

Aims

As a dialogical genre by nature, the full potential of letters and other correspondence material lies in the connection of the individuals writing and receiving letters, postcards, and telegrams at a specific time and from and to a specific place. But because the collections of letters and individual pieces of a correspondence are historically distributed wide and far in regards to geography and institution, there rarely exist links between them. Thus research on correspondence networks that existed in Norway, the Nordic Countries and beyond, to Europe and the rest of the world as well as research on the letter as the main means of written interpersonal communication for centuries is almost impossible. The project Norwegian Correspondences (*NorKorr*, from Norwegian *Norske korrespondanser*) aims to link these individual letters and similar materials not only to each other but to correspondences in all of Norway, Europe, and beyond by making use of the CorrespSearch infrastructure.

CorrespSearch is both an infrastructure for connecting correspondences across editions and collections making use of Linked Open Data (building on VIAF and GeoNames among other

openly available datasets) and a web service that aggregates specific correspondence metadata from digital and printed scholarly editions. These data can be easily searched via the CorrespSearch web interface or queried via their open API. By integrating Norwegian correspondences into the corpus of letters that already exists on CorrespSearch, they will become visible as part of a greater international network of letters and allow for a macroscopic view on the correspondence networks that existed throughout the centuries.

The aim of the NorKorr project is to aggregate and provide correspondence metadata from Norwegian editions of correspondences from different projects, institutions and collections in a format that can be ingested by CorrespSearch.

The final product will be a large set of metadata for Norwegian correspondences under a Creative Commons 4.0 License in the Correspondence Metadata Interchange Format (CMIF) and an open workflow for (semi-) automatically creating and delivering CMIF-compliant correspondence metadata from future editions to the CorrespSearch web service.

Correspondance in the archives

Norwegian cultural heritage institutions have a substantial amount of historical correspondences in its holdings. Yet, all these correspondence projects lead a solitary existence hidden either in editions of single authors or as digitized collections or individual pieces on institutional servers. When choosing cases for this project we decided to be as diverse and multifaceted as possible. We wanted to show the value and potential of linking and contextualizing these collections in a correspondence database.

The National Library of Norway has approximately 1.000 letters written by Norwegian author Camilla Collett in its manuscript collection. More than half of these letters have never been published. Collett's handwriting is difficult to read and there has been little research on them. The library want to make the letters more available by transcribing, encoding, and publishing them.

Norwegian artist Edvard Munch's correspondence with family and friends, and with assistants, patrons, collectors, art dealers, printers, news-paper and magazine editors, artists, writers, art historians, exhibition organisers, gallery owners, shipping companies,

