


The Impact of Technological and Economical Factors on the Future of Genealogy



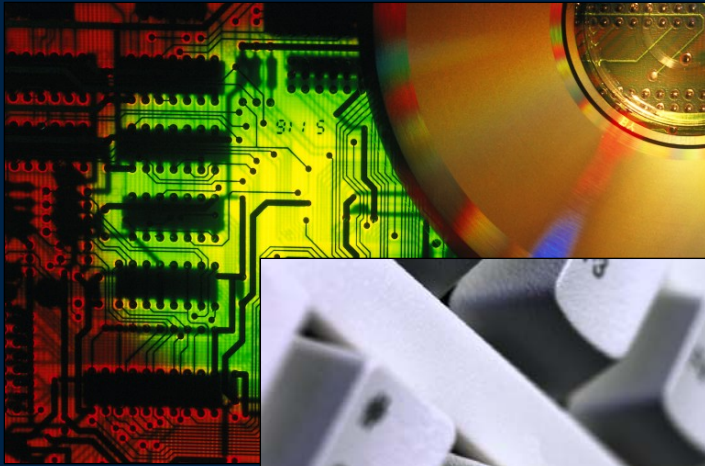
Jay L. Verkler
September 8, 2005




FAMILYSEARCH™
WHERE GENERATIONS MEET



Two Unstoppable Forces



❖ Technology

❖ Economics



Why Does Genealogy = Technology?

- ❖ Large amounts of information
 - Digitizing FamilySearch microfilm collection amounts to 19,234,000,000,000,000 bytes of information
- ❖ Complex questions
 - Find person with name like Robert, within 50 miles of Peoria, who lived in the 1850s
- ❖ Millions of interested users

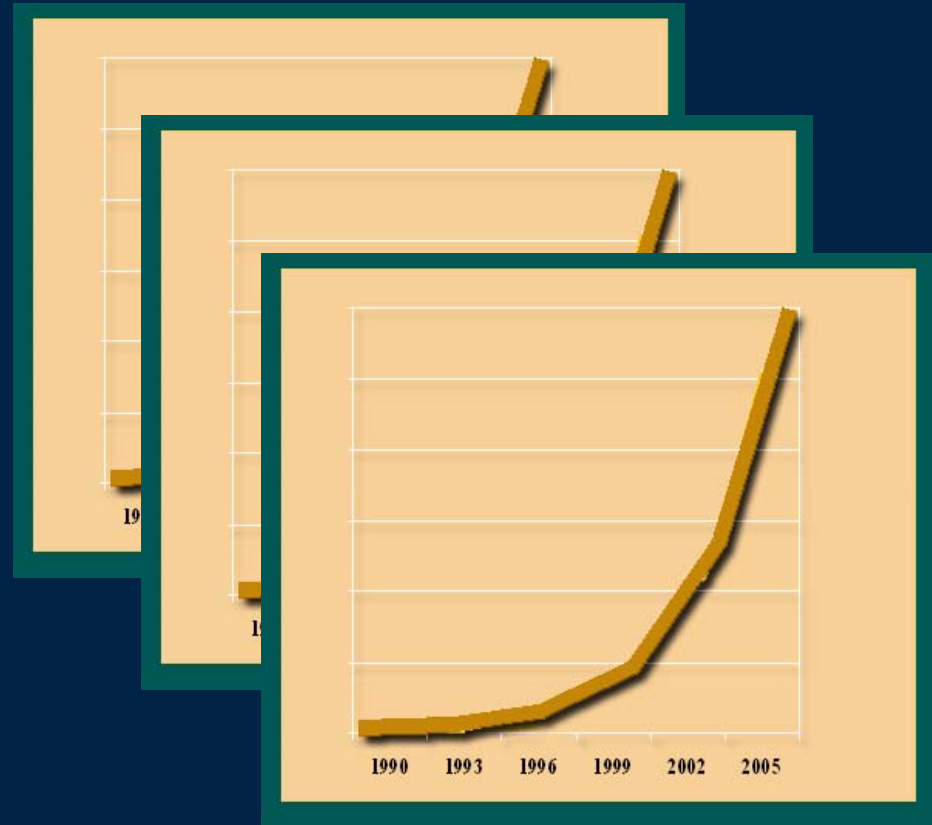


What Technology Represents

- ❖ Processor speed
- ❖ Memory
- ❖ Storage capacity
- ❖ Network bandwidth

Mantra:

Faster, Cheaper, More Capacity





Technology Capabilities

What if you could...

