About the International OpenGen Alliance

The International OpenGen Alliance (OpenGen) is a non-profit council of family history executives, genealogy professionals and technologists working to develop and maintain a standard for data exchange and sharing across various platforms and devices.

New technologies combined with the explosive growth of social media is evolving family research into new dimensions. The landscape of digital media pertaining to the growth and maintenance of family trees is more extensive today than when the original standards were first introduced.

OpenGen's charter centers around the urgent need for a consistent practice of sharing the expanded portfolio of genealogical data across platforms and devices. The Alliance is led by a Board of Directors of fourteen members who are renown in the practice of genealogy and/or the technologies supporting the field. The Board is led by inaugural Chairman Scott Mueller, founder and CEO of AppleTree.com.

The group is charged with the development of a contemporary file format standard and related standards, white papers, and such other supporting deliverables as may be needed to address and promote the opportunities of a modern day genealogy information exchange, as well as the ongoing development and implementation of the APIs that open up the world of data to real-time interaction and validation.

OpenGen will conduct semi-annual meetings to review progress relating to genealogy data exchange, address new opportunities in the field of genealogy data, and formalize future iterations of the data format and API standards and best practices.

Opportunity and Objectives

FamilySearch has long been the standard-bearer for genealogy preservation and exchange through the Gedcom file format. The participation of FamilySearch in the launch of OpenGen begins a coalition of many supporters that share an interest in family history data. The advent of a single, national voice through which a functional focus is enunciated helps ensure the promise of a standard is delivered.

OpenGen seeks to bring together the industry's top talents and influencers with the objective of defining a contemporary standard for genealogy data interoperability. Through cooperation, communication, and common goals, OpenGen can help clarify the path for the next generation of genealogy data exchange and preservation.

International OpenGen Alliance Charter - WORKING OVERVIEW DRAFT

NOTE: This is an interim document, to be replaced upon incorporation with a Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws that would be consistent with this, but longer, more detailed and more procedural as well.

Title

Charter of the International OpenGen Alliance [OpenGen]
A not-for-profit organization focused on the definition, evolution, and maintenance of digital standards for genealogy and family history data.

Vision Statement
To be the world's authority for genealogy standards for data frameworks, exchange and sharing

Mission Statement
To foster and promote the development and adoption of OpenGen data standards to facilitate greater interoperability of genealogy and family histories.

Article I – Purpose

The OpenGen was formed to allow for the definition, clarification, simplification and maintenance of standards in the practice of genealogy data management. The organization endeavors to bring together leading contributors in the genealogy and related industries to define a framework, standards and best practices for family history data portability.

Article II – Membership

Membership in OpenGen is limited to executives and directors of genealogy organizations, professional genealogists, and genealogy technical specialists.

Membership is granted based on the submission and approval of an application to the organization. *(Membership qualifications tbd)*

Article III – Officers and Duties

There shall be 14 members of the OpenGen Board of Directors and one Chairperson.

The responsibilities of the officers shall include the following:
- **Strategic Planning** – Collaborates with other OpenGen Board members to develop, change or refine the standards for genealogy data portability.
- **Feedback** - Provide ongoing feedback to the OpenGen Board and member base regarding industry trends and issues impacting genealogy data
- **Serve as spokespeople** - Where possible and in coordination with OpenGen practices, serve as industry press spokespeople for the adoption of genealogy data portability standards developed and sanctioned by OpenGen

- ***Administration*** – oversight and execution of OpenGen statutory roles such as operations, acting as Secretary, acting as Treasurer, etc.

Board of Directors members are not eligible for compensation for their services. Board member benefits include the following:
- Each Board member is entitled to one free pass to all OpenGen events. This pass is non-transferable.
- Recognition of their status as Board Member at OpenGen events and marketing materials.
- Upon completion of a full two-year term, Board members achieve Board Emeritus status, which includes free passes to OpenGen events and invitations to Board dinners in perpetuity.

Article IV – Meetings

Two in-person Board meetings shall be held per year held in conjunction with the annual National Genealogy Society conference and one other event to be determined. Member and committee conference calls shall be scheduled no less than bi-monthly.

Board members or their proxies are expected to attend both annual meetings, understanding that not all may be able to. Those that miss two out of three consecutive board and conference call meetings should be subject to replacement.

Board meeting agendas shall be broken into administration and four working categories as follows:
1. Persistent Identifiers
2. Bibliographic Meta Data Model
3. Genealogy data communications (API)
4. Genealogy data definitions

Article VI – Elections

Elections for members of the Board of Directors shall be held every 2 years.

The term of the Chairperson shall be not less than 4 years.

The process by which members are eligible for the Board are as follows:

- Must be a full-time employee of a OpenGen member in good standing
- A maximum of one member of a company or brand may serve on the OpenGen board during any given time
- If a Board member leaves their company or if their responsibilities at their current company no longer apply to the genealogy data field, they may keep their seat until the next scheduled Board meeting or until the next election, whichever comes first. A resignation of the Board seat may be requested at the discretion of the remaining members of the Board.

Article VII – Finances

Annual membership dues for IGA are as follows:

General members:	$TBD per year
Board members:	$TBD per year
Sponsoring Companies:	$TBD per year

Financial oversight for the administration of OpenGen shall be conducted by an independent firm.

Responsibilities shall include: collection of dues, disbursement of funds, expense management, and semi-annual reporting of financial affairs.