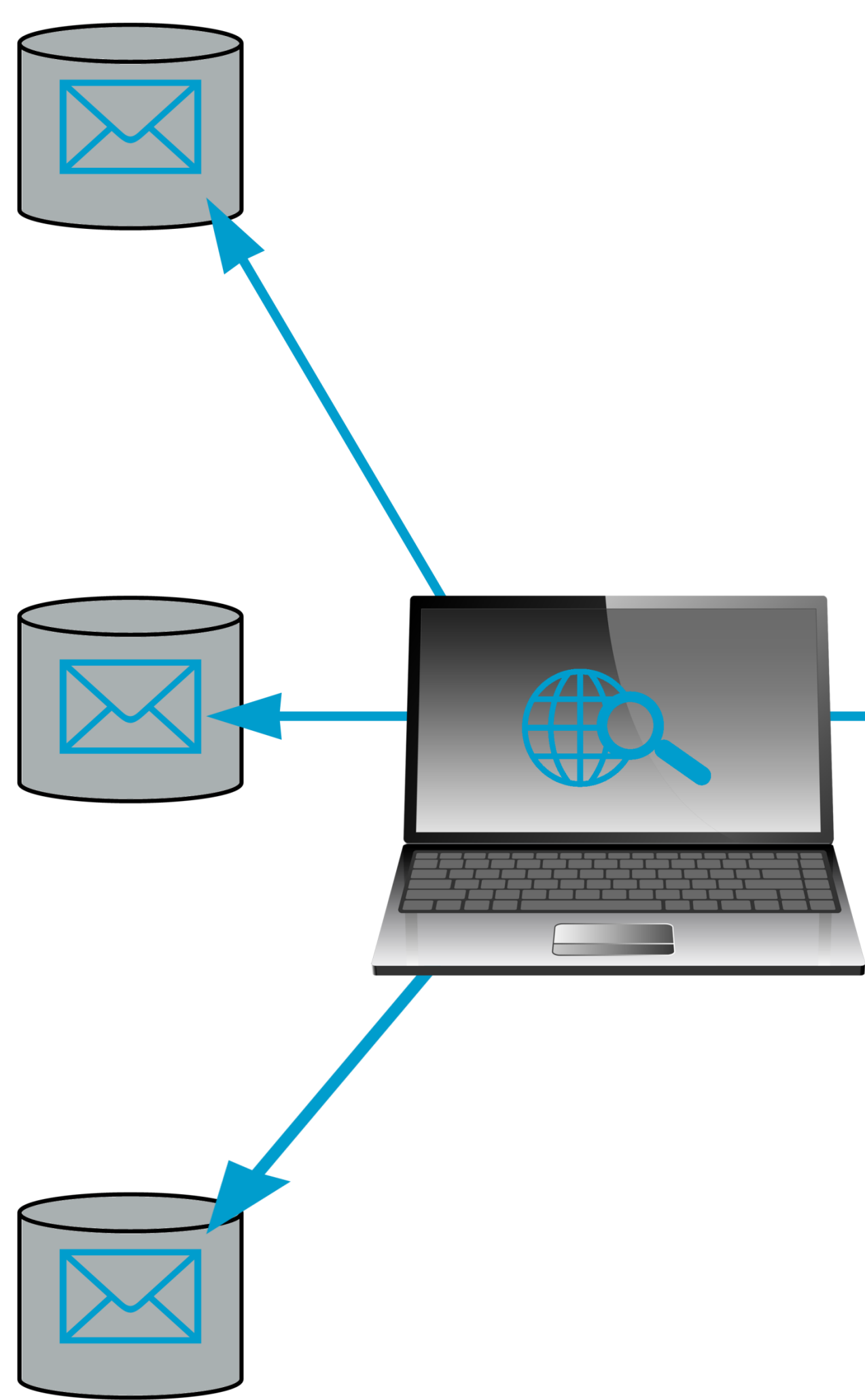
and more, comprises more than 10.000 known letters and letter drafts at the Munch Museum.

NTNU University Library's selected correspondence collections document more than 170 years of science and research, including scientific communication and exchange of species among scientist, both in Norway and internationally.

