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Making new discoveries from old data: utilizing digital scholarship to foster new research in special collections

Carruthers, Matt

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Utilizing digital scholarship to foster new research in special collections

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Introduction

Our team is exploring a framework for fostering new and original research taking place in the Special Collections Library at the University of Michigan. We aim to establish a paradigm that extends beyond typical service models to include participating more directly with digital scholarship endeavors.

Team Members

- Matt Carruthers, Metadata Projects Librarian
- Anne Elias, Collections Services Specialist
- Athena Jackson, Associate Director, Special Collections Library
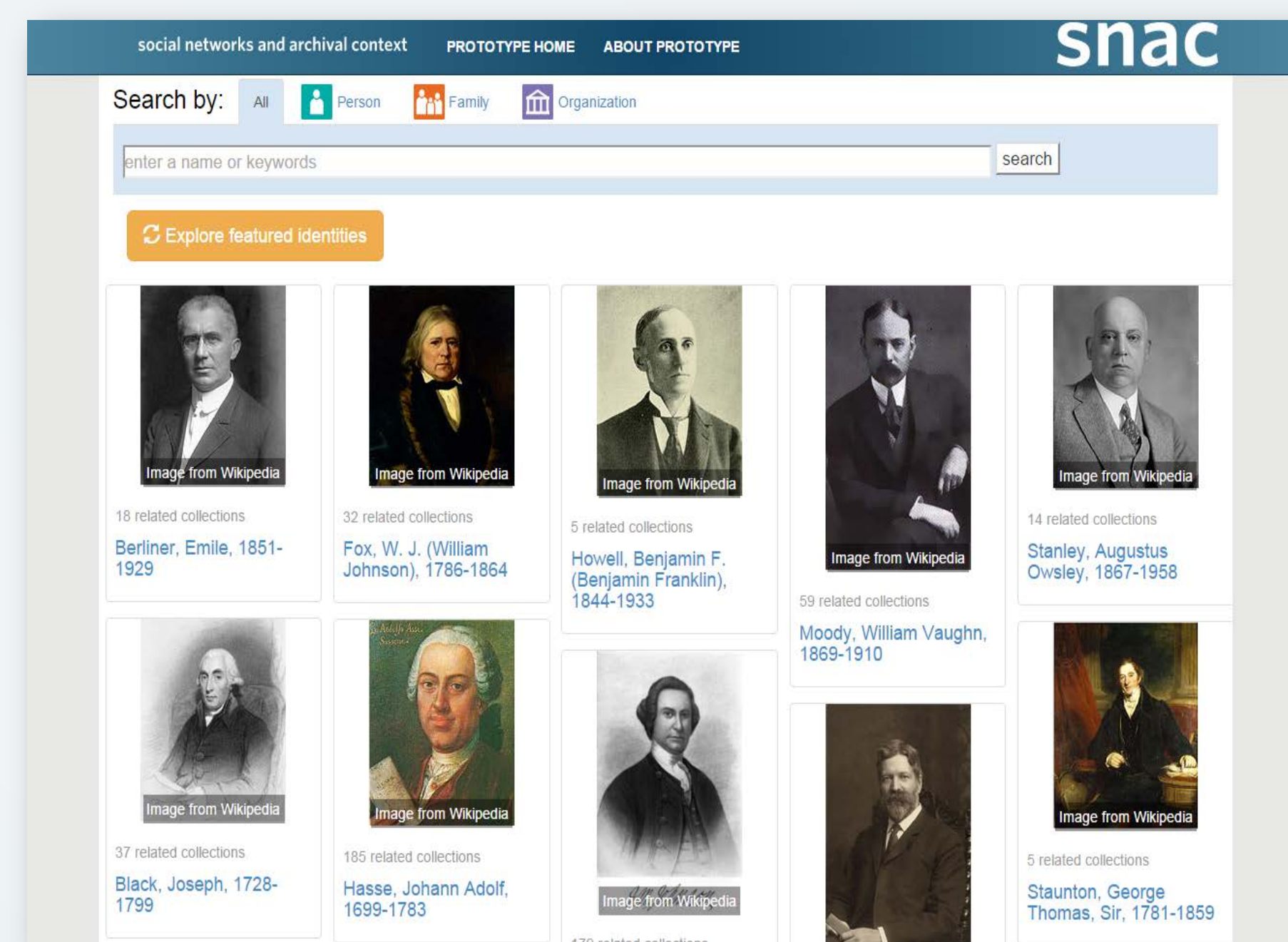- Alix Keener, Digital Scholarship Librarian

Goals

Starting with a pilot project of 20 finding aids from Children's Literature collections, our goal is to utilize existing finding aid data from Special Collections, open source tools, and publicly accessible databases to surface hidden connections between the creators of archival collections. Using this data, we will create a visual map of these connections to aid curators and researchers in making new discoveries.

