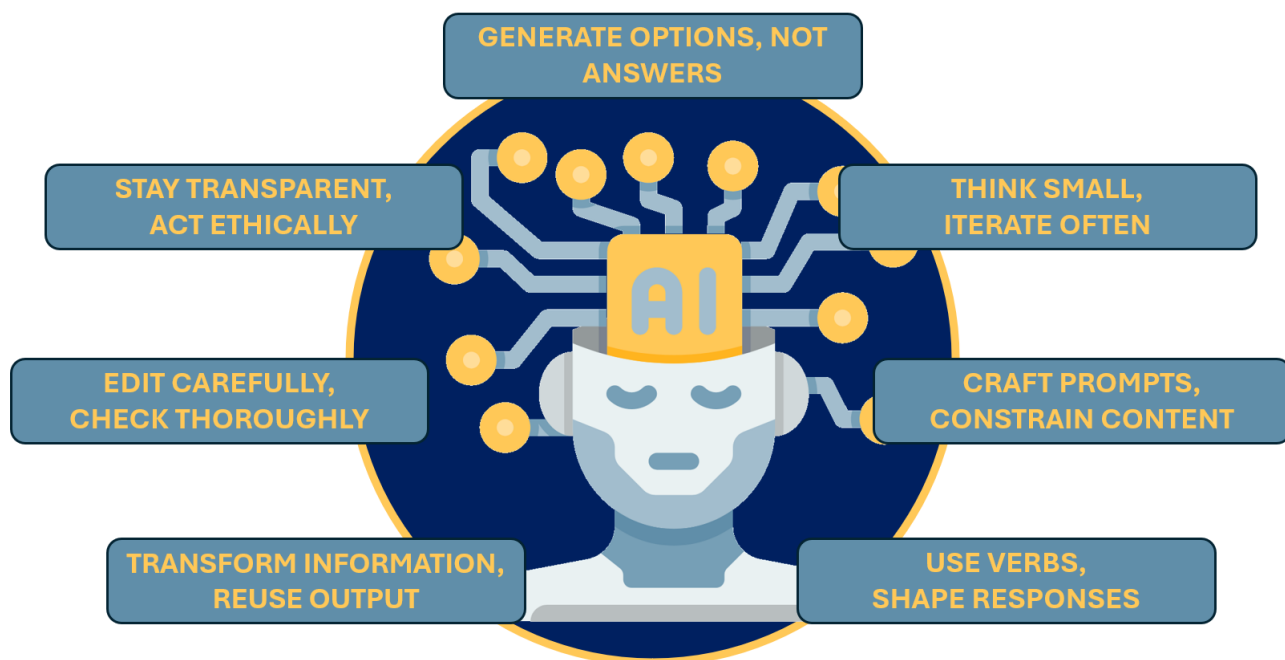**ENHANCED RESEARCH QUALITY & EFFICIENCY**

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IMPROVED FAMILY HISTORY

"It is the interaction between humans and the AI tools that make a difference. Anyone can chat with a bot, but the true power is in refining what to say, how to say it, critically analysing output and reiterating details in a dance of manipulation."

Andrew Redfern

CAN AI HELP?	YES	NO
Research	AI automates tasks such as transcribing documents and organising data	AI can't do the research for you – beware of "hallucinations"
Process Data	AI can rapidly process and sort through vast amounts of data	AI can't understand the emotional or cultural significance of the data
Identify Patterns	AI excels at identifying recurring names, dates, and relationships across datasets	AI may make incorrect assumptions or connections without human oversight
Collaborate	AI acts as a powerful tool to explore records and identify new research leads	AI doesn't replace human expertise in validating leads or interpreting nuanced information
Incorporate New Data	AI improves over time as more data is introduced, allowing it to offer refined suggestions and insights	AI is limited by the quality and comprehensiveness of the data it processes
Explore Potential Connections	AI can analyse records to suggest potential family links and connections.	AI can't fully verify these connections without input from human experts
Address & Correct Errors	AI can detect and highlight biases in records, helping researchers avoid common pitfalls	AI can also perpetuate biases if not properly monitored and corrected by human users
Make Judgements	AI provides data-backed insights, but it's up to the researcher to ensure the ethical use of data	AI can't make ethical decisions or discern the privacy concerns
Continually Update	AI thrives in environments where it receives continuous data input	AI can't adapt dynamically without human-driven updates and new data being fed into its system
Share Findings	AI can suggest innovative ways to present family history and provide possible options	AI can't generate original ideas or understand the emotional significance behind creative presentations

PRINCIPLES OF USING AI

GENERATE OPTIONS, NOT ANSWERS

STAY TRANSPARENT, ACT ETHICALLY

THINK SMALL, ITERATE OFTEN

EDIT CAREFULLY, CHECK THOROUGHLY

CRAFT PROMPTS, CONSTRAIN CONTENT

TRANSFORM INFORMATION, REUSE OUTPUT

USE VERBS, SHAPE RESPONSES

Developed by Andrew Redfern, 2023-2025

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE TASK	RESEARCH	PROVIDING CONTEXT	ANALYSING DATA	WRITING TEXT	GENERATING IMAGES	WRITING CODE	TRANSCRIPTION
CHATGPT			✓	✓		✓	✓
CLAUDE				✓			
PERPLEXITY	✓	✓					
DEEPSEEK			✓			✓	
COPILOT				✓	✓		
GEMINI	✓						
MIDJOURNEY					✓		
TRANSKRIBUS							✓
CANVA					✓		
META					✓		

SOME PROMPT EXAMPLES

- Adopt the role of a family historian. Make a list of 10 places to research my convict ancestors travelling to New South Wales before 1830.

- As an editor, retype this newspaper article, standardising spelling, abbreviations and capitalisation. [Copy and paste the text of the article from online newspaper]

- As a professional presenter, generate a list of 10 possible titles that could be used as a title slide for a presentation.

- As a children's book author, rewrite the newspaper report in a style appropriate for children aged between 5 and 12.

- Adopt the role of a data analyst. Create a table of this information, separating the various fields and selecting only those people living in _____. [Paste data from source]

- Create a biography of _____ using this information: [Copy information from Ancestry profile]

- Retype this newspaper article. [Paste from online repository].
  - ➢ Now create a table of relatives mentioned in the newspaper article and their relationship to the deceased.
  - ➢ Create a list of _____ children
  - ➢ Create a list of _____ siblings

- Develop a research plan and strategy for researching my ancestors who _____. Outline possible records I may be able to investigate.

TIPS FOR CREATING BETTER PROMPTS IN FAMILY HISTORY

- Provide context around the type of records you are providing to the tool eg birth registration, newspaper article

- When creating tables, get the tool to create the column headings first and then populate the table with the data

- For images, provide detailed prompts. Even asking the tool to create a prompt for you to edit can be a good starting point.

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Bringing Family History to Life