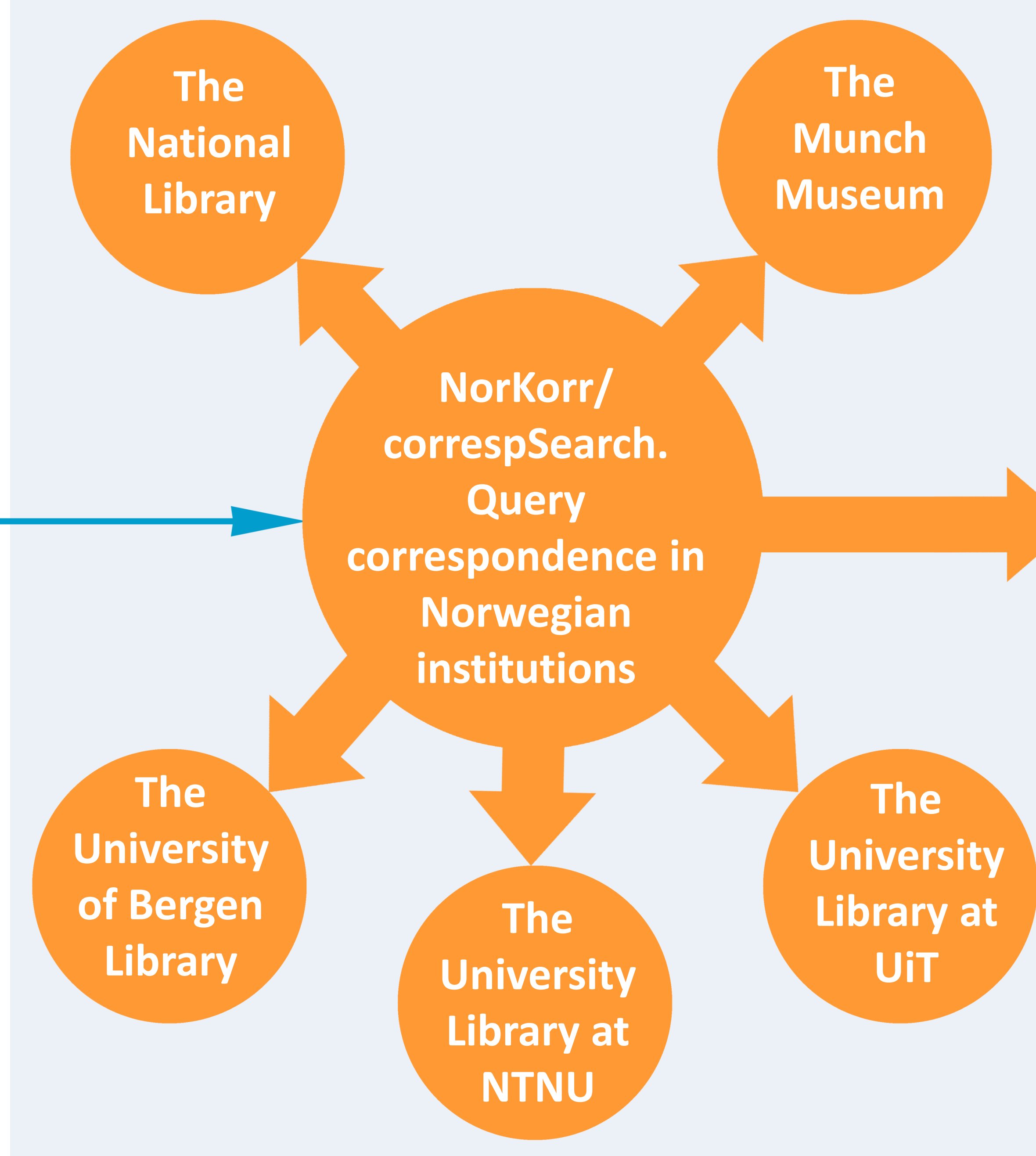
The selection from University of Bergen Library represent three distinct types of correspondence collections; a large curated collection from a private collector, a local scientist corresponding with scientists across Europe, and third, a private collection contemplating social conditions and class distinctions.

Just Knud Qvigstad was an expert on Sami language and culture (lappologist). He worked as the headmaster of the Troms Teacher Training College, which is one of the predecessors of UiT The Arctic University of Norway. During several decades, Qvigstad was involved in an extensive correspondence with other experts on Sami from Norway, Scandinavia, and other countries. Some of Qvigstad's letters were digitized, transcribed, and published online as part of the Documentation Project in the early 1990s.