- ❖ Search with complex criteria
- ❖ Search 20 billion records and classify 20,000 possible matches in less than a second
- ❖ Work with records as though they were people and places
- ❖ Automatically index text via family relationships



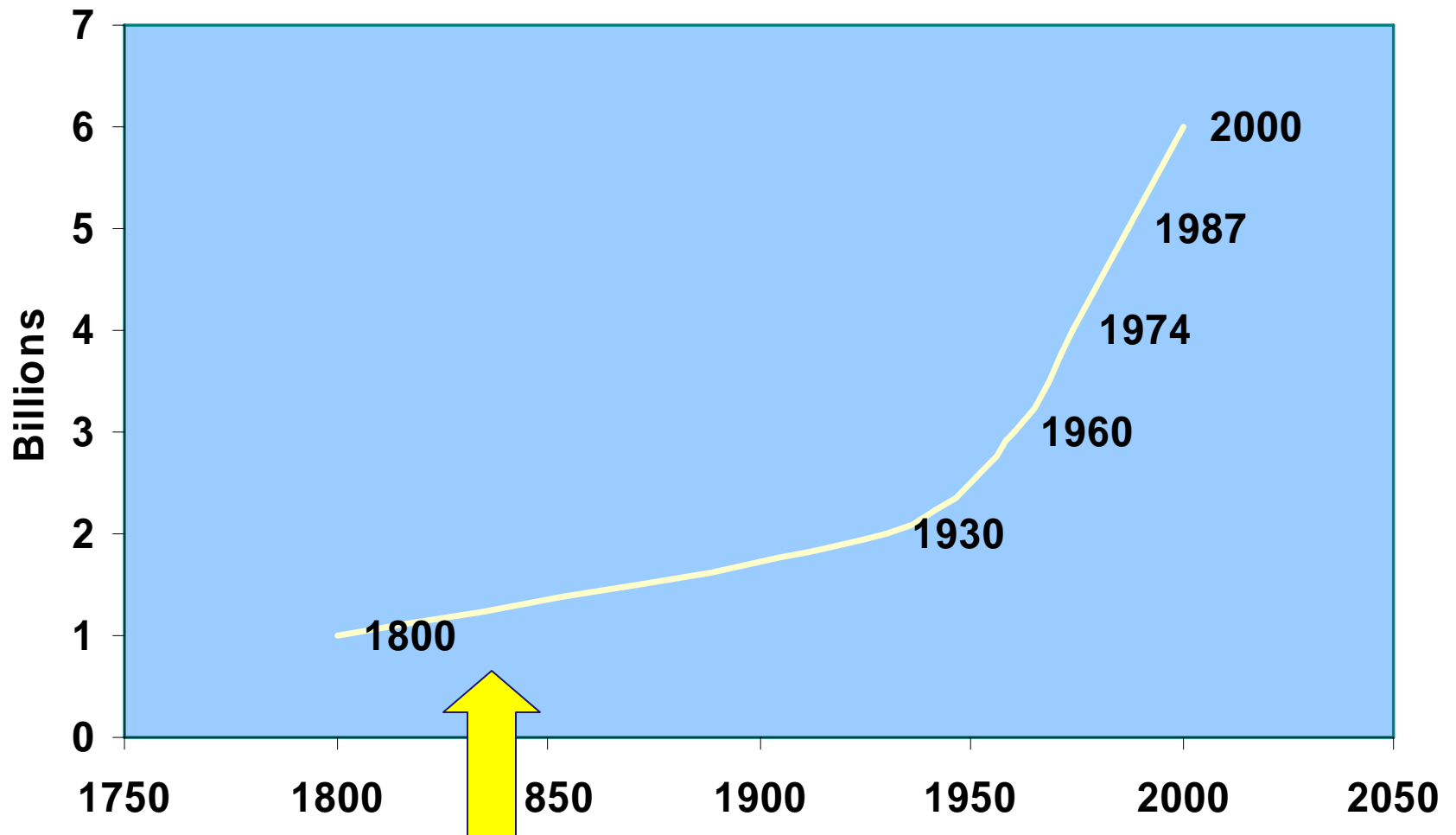
Capabilities Can Change Markets

If you build it...