We will use this initial project to determine workflows and extend into a service model for researchers.
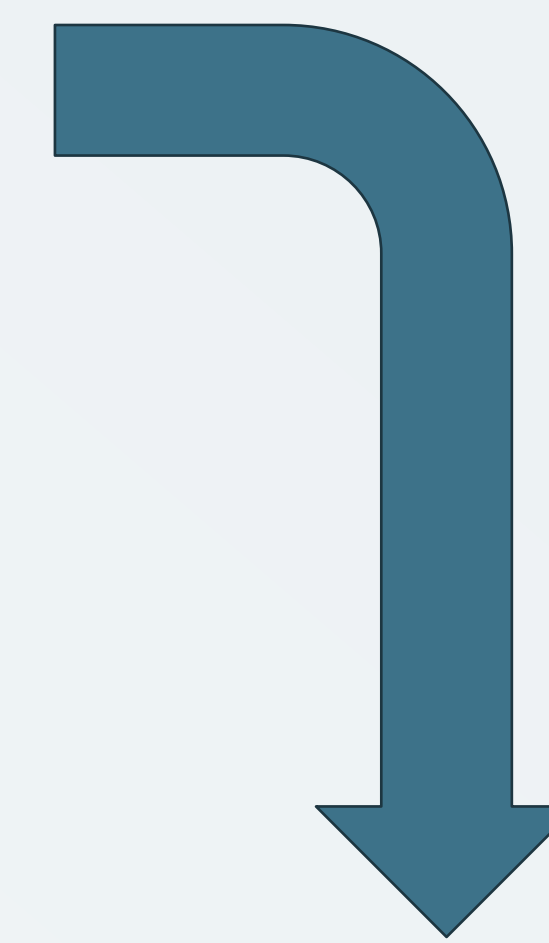
Pilot Project

Social Networks and Archival Context (SNAC)

socialarchive.iath.virginia.edu/snac/search

Download EAC-CPF files for creators of our archival collections
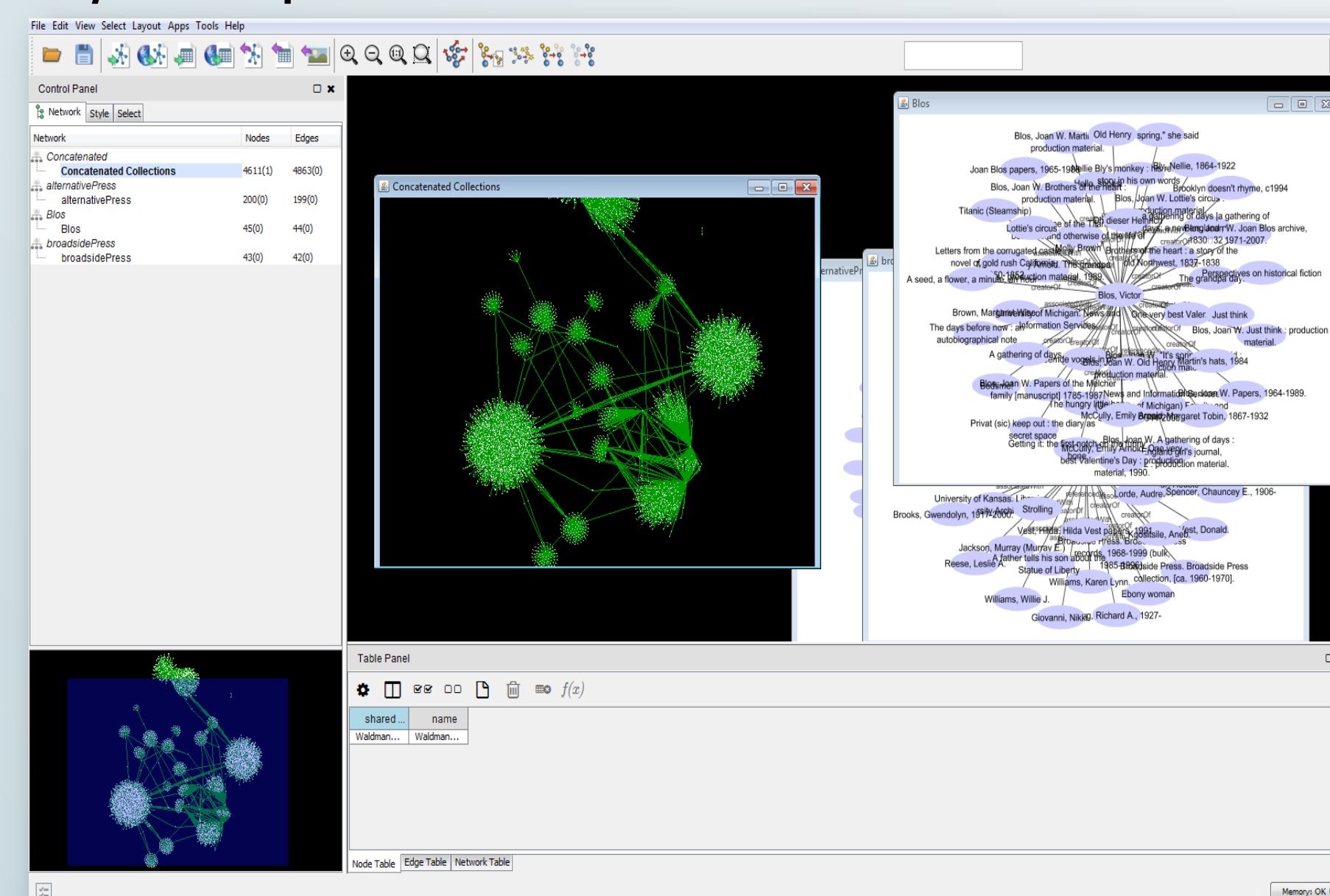
EAC-CPF + XSLT = Tab-delimited Text Files