Traditional query

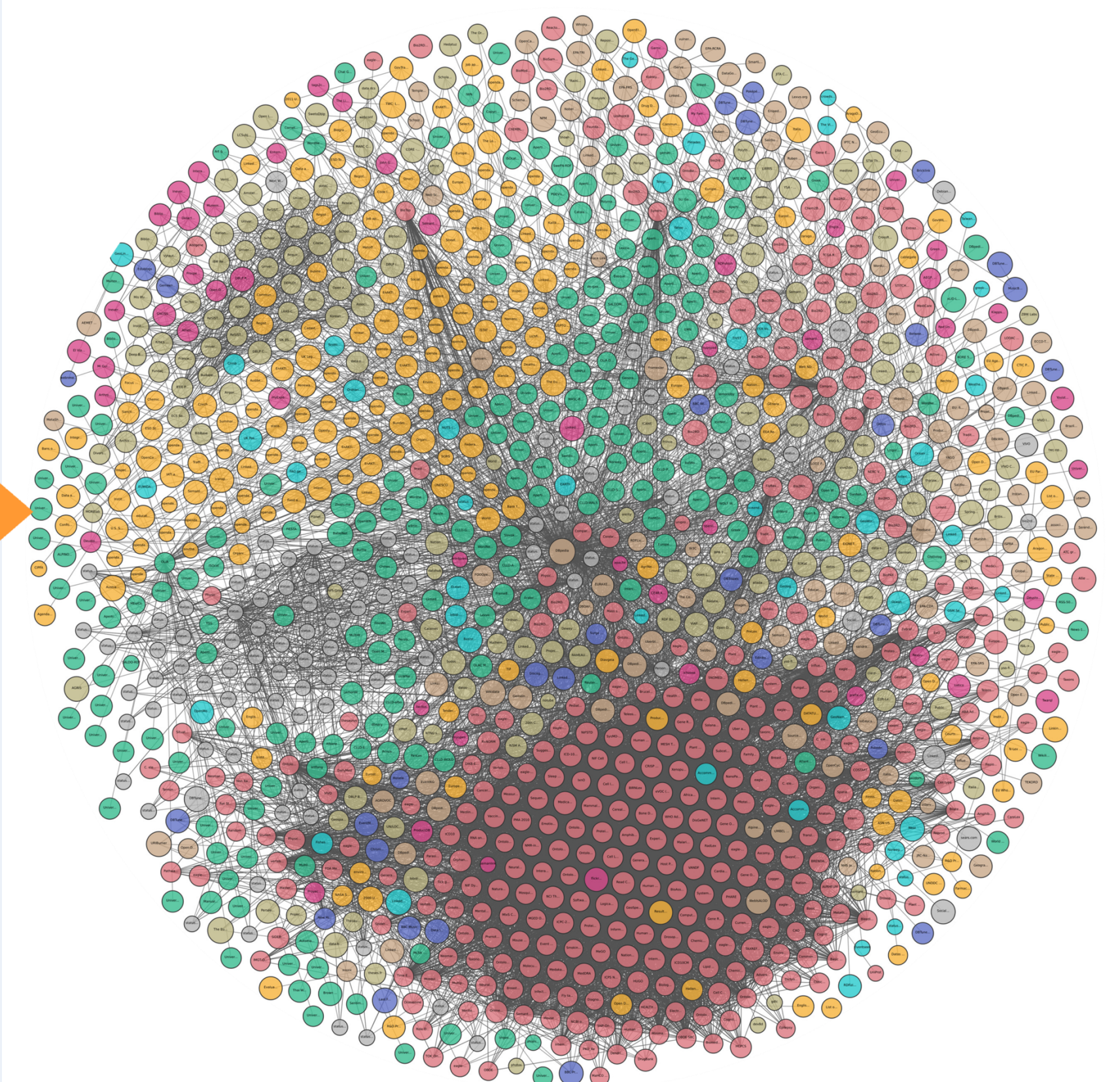


Query via NorKorr/CorrespSearch



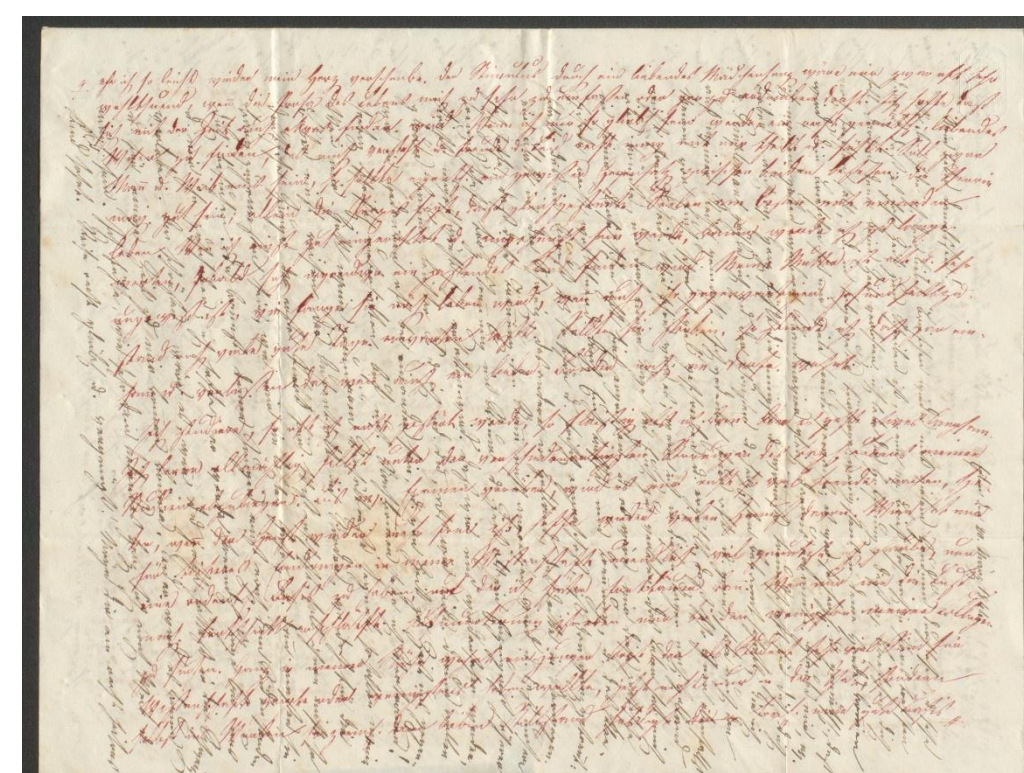
Linked Open Data datasets

LOD-Cloud Source: <https://lod-cloud.net/>



Potential

Because it is commonly only a small and often strongly canonised selection of authors, musicians, artists and academics whose letters are deemed worthy of a scholarly edition, the picture we have of Norwegian correspondence networks and Norwegian cultural contacts with the other Nordic countries and the rest of the world is strongly biased and non-representative. NorKorr is able to include correspondence material regardless of language, time period, social class, gender, and nationality.

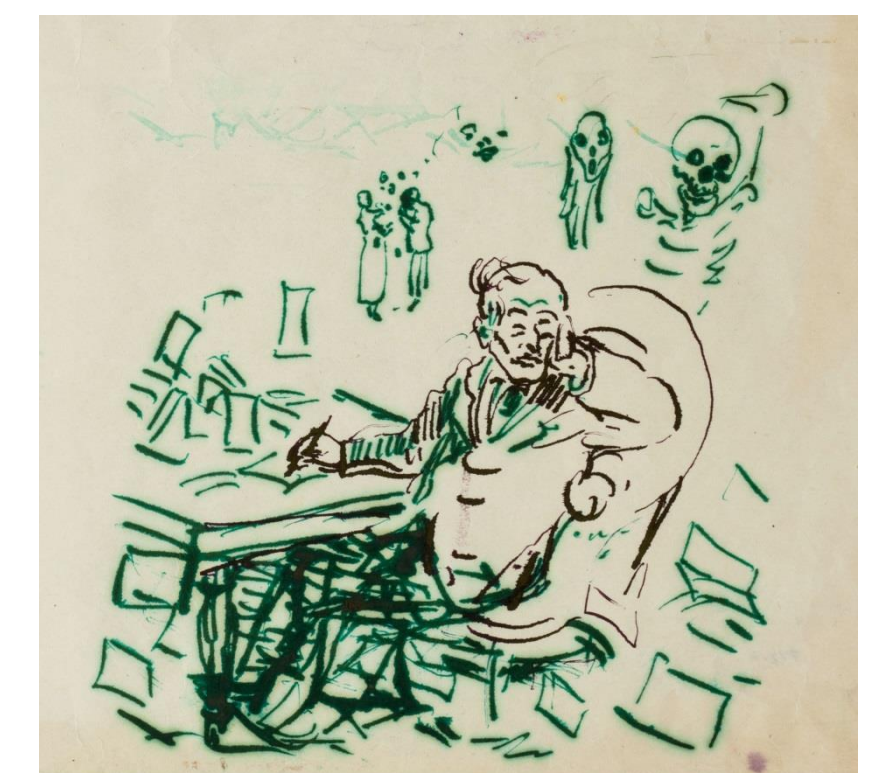


NorKorr aims to cross reference the cross-writing. Letter dated 1844, sent by Diethelm to D.C. Danielssen. Source: UiB.

Project Website



In the spirit of Open Science, the project NorKorr is collectively developed on GitHub <https://github.com/arockenberger/NorKorr> in plain view. It is open for collaborators from all Norwegian cultural heritage institutions (ALM sector), the universities and other research institutions, individual researchers as well as any organisations or individuals who hold collections of relevant correspondence material. We document our code and share it under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license. We build on the work shared by the CorrespSearch developer team, the TEI Correspondence SIG and the individual researchers and developers on GitHub and beyond. The website is presented at: <https://arockenberger.github.io/NorKorr/>.



Sketch by Edvard Munch. A self portrait depicting himself at the writing desk [writing letters]. Source: Munch Museum.

Initiated by:

In collaboration with: