An optimized platform for capturing metadata of historical correspondences

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The Vernetzte Korrespondenzen (engl. Networked Correspondences) project...

- investigates the correspondences and social networks of German scholars which went into exile during Nazi Germany
- processes four-"dimensional" data:
 - Who wrote a letter to whom?
 - When was a letter written?
 - From where to where was a letter sent?
 - What were the topics of a letter?
- tries to answer questions like
 - How did specific topics spread in time and space?
 - How did the authors deal with the Nazi seizure of power?
 - How did they socialize?





But before we can start to investigate, to process, and to answer questions, someone has to capture the metadata of all the letters in our corpus according to our four dimensions.

Motivation

Author Title:	Select
Author First Name:*	
Author Middle Name:	
Author Last Name:*	
Author Locality:*	
Author State:	
Author Country:*	
Correspondent Title:	Select
Correspondent First Name:*	
Correspondent Middle Name:	
Correspondent Last Name:*	
Correspondent Street Address:*	
Correspondent Locality:*	
Correspondent State:	
Correspondent Country:*	
Date of Writing:*	Format: MM / DD / YYYY
Date Stamp on Envelope:	Format: MM / DD / YYYY
Number of Pages:	
Language:	Select
Rights:	Select
Signature:	
Condition:	
Location:	
Type:	
Comment:	
	OK Print Cancel

Motivation

Author Title:	Select
Author First Name:*	
Author Middle Name:	
Author Last Name:*	
Author Locality:*	
Author State:	
Author Country:*	
Correspondent Title:	Select
Correspondent First Name:*	
Correspondent Middle Name:	
Correspondent Last Name:*	
Correspondent Street Address:*	
Correspondent Locality:*	
Correspondent State:	
Correspondent Country:*	
Date of Writing:*	Format: MM / DD / YYYY
Date Stamp on Envelope:	Format: MM / DD / YYYY
Number of Pages:	
Language:	Select
Rights:	Select
Signature:	
Condition:	
Location:	
Type:	
Comment:	
	OK Print Cancel

So, who wants to do it?



Motivation

Author Title:	Select
Author First Name:*	
Author Middle Name:	
Author Last Name:*	
Author Locality:*	
Author State:	
Author Country:*	
Correspondent Title:	Select
Correspondent First Name:*	
Correspondent Middle Name:	
Correspondent Last Name:*	
Correspondent Street Address:*	
Correspondent Locality:*	
Correspondent State:	
Correspondent Country:*	
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Date Stamp on Envelope:	Format: MM / DD / YYYY
Number of Pages:	
Language:	Select
Rights:	Select
Signature:	
Condition:	
Location:	
Type:	
Comment:	
	OK Print Cancel

So, who wants to do it? Nobody?

How can we improve that?



Our goals/requirements

Entering metadata should be...

- simple: accept unformatted input as far as possible
- accurate: entries have to be correct and unambiguous
- focused: no more input fields than necessary
- intuitive: nobody likes reading manuals
- aided: the system offers suggestions or provides context
- fast: it's a large corpus

The biggest challenge

Simplicity



Accuracy

The Right Tool for the Job

A demonstration.

Example: A letter from Edgar Allan Poe

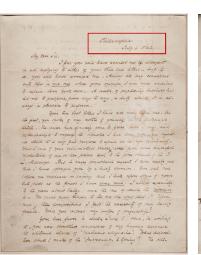
I fear you will have accused me of disapert in not replying to either of your three take letters - but if so, you will have wronged me . Among all my correspond outs there is not one whose good opinion I am more anaises led me to postpone, poor day to day, a duty which it is always a pleasure & perform. your two last letters I have not now before me. In the first, you sicke of my notice of yourself in the autograph article. The paper had generally gone & press befor I can sent returnities to myself the ridustice I have how you are night in which it is my first purpose & upair as the him opposituation. That I taid of your grammatical coross, arose from some imperfect recollections of one on his points sent & the first volume of the S. a. Assessage. But in more important respects I now deeply feel suppose me missione in carine that I look upon some of your late pieces as the priess I have ever read. I allede experielly to the room about Shelley, and he me of which the refrain is - The came from Marien & the new she work sheet " report reaching these compositions I feel the measurity of our being

gone have form to should close II. come it writing to go to be a considered assument of my human to program to extend to extend whose of parlamet originalists. More traperty the character to make y the "horse chain to formy ? The other

friends. Will you accept my purple of prienceship?