- ❖ What if these capabilities are put in the hands of everyone, in an easy-to-use way?
- ❖ What if the cost of using these capabilities approaches something trivial?
- ❖ Families and genealogy resonate with a broad base of individuals



The Knee in the Curve

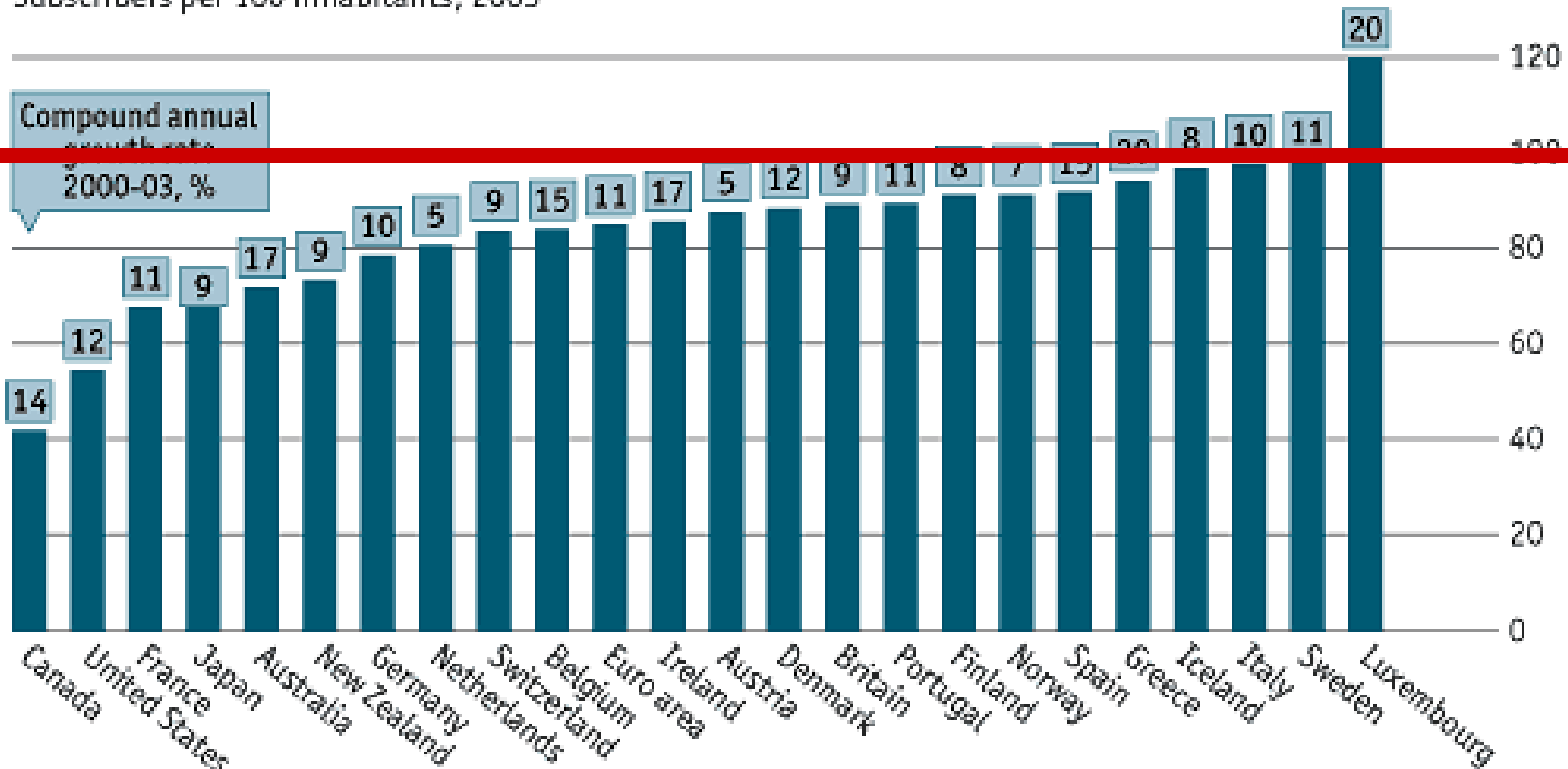




Example: Mobile Phone Penetration

Mobile-phone penetration

Subscribers per 100 inhabitants, 2003



Source: OECD



Not a Lot of Choice: High Probability

- ❖ Significant new capabilities are targeted for genealogy use
- ❖ New capabilities compete and win at collecting \$\$
- ❖ Significant numbers of new and inexperienced users
- ❖ Technology use requires constant change