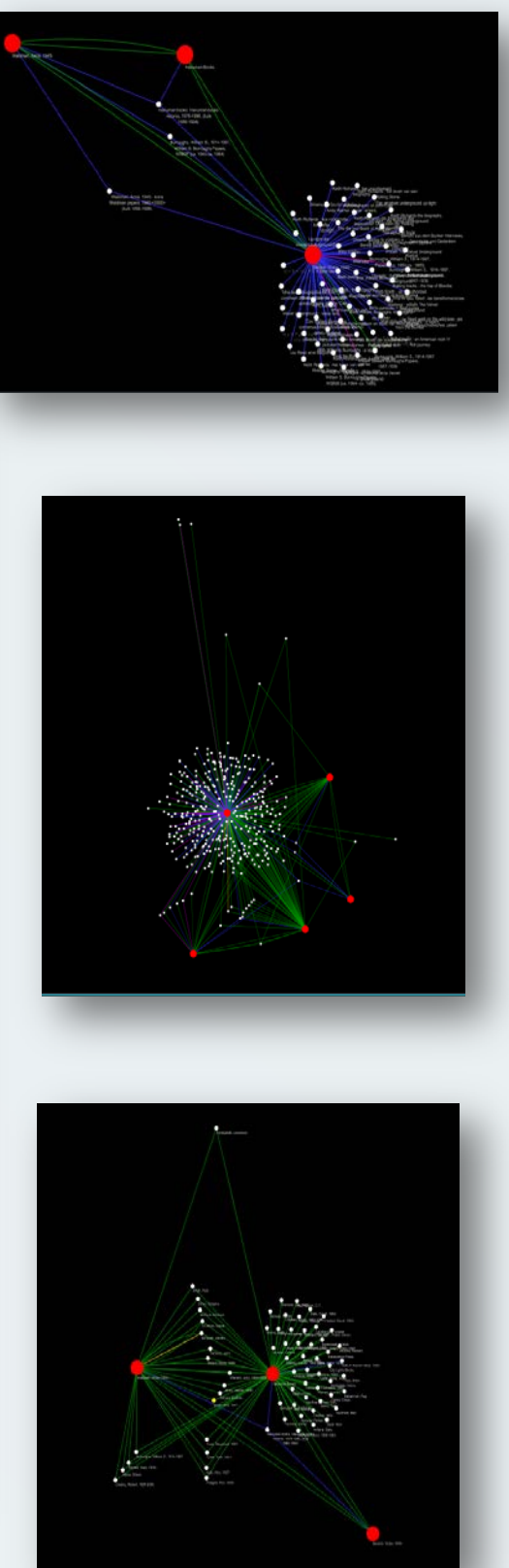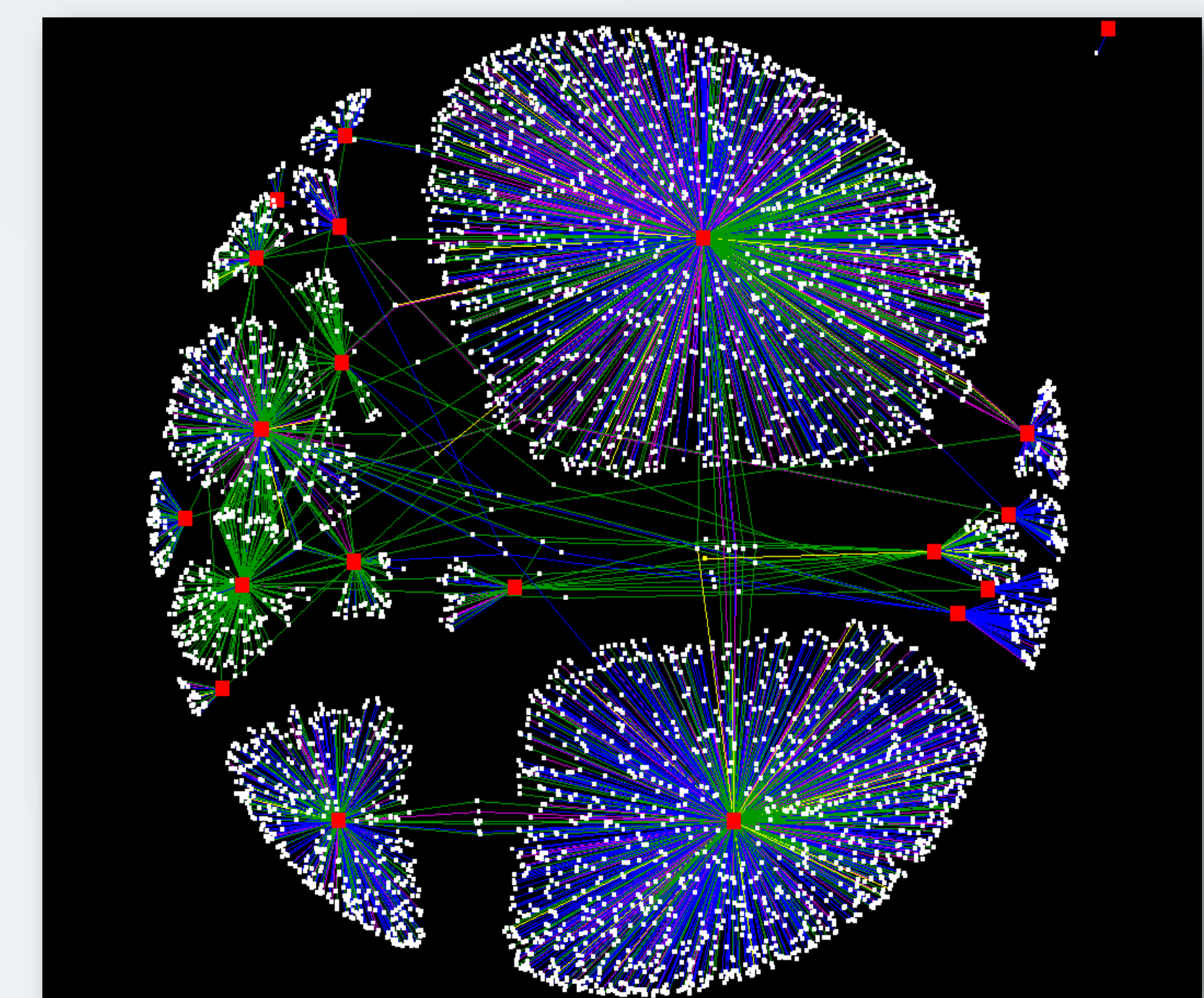Extract relations data using XSLT and format as tab-delimited text files

Cytoscape

cytoscape.org

Load files into Cytoscape and create network visualizations

Preliminary Results

- ■ Associative Relationship (green)
- ■ Creator Relationship (blue)
- ■ Correspondence Relationship (yellow)
- ■ Reference Relationship (purple)

Current Action & Future Work

- Analyze Aeon data related to user-generated images
- Examine outreach opportunities with select researchers
- Establish sustainable service model framework in order to expand service model scope
- Identify staff outreach participants
- Design and distribute promotional material