

“#alltheographies: Developing an event model through LEAF-LINCS collaboration”

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Forward Linking Conference, Ottawa CA
6-7 May 2024

Note that this document is meant to follow the slides of this presentation

SLIDE #1

The title of this paper is a reminder of a joke many women in DH have shared over the years. It invokes #allthethings, which is both a blessing and a curse. We want to do all-the-things that brought us to DH in the first place ... the promising ways we could pursue discovery, analysis, and mobilization; and all-the-things that we can't possibly pursue because we have to do all-the-things that prevent us from focusing.

Here, the riff has to do with all the possibilities that are proffered by structuring our data in ways that make it communicable on the Semantic web: not just shareable or discoverable but presented in contextualized ways that help to explain **why** we are sharing it and **how** we see it being of value to enhancing the cultural record. But also the nod to the fact that we do need those personographies and gazetteers and vocabularies in order to provide the contexts.

This paper describes the work that my collaborator Rachel Milio and I have been doing for the past two years in collaboration with our colleagues at LINCS, including Kim Martin, Susan Brown, Connie Crompton, Alice Defours, Alliya Mo ... and so many others. Rachel can't be here today because she is in Rethymno at the University of Crete, having just begun her PhD on "Semantic Annotation and Knowledge Graphs for Classics / Ancient Greek" as part of the TALOS research project.

SLIDE #2

We believe this work occupies an interesting space within the LINCS ecosystem, because it comes from multiple ways of participating in LINCS: our work as researchers on the REED London project and as part of the LEAF development team; our involvement in LINCS through LEAF in the 'TEI Neighborhood'; and as contributors through our work on vocabularies including early modern London Place Types, Occupations, and Events. As well, we've used the work we've been doing on REED London in developing a TEI-structured 'event model' to test our person- place- and organization-ographies with the XTriples tools.

SLIDE #3

REED London is a dynamic digital scholarly edition that brings together archival documents and editorial materials about pre-modern London performance in new ways to new audiences. This prototype edition offers new ways of reading and experiencing theatre, music, and all forms of entertainment through contemporary eyewitness accounts, financial and legal records, and much more. In REED London records, people, places, and organizations play roles that are sometimes at odds with the ways they are perceived in other historical contexts.

SLIDE #4

Recently our focus has shifted to contextualizing the elements the records contain, such as places, people, organizations, and events, in order to combine all of these features into one story of a performance event. For example, with the royal entrance of Katherine of Aragon in 1501, we not only know the performance content of each pageant she viewed on her route, but also the role played by the political leaders, and guild members in the performance. We even know the names of individual guild representatives who stood along the route. Individual records have little meaning when studied alone, but when synthesized, for example, as an ArcGIS Story Map, they can be leveraged to tell a complete story.

SLIDE #5

The first element we have grappled with is the many, many places mentioned in the REED London records. These places vary in how well-documented they are. Some, like St. Paul's Cathedral, are very easy to trace throughout history. But we also have residences that change names as they shift hands, taverns that no longer exist, and countless pre-Fire and pre-Blitz churches.

SLIDE #6

There are also a lot of people mentioned in REED London records – some of whom are known to history, but in ways that are different from our perspective. And this is one of the things we think we can contribute to LINCS. USo for example, Thomas Legh, Lord Mayor of London, is known to REED as a participant in Elizabeth's coronation celebrations rather than for his political dealings. More often than not, however, we know very little about the people mentioned besides their name (sometimes just a last name) and a floruit date.

SLIDE #7

A key element of the records contained in the REED London Civic collection are the Worshipful Companies, or London trade guilds. Many of our performance events are inextricable from the involvement of guild members, who would fund as well as participate in these events. The City of London was also governed by members of these guilds, so when records describe the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs, or the Aldermen, we consider it important to contextualize these figures via the guilds they represent, as well as their role in these performances.

ANIMATION

This need led to the creation of this orgography, which captures contextual information about the Worshipful Companies. This information includes the name of the company at the time of Elizabeth I's coronation, the order of precedence, a brief description of the jurisdiction of the guild, a list of the Halls owned by the guild, the notable dates within the guild's history, and the REED collection of records from this guild.

[bridge text] This helped us to articulate the ‘Event Model’

SLIDE #8

The event model represents the way in which REED London has been evolving, and also addresses a question we’ve been thinking about that might serve to connect the unstructured REED data presented in TEI with the structured data required for communication via CIDOC-CRM and so, we hope, through LINCIS.

Essentially, we’ve distilled our understanding of events in TEI so that an Event is an occurrence that changes our understanding of time. Our definition needed to be capacious and because, as we consider it, such a shift of understanding could be personal, political, social, natural, catastrophic ... anything from a pageant to the volcanic eruption that carbonized Pompeii. For an event to register, it must involve at least two of the following: participant(s), location(s), time (or time range) ... and there must be some sort of evidence left behind, whether it be a letter written by an eyewitness or the layers of ash that covered a city.