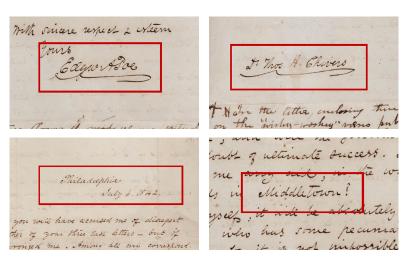
pieces are in the hunds of my encussor, the griswold . #+ It is my intention now to resume the project of the "Pour eleganie. I had made every preparation for the issue of the post mumber in Farmany 1841, but relinquished the asign at the freshound representation of joining me in July provided I would exist his estays in the meantiques. In hely be put me of until danuary; and in January until hely again. He was finally distines, and I am resolved to push formula for misself. I believe this I have morey warm friends. expended, in the South and mest, and were the journal faith before The partie, I have no doubt of national success. Is it south that you could appeal me any wind, in the way of subscribed amon your friends in ellidelectown! As I have no money myself, it will be absolutely ne. assery this I prouve a partner who has some pecuniary means . I mention this & you - for it is not mixogrible " dint you you say may have both the will i the ability to Joses me. The was muraber will not agreen until daming, so Mart I shall have time to look about me With sinare respect & extern The die the cetter and any through the property they will be the said of the s

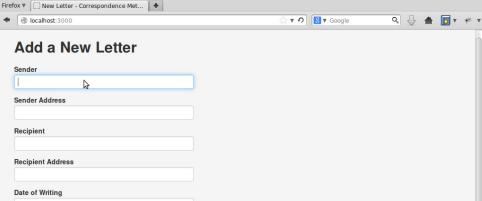
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Example: A letter from Edgar Allan Poe





Create Letter

Cancel

Sender	
	b
Sender Address	
Recipient	
Recipient Address	
Date of Writing	
Content Summary	

American rapper

Sender		
poe		
Edgar Allan Poe American poet, short story writer and	* 1809, † 1849 d literary critic	
James Poe Screenwriter	* 1921, † 1980	
Ted Poe American politician	* 1948	
Raymond Poe American politician	* 1944	
William F. Poe American politician	* 1931	
Neilson Poe American politician	* 1809, † 1884	
Anthony Poshepny United States Marine	* 1924, † 2003	
Junior Siavii Player of American football	* 1978	
Richard Poe American actor	* 1946	
Illmaculate	* 1986	

Sender

Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe American poet, short story writer and liter	* 1809, † 1849 rary critic
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Richard Poe American actor	* 1946
IIImaculate American rapper	* 1986



Edgar Allan Poe was an American author, poet, editor, and literary critic, considered part of the American Romantic Movement. Best known for his tales of mystery and the macabre. Poe was one of the earliest American practitioners of the short story and is generally considered the

inventor of the detective fiction genre. He is further credited with contributing to the emerging genre of science fiction. He was the first well-known American writer to try to earn a living through writing alone, resulting in a financially difficult life and career. (Source: Wikipedia)

Born:

January 19, 1809 in Boston, Massachusetts, United States

Died:

October 07, 1849 in Baltimore, Maryland, United States (im Alter von 40 Jahren)

Alternative Names:

- Edgar Poe
- E. A. Poe

Authority Control:

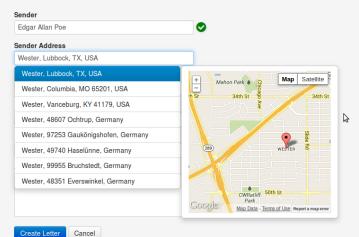
VIAF, LCCN, Worldcat, GND, Wikipedia

Create Letter

Sender Edgar Allan Poe Sender Address wester Wester, Lubbock, TX, USA Wester, Columbia, MO 65201, USA Wester, Vanceburg, KY 41179, USA Wester, 48607 Ochtrup, Germany Wester, 97253 Gaukönigshofen, Germany Wester, 49740 Haselünne, Germany Wester, 99955 Bruchstedt, Germany Wester, 48351 Everswinkel, Germany

Cancel

3



Sender

Edgar Allan Poe

Sender Address

Philadelphia, PA, USA



Recipient

Thomas Holley Chivers

,	
Thomas Holley Chivers 19th century American poet	* 1809, † 1858
Edgar Schiferli Dutch cricketer	* 1976
Martin Chivers English footballer	* 1945
Gary Chivers Professional footballer	* 1960
Frank Chivers English footballer	* 1909, † 1942
Basil Chivers English cricketer	* 1939
lan Chivers English cricketer	* 1964
Nathan Chivers Australian Paralympic alpine guide skier	* 1976



Thomas Holley Chivers was an American doctor-turned-poet from the state of Georgia. He is best known for his friendship with Edgar Allan Poe and his controversial defense of the poet after his death. (Source: Weipedia)

Born:

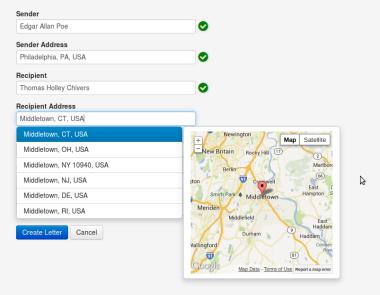
October 18, 1809 in Georgia,

United States

December 18, 1858 in Decatur, Georgia (im Alter von 49 Jahren)

