

Linked Open Dime Novels; or, 19th Century Fiction and 21st Century Data

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Albert Johannsen Project

CLIR awarded a Hidden Collections grant to NIU and Villanova to digitize NIU's Johannsen Collection

- Digitize 5,400 dime novels (approx. 166K pages)
- Publish Johannsen's bibliography as open linked data via dimenovels.org
- Develop contextual materials and lesson plans



Nickels and Dimes

NICKELS AND DIMES
FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF JOHANNSEN AND LEBLANC

42 Items | Dictionary | Update | Library | Quick Links

Advanced Search

↑ BROWSE SERIES ▼ AUTHORS ▼ ABOUT ▼

ABOUT

Dime novels were a format of inexpensive popular fiction produced in the United States from 1860 through 1930. Available for as little as a nickel or as much as a dime, they opened up leisure reading for the masses in a way previously not possible. Originally featuring stories about the American frontier and the West, badmen and cowboys eventually gave way to detectives, like Nick Carter, and boy adventurers and entrepreneurs, like Frank Reade Jr. This site contains materials from two major dime novel collections in Rare Books and Special Collections at Northern Illinois University: the Albert Johannsen and Edward T. LeBlanc Collection. It also hosts the Johannsen Project, a collaboration between NIU and Villanova University, generously supported by a Digitizing Hidden Collections grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). Visitors may browse the entire full-text collection, explore a particular series or author, or start at our about pages to learn more about dime novels.

NEWS & UPDATES

December 21, 2017
We've recently finished updating our holdings of Beasley Half-Dime Library, including a whopping 1,111 issues—a major milestone for the Johannsen Project! A list of missing issues can be found here.

August 30, 2017
Our website was recently redesigned to improve performance and responsiveness. Several contextual errors have also been added, including Format, Authorship, Genres, and Scholarship. While parts of the site are still under construction, please let us know what you think.

June 6, 2017
We've finished adding every issue we own of New Nick Carter weekly to the collection, encompassing what J. Randolph Cox calls the Golden Age of the character.

RECENTLY ADDED

Abby Abe, the dock sharp, or, The parson sports mysterious mission : the romance of a libre cruise for sea sharks
The ex-newspaper detective's doom, or, Bob Buckle's big inning
The Broadway Sport, or, Elmer Fret's clear case
Buffalo Bill's mazzepa-chase, or, Dick Dearborn's death-ride : the mystery of the black mustang
New York Nat's double, or, The unknown three
Jack Lang, the privateer rover, or, The man of many names : a romance of the Frigate "United States" first cruise
Sensational Sam, the detective on wheels, or, The sensation at Washington Heights
\$1000 reward, or, The rival reporters' sleek scoop : a story of two printers'-devil detectives
Reddy Risher, the bellboy detective, or, Chowder Johnny's soap-strike
Scaler Sam, detective of Hook and Ladder 5, or, Searching the sheeny fire-tugs

NIU Links

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Contact Us

Emergency Information
Accessibility
Jobs @ NIU
NIUBook.com

Northern Illinois University
NIU Home

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1425 W Lincoln Hwy, DeKalb, IL 60110
(815) 750-2800 | webinfo@niu.edu

- Project launched ca. 2012 at NIU to digitize the Johannsen and Edward T. LeBlanc Collections (approx. 55K volumes)
- >7,000 dime novels available to date
- PDFs free to download, with full-text available

<https://dimenovels.lib.niu.edu>

dimenovels.org

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Edward T. LeBlanc Memorial Dime Novel Bibliography. The header includes the site logo, navigation links (Account, Log Out, Search), and a search bar. The main content area is divided into several sections: a 'Main Menu' with a 'Welcome!' message and a brief description of the project; a 'Browse' section with filters for Series (by name, category, city, country, language, publisher, comments) and Items (by name, subject/tag, year, full text, reviews); a 'Users' section with links to 'List Registered Users' and 'Browse Recent Reviews'; and a 'Podcasts' section featuring two audio files: 'Mittie's Storytime: The Bride of the Tomb, Chapters XXXIX and XL' and 'Professor M's Lecture Series: Eddie LeBlanc in conversation with Lydia Schurman, Episode 1'. A 'Tweets by @DimeNovelBiblio' widget is also present, showing a tweet about a specific novel. The footer contains contact information, social media links, and a Creative Commons license.

The Edward T. LeBlanc Memorial
DIME NOVEL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Account • Log Out • Search: Title ▾ Search

Main Menu

Welcome!

The Edward T. LeBlanc Dime Novel Bibliography project aims to create a comprehensive online database of dime novels, story papers, reprint libraries and related materials. [Learn More](#) →

Browse

Series	Items
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• by name• by category• by city• by country• by language• by publisher• with comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• by name• by subject/tag• by year• with full text• with reviews

Users

- List Registered Users
- Browse Recent Reviews

Podcasts

<p>Mittie's Storytime: The Bride of the Tomb, Chapters XXXIX and XL</p> <p>Released on August 21, 2014.</p> <p>Download: MP3 (11.59 MB, Duration: 12:39)</p>	<p>Professor M's Lecture Series: Eddie LeBlanc in conversation with Lydia Schurman, Episode 1</p> <p>Released on June 4, 2013.</p> <p>Download: MP3 (4.90 MB, Duration: 05:20)</p>
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Tweets by @DimeNovelBiblio

DimeNovels.org @DimeNovelBiblio
Online today: Secret Service no. 188. The Bradys as Firemen; or, Tracking a Gang of Incendiaris.
digital.library.villanova.edu/item/vud:4971

Embed View on Twitter

Comments/questions/corrections? Contact Demian Katz or read About the Project.
Want to learn more? View the online exhibit or listen to our podcast.
Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
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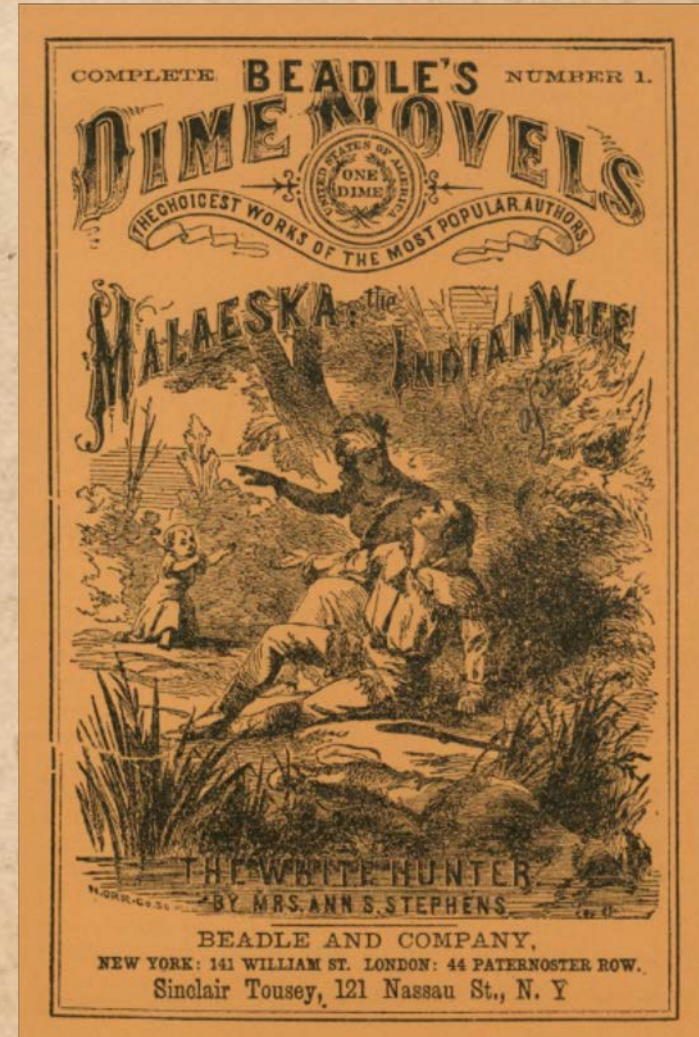
Powered by Geebj-Deebj.