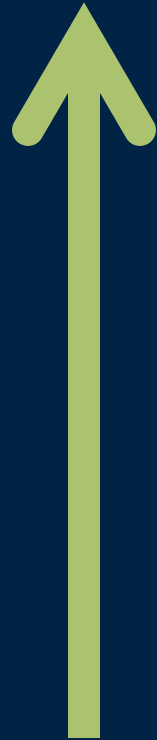
Choices

1. Economically driven vs. human resource driven
2. Organization focus and evolution
3. Individual leadership in a collaborative world



Driving Forces in Genealogy Industry

**Economic-
ally
Driven**



❖ Ancestry

❖ NEHGS

❖ FamilySearch



Volunteer Driven



Indexing Needs

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of Baywell St. Andrew
in the County of Northumberland in the Year 1833

When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents' Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1833 June 23. No. 167	John son of	Thomas & Nancy	Browell	Broom-school -haugh, master	Wm Raitton	
September 30th No. 168	Hannah D. or of Elizabeth	Thomas & Elizabeth	Browell	Broom -haugh, Farmer	Wm Raitton	



Indexing Needs

15

Martius 1788

7^{ma} Baptizatus est Maria Philippina Scheri Vespri
medis quinquagesimo sexto legitima iudoci Guliebant
francisci et iudoca Van Langenkov s: iudoci Subceptoris
joannes Guliebant et iudoca Van Langenkov
qd attestor J. F. Van Junid Vicyp: absti

7^{ma} Baptizatus est Catharina Joana Scheri Vespri hora
octavae legitima Maria Theresia de Melu
s: iudoci Subceptoris joannes Wellekas et Catha-
rina Van Gherste qd attestor J. F. Van Junid Vicyp: absti



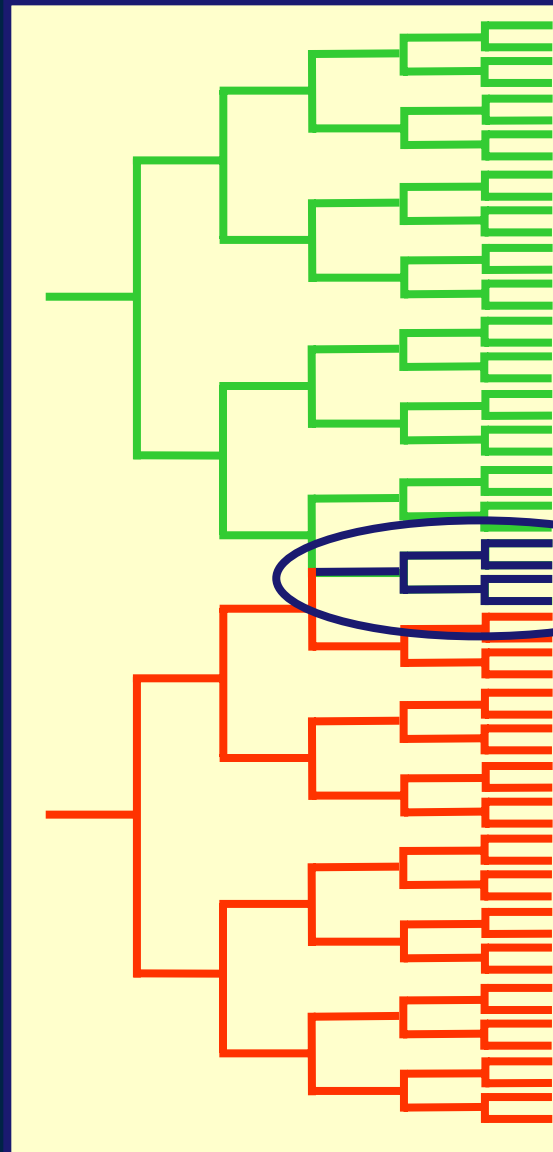


Societies and Other Organizations

- ❖ Substantial technology and economic impact
- ❖ Must reduce costs
- ❖ Leverage unique assets
- ❖ Use Internet to expand to broader interest base
 - People in Virginia interested in genealogy vs. people interested in Virginia genealogy

