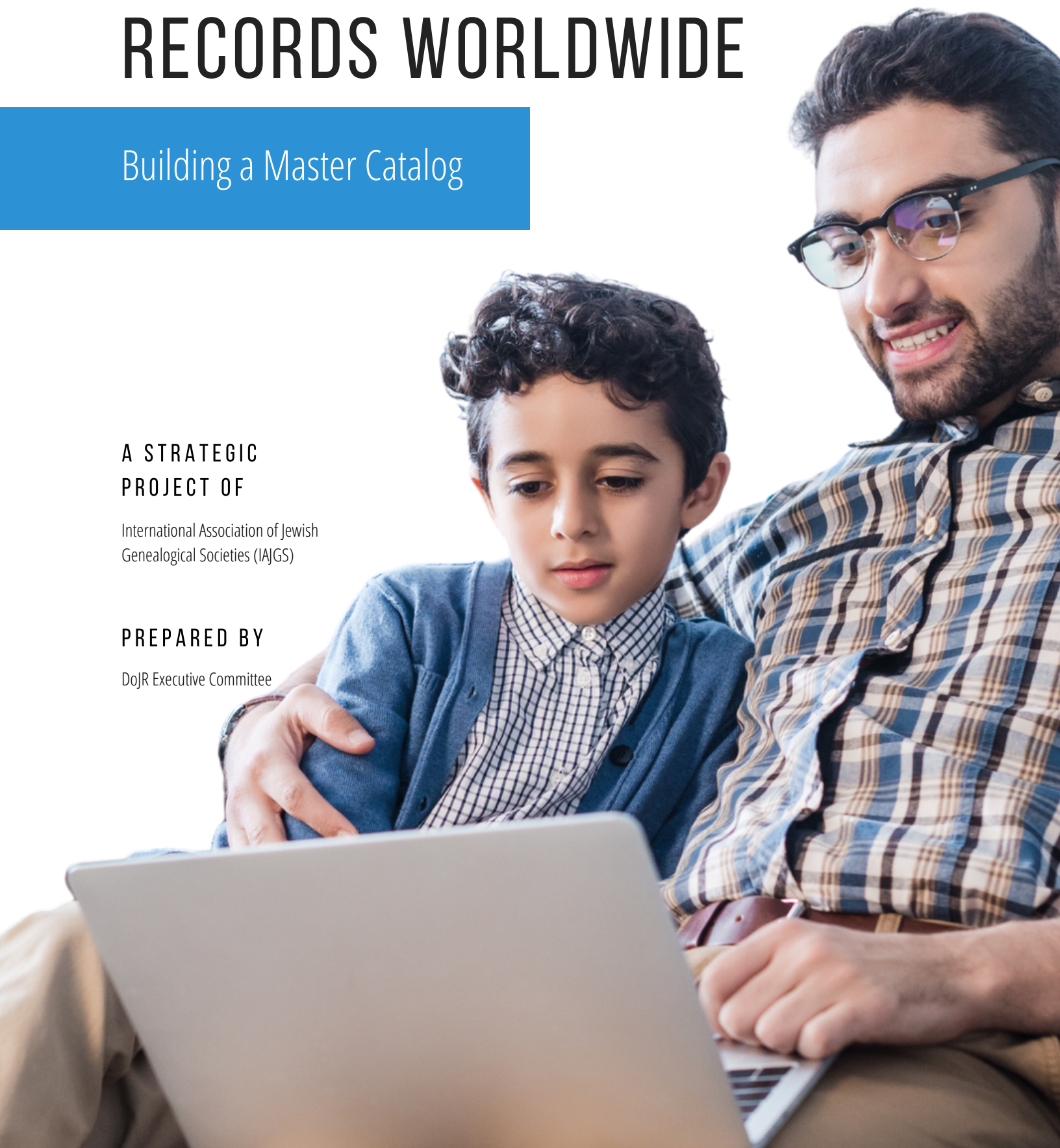# DOCUMENTATION OF JEWISH RECORDS WORLDWIDE

Building a Master Catalog

A STRATEGIC PROJECT OF

International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)

PREPARED BY

DoJR Executive Committee

ABOUT DOJR

DoJR research in the archives, libraries, and museums onsite and online will accelerate digitization, records indexing projects, and records preservation. Information published in JCat will reduce redundant surveys and duplicate projects. The initial DoJR priority will be to identify record collections currently unknown to the genealogical community - breaking through brick walls in connecting the generations.