SLIDE #9

But REED London’s emphasis on scraps of documentary evidence related to performance events, compared with chronicle-based understandings of ‘historical’ events led us to push back against hierarchical judgements about importance, and think instead about constellations of events that connect in implicit as well as explicit ways and involve multitudes of people affiliated in different ways, occurring in different places at different time frames, with evidence that may seem tangential, but in fact shows impact in ways that foreground ways of connecting aligned with what CIDOC calls ‘properties’. So, for example, we could shift from event shorthand of the coronation of Elizabeth I – 15 January 1559 – to the **Accession** of Elizabeth, which extended from the death of Mary on 17 November 1558 through the celebrations of the coronation, which continued throughout the winter of 1559. Specifically, we’ve been testing our model to examine the performance-centric events that cover the roughly two months between Mary’s death and Elizabeth’s coronation, focusing on the multiple witnesses

of the various moments of civic engagement and performance that informed the new queen's procession through the streets of London on her way to Westminster Abbey.

SLIDE #10

Here you can see some events along Elizabeth's route as presented in our event model. Each event is made up of structured data, such as the lists of participants, as well as unstructured data, such as a narrative description of the event and the speech delivered by a pageant performer. This event model combines all of our other -ographies: places, people and organizations. It is also flexible. People can be included in reference to the guild they belong to, such as in the second and third pageant, or their local government role, such as the Lord Mayor and the City Recorder.

SLIDE #11

An example of performance-centric sub-events is the Coronation Procession of Elizabeth I on the 14th of January, 1559. This procession took Elizabeth through the streets of the city from the Tower of London to Westminster Palace. Rather than look at the procession as one, large event, we broke it down into smaller events. Each stop along the procession route has participants, a location, and sometimes even an approximate time of day.

SLIDE #12

As is described in the title for this paper, none of this work would have been possible without our collaborations – first with the Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory, which gave REED London a home, taught us how we could better analyze and present this strange material, then in collaborating to develop the LEAF platform, in which we can continue to grow and experiment with new forms of analysis, publication, and sharing, and then – and in many ways most fruitfully – with the LINCS team. Rachel and I occupy interesting and unusual places in the LINCS ecosystem. We are researchers, for certain, but also collaborators and contributors to LINCS through the tools that we build and the ways in which we do not just

have a ringside seat to what LINCS has been doing over the past several years, we've also been part of the evolution of the ecosystem.

ANIMATION

At last year's LINCS conference we learned that Susan had started calling LEAF, LEAF-Writer, and XTriples part of the "TEI Neighbourhood", where users with text-centric data could transform that text using standards developed by the Text Encoding Initiative using the semantic encoding editor LEAF-Writer – there will be a workshop on LEAF-Writer tomorrow – as well as other commons tools like the Dynamic Table of Contexts and the LEAF Turning Engine, which assist users in converting and reconciling data to prepare it for possibly launching it into the stratosphere.

I serve as the LINCS Site Tech Lead for LEAF, and both Raachel and I have contributed in meaningful ways to a number of LINCS initiatives and working groups. So the remainder of this paper will describe some of that work, and tee it up for Alice's paper.

Slide #13

In CWRC, Rachel created over 450 place entities that appear in the REED records – that work involved reconciling our place names with those in Janelle Jenstad's work in the Map of Early Modern London – another LINCS-connected project. She used those named places to create the maps and capture the event information you've seen over these slides.

Slide #14

We then participated in a working group of early modernists to create a London place 'type' vocabulary led by Kim and Jasmine Drudge-Willson, and including Janelle, Kate LeBere, and Molly Rothwell from MoEML, and Brent Nelson, Kyle Dase from the Digital Ark. For a group of early modernists you would have thought we would have had an agreed-upon understanding of how to define places, but you'd be wrong.

Slide #15

It was an incredibly productive experience, and one that I hope other researchers get to experience. One of our major conclusions from this work is the necessity of “functional place” as well as structural place. For instance, a church is primarily a Place of Religious Activity. However, in the REED Records, which center performance, a church can also be the location of a performance. The contextual label is also necessary to describe the shifting purposes of Early Modern buildings.

Slide #16

Last spring, thanks to a Fulbright fellowship that allowed me to spend six months in Guelph working with Kim, Susan, and the LINCS and CWRC teams, we began working on transforming a number of vocabularies from the Orlando-centric CWRC taxonomies into components of the new LINCS vocabularies. Specifically, because REED London focuses so much on London citizens whose participation in performance is tangential to their ‘day jobs’, we have a dataset that complicates LINCS’ other understandings of ‘work’ from projects like the Yellow Nineties.

Slide #17

In addition to Susan, we worked with Alliyya Mo, Jingyi Long, Aliza Ferrone, and other members of the LINCS team to reconcile temporally-specific jobs like ‘tallow chandler’ with those that span different times in British experience, like governess.

SLIDE #18

All this while Connie Crompton and Alice Defours had been working on the XTriples tool, which would assist researchers working with text to convert their unstructured data into Triples with CIDOC-CRM to move them along in the LINCS ecosystem. Last spring, we started collaborating with Alice and Connie, contributing our place and organization data - our ‘ographies’ to test XTriples functionality, and are now collaborating on the next phase, which will see testing the event-ography in XTriples, and ‘aboutness’, which Alice will speak more about, as well as using LEAF-Writer as a means of streamlining the user process from TEI to Turtle.

SLIDE #19

As Sarah, Jordan, and Kim spoke so eloquently about recognition and gratitude, we wouldn't have been able to participate or contribute without this incredible infrastructure of people. But we also need to acknowledge the funding and support that Rachel and I have received from Bucknell, the Mellon Foundation, the NEH, and the Fulbright Canada program.