

## **Connecting the Dots: Using EAC-CPF to Reunite Samuel Johnson and His Circle**

### **Addendum to Proposal**

Submitted by:

Houghton Library, Harvard University: Susan Pyzynski, Krista Ferrante, Melanie Wisner  
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: Ellen Doon, Michael Rush

Date: November 8, 2011

### **Why Samuel Johnson?**

This proposal focuses on Samuel Johnson and his circle for two reasons: 1) we needed a defined and richly interrelated set of creators on which to base our project; and 2) Samuel Johnson is an individual for whom both Houghton and Beinecke hold important collections. The two repositories can share equal parts in the creation of EAC-CPF records while profitably evaluating workflows from different perspectives. While the data will be specific to the creators of these collections, the lessons to be learned from our application of EAC-CPF to archival collections will not depend on areas of particular study.

EAC-CPF records have the potential fundamentally to change and improve archival description and therefore researchers' access to our collections. Creator descriptions, rather than being anchored to specific resources or siloed in particular institutions, will be aggregated and interrelated, providing new and enhanced means of discovery and access.

Traditional EAD finding aids are based on the assumption that there is a one-to-one relationship between the creator and the collection. In actuality, one collection often has many creators, and many collections can share a single creator. EAC-CPF separates the description of the creator from that of the collection, making possible dynamic linking between the creator and any number of related collections. In addition, it provides dynamic linking between creators. The ability to separate the collection descriptions from the creator descriptions allows archivists to reflect more accurately the complex relationships between people and what they leave behind. Since it is often not possible to describe every item within a manuscript collection, the context and conditions under which a collection was gathered offer important clues for researchers.

### **Infrastructure beyond the project**

While we regard this project as a first experimental step in the implementation of EAC-CPF, we expect the results to have long-range impact on the implementation of EAC-CPF at Harvard, Yale, and within the North American archival community. The EAC-CPF records we create during this project will be an important contribution to the larger test project, SNAC: The Social Networks and Archival Context Project; we will have the opportunity to evaluate EAC-CPF records created within this larger context.

We expect that the standards, workflows, and best practices we derive from this project will be the basis for wider adoption of EAC-CPF at Harvard and Yale, and we anticipate that they will draw interest broadly from other North American repositories.

The choice of the ICA-AtoM database software and SNAC's prototype historical resource and access system (<http://socialarchive.iath.virginia.edu/xtf/search>) represents our understanding of best tools available for the purpose at this moment. Our EAC-CPF records, and those created beyond the life of this project, should be by their nature easily imported/exported as the need arises, and our testing of these products will valuably inform future software decisions.

**Beinecke's contribution**

The Beinecke library is contributing professional and knowledgeable staff time to this project in the persons of Ellen Doon, Michael Rush and Kathryn James, all of whom who will give a percentage to their time to this project. They will also be supervising and hosting one of the 3-month term employees, and their IT staff will be needed as we determine project specifics.