Key components of the DoJR project:

- CONTENT ACQUISITION through regional custodial organizations survey and content acquired via onsite and online survey projects, extant catalog extensions, API (Application Programming Interface) development, and published post extractions
- PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT for catalog entry and search with UI/UX (User Interface/User Experience) design in native languages
- AUTOMATION DEVELOPMENT including pilot project(s) and AI/ML (Artificial Intelligence/Machine Language) frameworks

JCat will comprise record collections from all countries and in all forms (paper, microfilm, on-line, photos, audio, video, etc.).

MISSION

The DoJR project will build a first ever master catalog, JCat, of all record collections holding Jewish genealogically relevant data. For those seeking to discover their ancestors, JCat will answer the question "What records are available for my ancestral town?"

VISION

Every Jewish descendant can connect their ancestors from generation to generation, l'dor v'dor, across the time of recorded history and strengthen Jewish identity through ancestral discovery. Every Jewish descendant can discover, connect, and belong.

ABOUT IAJGS The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) delivers the "World of Jewish Ancestry Where You Live" through its global network of 94 societies. The IAJGS was formed in 1988 to provide a common voice for issues of significance to its members, to advance family history research, and to produce the annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy.

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HUGE STEP FORWARD

The Jewish world will be feasting on this source for generations to come...

WHERE WE'RE GOING

BUILDING BRICK BY BRICK THE LIBRARY OF THE JEWISH WORLD

Most of the information about our Jewish ancestors' past is hidden in plain sight and we don't even know about it. This information tells us what life was like for our ancestors, who they were, what they did, and how they lived. It connects one generation to the next, helps us know who we are, and allows us to leave that knowledge as a legacy for our children, their children, and their children's children, so that they also can know who they are.

You start this discovery with a catalog of everything - not just the birth, marriage, and death records researchers first think of, not just the records labeled "Jewish", but the less obvious often information richer records. A treasure trove of records of our ancestors' lives resides in archives, libraries, courthouses, synagogues and many other facilities in shtetls and cities across the globe. JCat is a global reference for all these records that document individuals, inform their life stories, and enable the building of family and community histories, preserving Jewish history and heritage.

PRESERVE JEWISH HISTORY & HERITAGE

DEVELOP COMMUNITY HISTORIES

BUILD FAMILY HISTORIES

RECREATE LIFE STORIES

IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS

DISCOVER RECORDS

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WHERE WE'RE AT

DOJR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

IDEATION & PROJECT PLAN

Need and implementation feasibility reviewed by diverse stakeholders: researchers, archivists, librarians, genealogist leaders and luminaries, and genealogy company executives.

KEY STAFF & ADVISORS

Core team with essential leadership, management, and data and catalog technology skills in place. Subject matter experts advising on content acquisition strategies, record type taxonomies, authority files and standards.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

Pilot project successfully completed: identified substantial number of hidden-in-plain-sight record collections and validated the catalog entry template.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Constituent Resource Management (CRM) system operational.

USE CASE FEEDBACK

Feedback obtained from diverse user personas and requirements refined.

DESIGN

Conceptual data model definition underway.

THE ROAD TO DISCOVERY

"Each JCat entry, from across the globe, is a building block in the preservation of Jewish history and our collective heritage."

JCat will be populated with information about record collections from a myriad of sources:

CROWDSOURCE
Individual researchers: professional and hobbyist

CATALOGS & PROJECTS
Custodial entities holding records and catalogs of records

REGIONAL NETWORKS
Jewish genealogical societies and regional affiliates

PUBLICATIONS & POSTINGS
Print media and social media current and archived

In parallel, research will begin in automated catalog culling and catalog entry creation. Automation will speed up the addition of new information to the catalog at a lower cost per catalog entry.

TECHNOLOGY MAKES IT ACHIEVABLE

- DIGITIZATION: Institutions continue to digitize their collections facilitating online access
- CROWDSOURCING: Crowdsourcing methods enable a global community of catalog contributors
- AUTOMATION: Advances in use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for records processing drive down catalog entry cost and time

WHILE DOORS ARE OPEN

- OPEN ACCESS: Fluctuations and variances in administrations and policies of archival institutions drive a mandate to get inside now, before the door closes again.