Authority Control: VIAF, Wikipedia





Sender Edgar Allan Poe \odot Sender Address **②** Philadelphia, PA, USA Recipient Thomas Holley Chivers Recipient Address **②** Middletown, CT, USA Date of Writing July 6. 1842 0 **Content Summary** Create Letter Cancel

ilter:	■ History	■ Births	Deaths	Holidays
Sunda	y, 3. July 18	842		
• Jam	es Marsh, Ar	nerican philo		born. gregational clergyman , dies at age 47.
Monda	ıy, 4. July 1	842		
• Inde	pendence Da	ıy		
Tuesd	ay, 5. July 1	1842		
• Cha		organ, Amer	ican congress	sman for Missouri, is
Saturd	ay, 9. July	1842		
• Cha	rles H. Tenne	y, American	businessma	n, is born.

Edward Alley Des		
Edgar Allan Poe		
Sender Address		
Philadelphia, PA, USA		
Recipient		
Thomas Holley Chivers		
Recipient Address		
Middletown, CT, USA		
Date of Writing		
Independence Day 39	₽ 2	
Content Summary		

Filter: History Births Deaths Holidays Tuesday, 2. July 1839 . Twenty miles off the coast of Cuba, 53 rebelling African slaves led by Joseph Cinqué take over the slave ship Amistad. · Henry Lumpkin Wilson, Georgian politician, is born. Wednesday, 3. July 1839 . The first state normal school in the United States, the forerunner to today's Framingham State College, opens in Lexington, Massachusetts with 3 students. · Hans Larsen Saakvitne, Norwegian politician, is born. Thursday, 4. July 1839 Independence Day Saturday, 6. July 1839 · Jonathan Dixon, American politician, is born.

Sender Edgar Allan Poe Sender Address Philadelphia, PA, USA Recipient Thomas Holley Chivers Recipient Address Middletown, CT, USA

Content Summary

Date of Writing
Independence Day 39

.al

Create Letter Cancel

Edgar Allan Poe



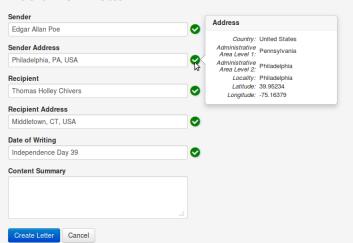
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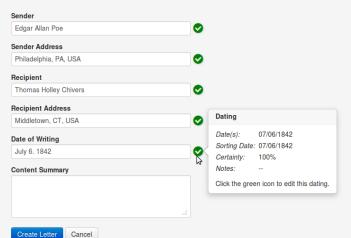
American poet, short story writer and literary critic

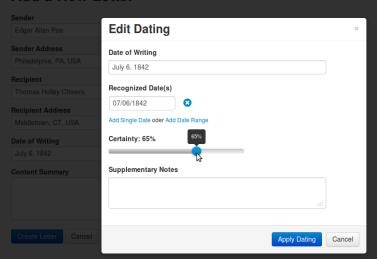
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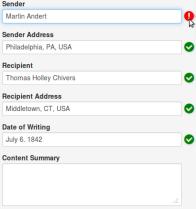




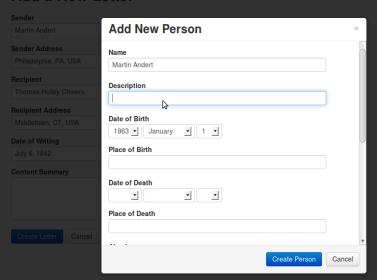
Add a New Letter Sender Martin Andert

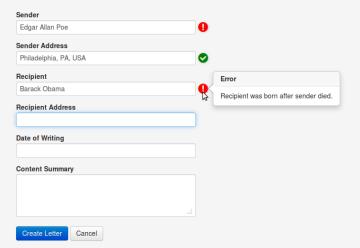
Create Letter

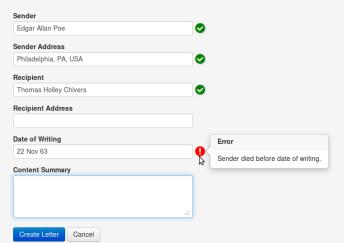
Cancel



Error
Unrecognized name.
Click the red icon to create a new person.







Outlook / Next steps

- As stated earlier, this is a proof-of-concept application.
- Things on our to-do list:
 - support for the fourth dimension ("what")
 - multiple recipients; organizations as correspondents
 - customizable inputs
 - configurable relevance ranking
 - more output formats (JSON, XML, RDF, OA, etc.)
 - availability as a web-service endpoint
 - provide a programming interface (API)
 - ..



What do you think?