- Launched ca. 2012 by Villanova
- Online relational database with information about authors, series, publishers, stories, and editions
- Based on the work of Edward T. LeBlanc, a dime novel collector/bibliographer

<https://dimenovels.org>

What Are Dime Novels?

- Cheaply produced popular fiction sold in the United States in the 19th century (ca. 1860-1915)
- Popular among working classes, immigrants, and children
- Often deal with issues related to gender, class, race, and ethnicity
- Also where many genres of American popular fiction first evolved, especially the Western and detective fiction



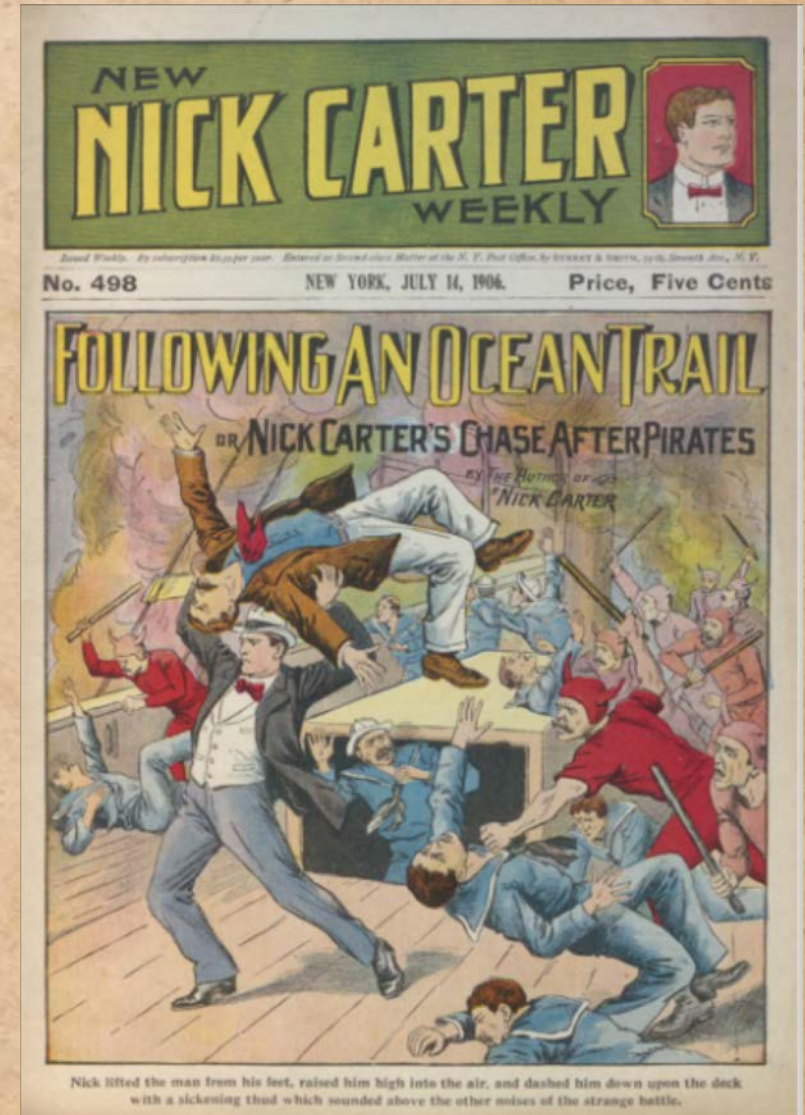
Bibliographic Nightmares

- Dime novels are always issued in a series, issues often contain multiple stories, and stories are sometimes serialized
- Stories are frequently reprinted or reissued, usually in different formats and with variations
- Stories are often attributed to pseudonyms, which may be shared by as many as a dozen real-world persons
- We usually know the real-world person responsible for a story through the work of bibliographers