TIME IS THE ENEMY

- RECORDS VULNERABILITY: Records suffer damage and destruction with time (human, mold, insect, flood and fire)

WHY NOW

Because now we can... before it is too late

BY THE NUMBERS

52
DISCOVERY

- 52 collections discovered which were previously unknown by 2 archival researchers (Mikolayev, Ukraine and Kielce, Poland) in 4 weeks
- 80 more hidden-in-plain-sight expected in Mikolayev

116K
IMPACT

- 116k Jewish individuals discovered in 4 week Pilot Project
- 580,000 descendants now have a new record of their ancestor (assuming each with 5 living descendants)
- 30 researchers in a year = 9,000 discovered collections
- 1.8M are actively tracing Jewish ancestry, 3.5M want to know, 8.1M want to know if it is easy to discover

1.9B
CATALOGS

- 1,893,000 collections in FamilySearch catalog
- 8,500 collections keyword search "Jewish" in FamilySearch catalog
- 85,400 libraries/archives (123 countries) in WorldCat/OCLC
- 60M pages of documentation Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People

99.9%
AUTOMATION

- 99.9% decrease in time when AI used for indexing 5M records in 10 hours vs. 150 human years
- DoJR pilot project costs $85 per catalog entry with potential to realize order of magnitude savings

LEADERSHIP

MARLIS HUMPHREY
Executive Committee Lead

Global Non-Profit Leadership | Technology Industry Executive | Innovation | Standards | Methodology | Global Partnership | Team Building | Vision to Roadmap to Project Delivery | Accelerating Growth

...more...

CHARLIE KATZ
DoJR Agile Coach and Data Governance

Program Management | Product Management | Data Governance | Data Models | Cloud Strategy | Technology Delivery | Cross-Functional Teams | Agile Practitioner

...more...

STANLEY DIAMOND
Executive Committee

Global Non-Profit Leadership | Entrepreneur | Manufacturing CEO | Records Indexing Leader | Volunteer Development | National Archive Cooperation Expert | Large Scale Project Delivery | Fundraising

...more...

JAN GRONSKI
DoJR Technology Advisor

Technology| VoIP | Routing | Engineering Management | Start-up Operations | China | Multilingual | SalesForce | Tableau

...more...

DR SALLYANN SACK
Executive Committee

Global Non-Profit Leadership | Entrepreneur | Global Publishing | Genealogy Luminary | Visionary | Rainmaker | Large Scale Project Delivery

...more...

GARY PERLMAN
DoJR Catalog Technology and Standards Consultant

UI/UX | Multilingual & Accessible Interfaces | Library Catalog Design | Big Data | Metadata Standards | Data Models | Information Management| Computer Science | Experimental Psychology | Cognitive Engineering | Statistics | Multilingual

...more...

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ENDORSEMENT

"It would certainly be a monumental work, to better document sources of available Jewish genealogical material, and commercial companies like MyHeritage would certainly be very interested in such an inventory."

GILAD JAPHET
Founder & CEO
MyHeritage

"This project sounds fascinating. Impressive. We can use it to expose our holdings to a broader community, to avoid redundant work on collections, and to discover new collections for acquisition."

DR. YOCHAI BEN-GHEDALIA
Director
Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People

"I think JCat has astounding potential. I can use it for authority file disambiguation."

DR. AHAVA COHEN
Senior Librarian
National Library of Israel

"DoJR is a very promising initiative!"

DR. GABOR KADAR
Noted European Jewry Historian and Archivist

"A wonderful initiative which will surely benefit the broader Jewish genealogical community."

AVRAHAM GROLL
Executive Director
JewishGen.org

"We understand how useful this catalogue will be . . . we uncovered household records in Vilnius and they were not labelled Jewish but had rich Jewish genealogical information. The Litvak records were packed up several times and sent to Russia - who knows whether they all came back? We hope JCat will help us find records in other countries and places where we have yet to look and we will all be able to avoid duplication of work. We want to ensure, before it is too late, that the records will be preserved and translated."

JILL ANDERSON
President
Litvak SIG

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