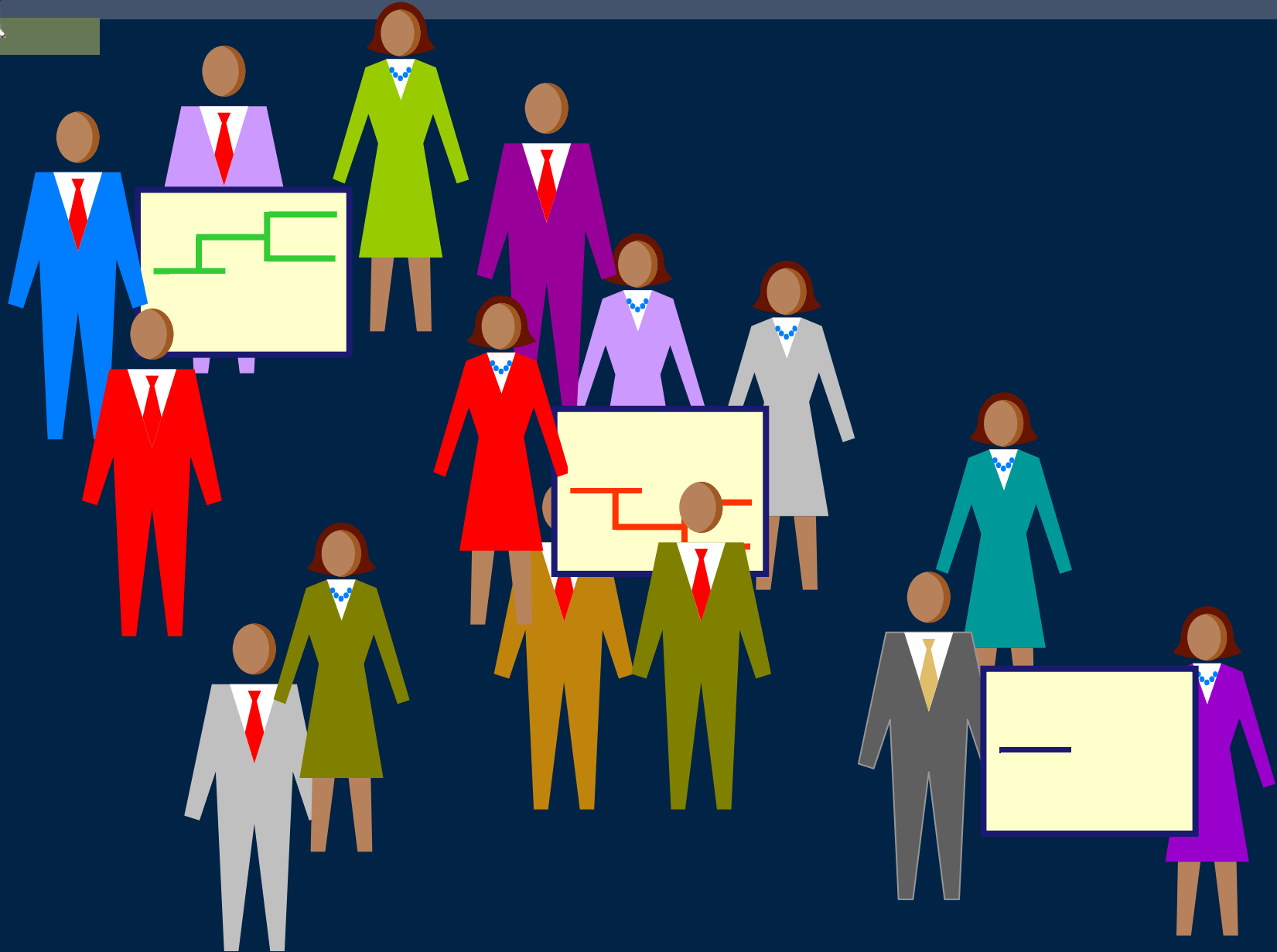


Collaboration: Unavoidable



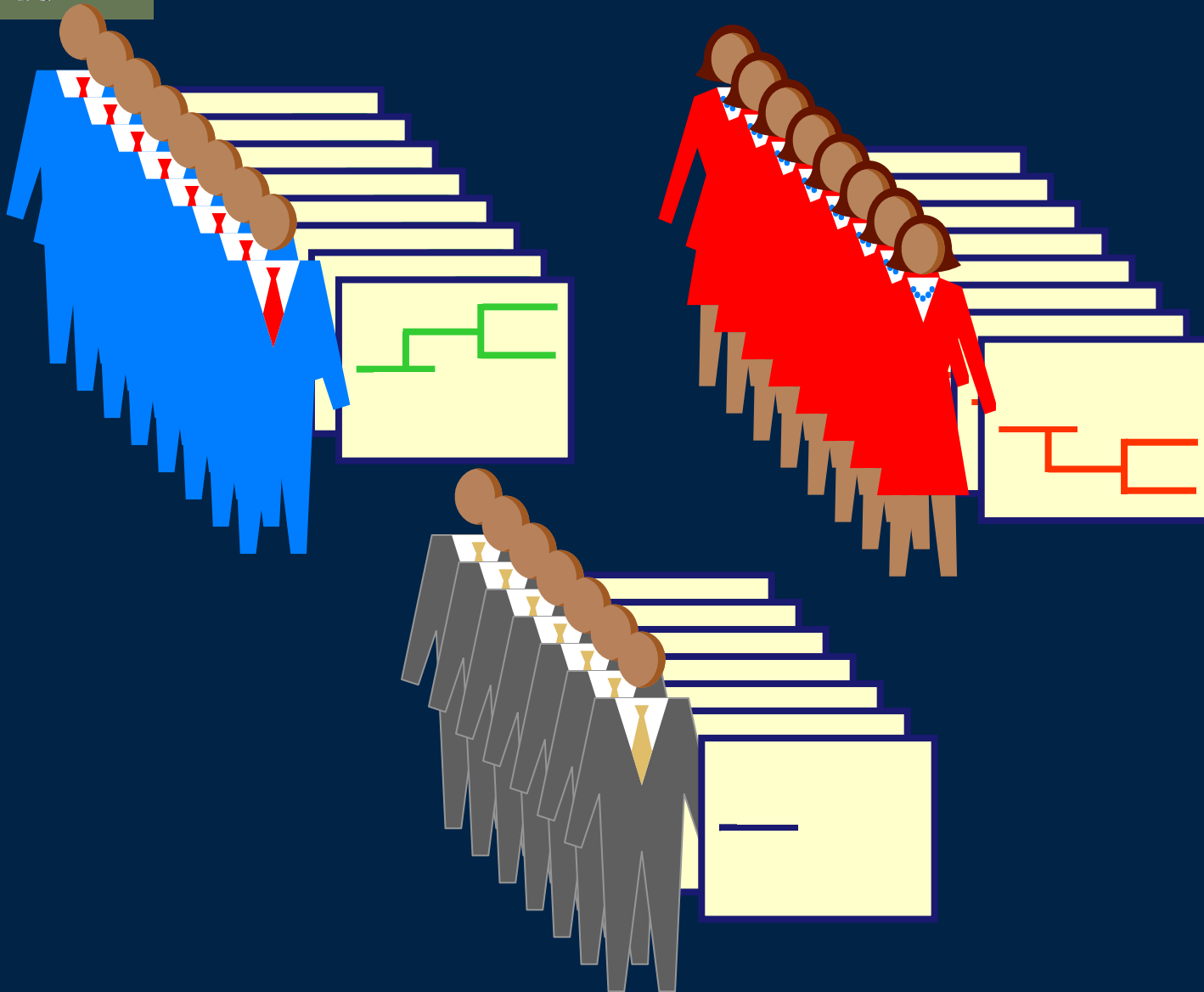


Duplicate, Overlapping Work



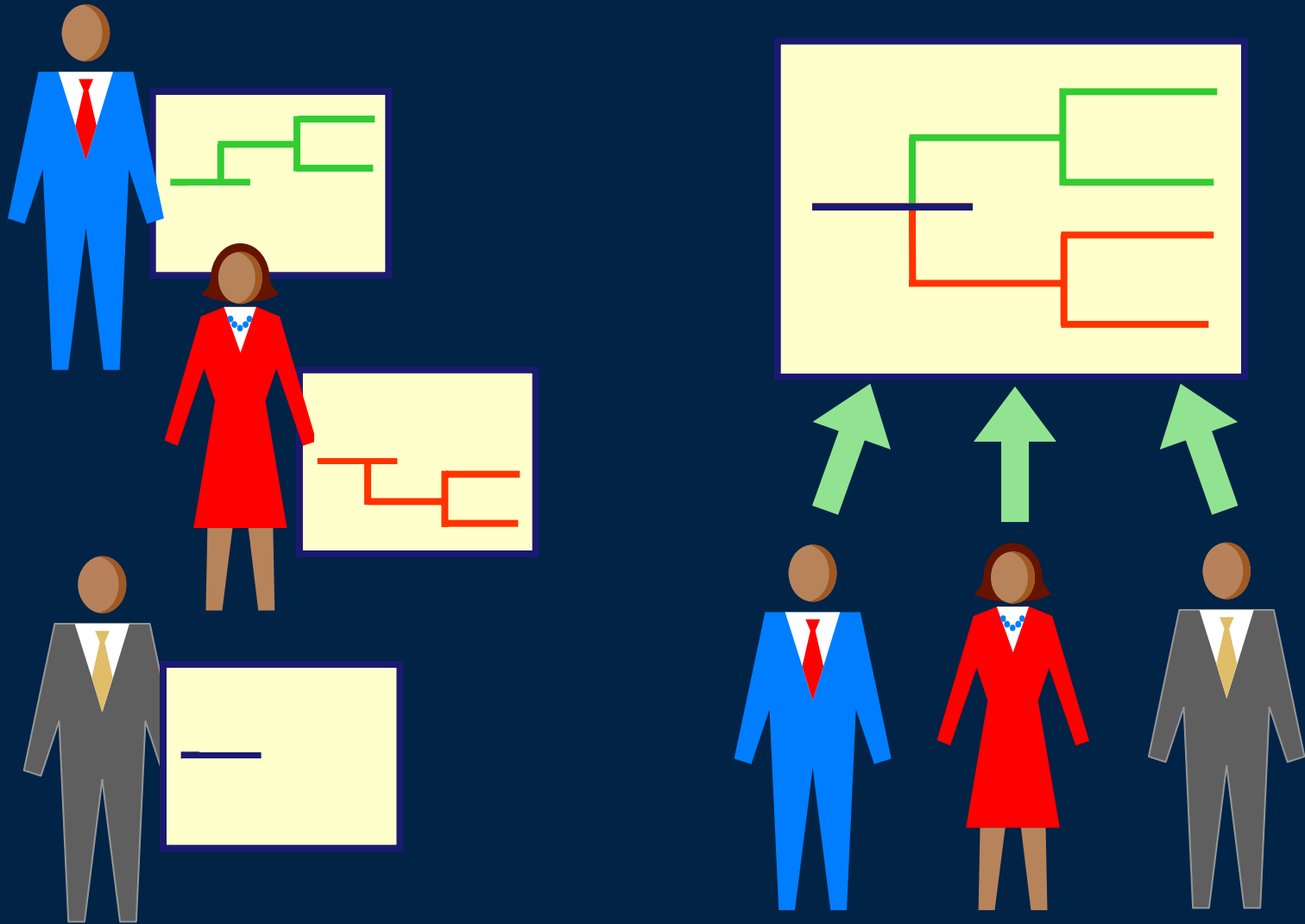


Copies Multiply and Diverge





Collaborative Model







Collaboration as a Cornerstone

- ❖ Genealogy is naturally collaborative
- ❖ Brings related individuals together, introduces those mildly interested
- ❖ Provides means to find expertise
- ❖ Links sources to people
- ❖ Natural, shared, long-term, preserved repository of family history knowledge
- ❖ Data from collaboration becomes basis for FamilySearch acquisition and collection efforts



Are We There Yet?

- ❖ We are just hitting the knee of the curve
 - Technologically
 - Genealogically
- ❖ As individuals and organizations, the impact of the choices we make in the next few years will have effects for decades to come