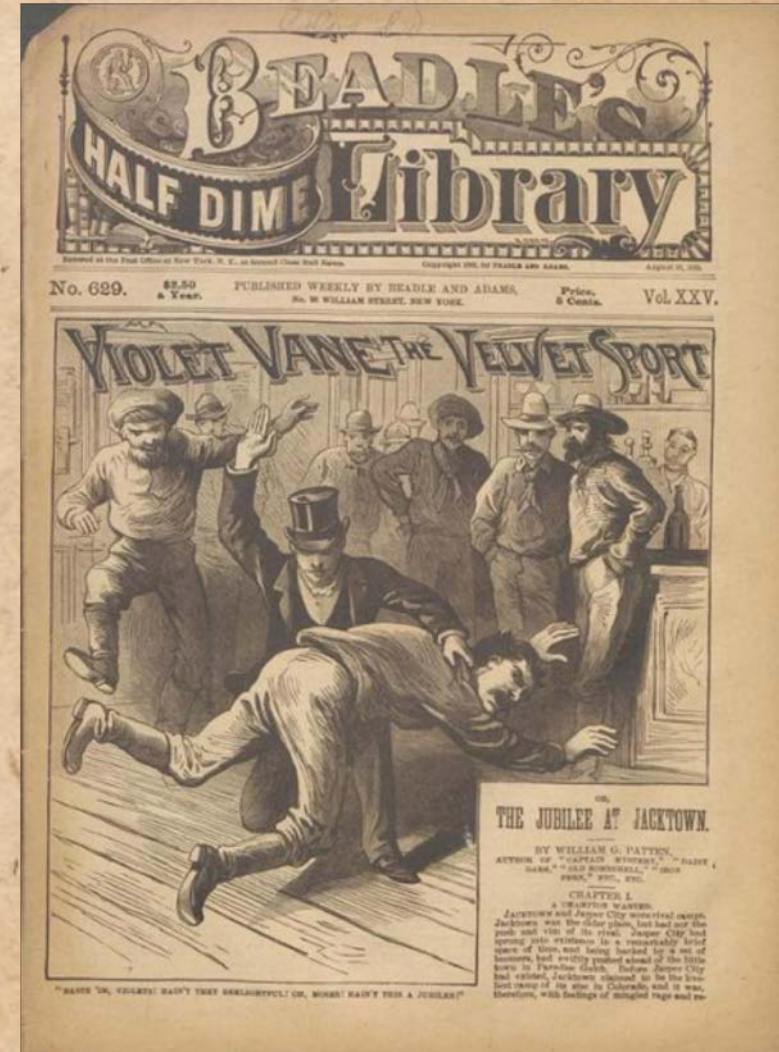
Digital Dime Novels, Everywhere

- Nickels and Dimes (Northern Illinois University)
- Dime Novel and Popular Literature (Villanova Digital Library)
- Dime Novel Collection (University of South Florida)
- Nickel Weeklies (Bowling Green State University)
- Dime Novels and Penny Dreadfuls (Stanford University)
- + dozens of other collections



The Problems

- We need some way to talk about:
 - the complex relationships between stories and editions
 - the complex relationships between stories and their creators
- And we need to be able to share this information across institutions digitizing dime novels, so that we can coordinate our efforts



How We're Using Linked Data

- Agree on a shared meaning about what entities exist, what properties they have, and how they're related (**an ontology**)
- Map our existing bibliographic database at dimenovels.org to that ontology and publish it as open linked data
- Use URIs in our metadata, so that our cataloging can be used to build on dimenovels.org
- Harvest data from dimenovels.org and use it within *Nickels and Dimes* to expose relationships in context



Dime Novel Ontology

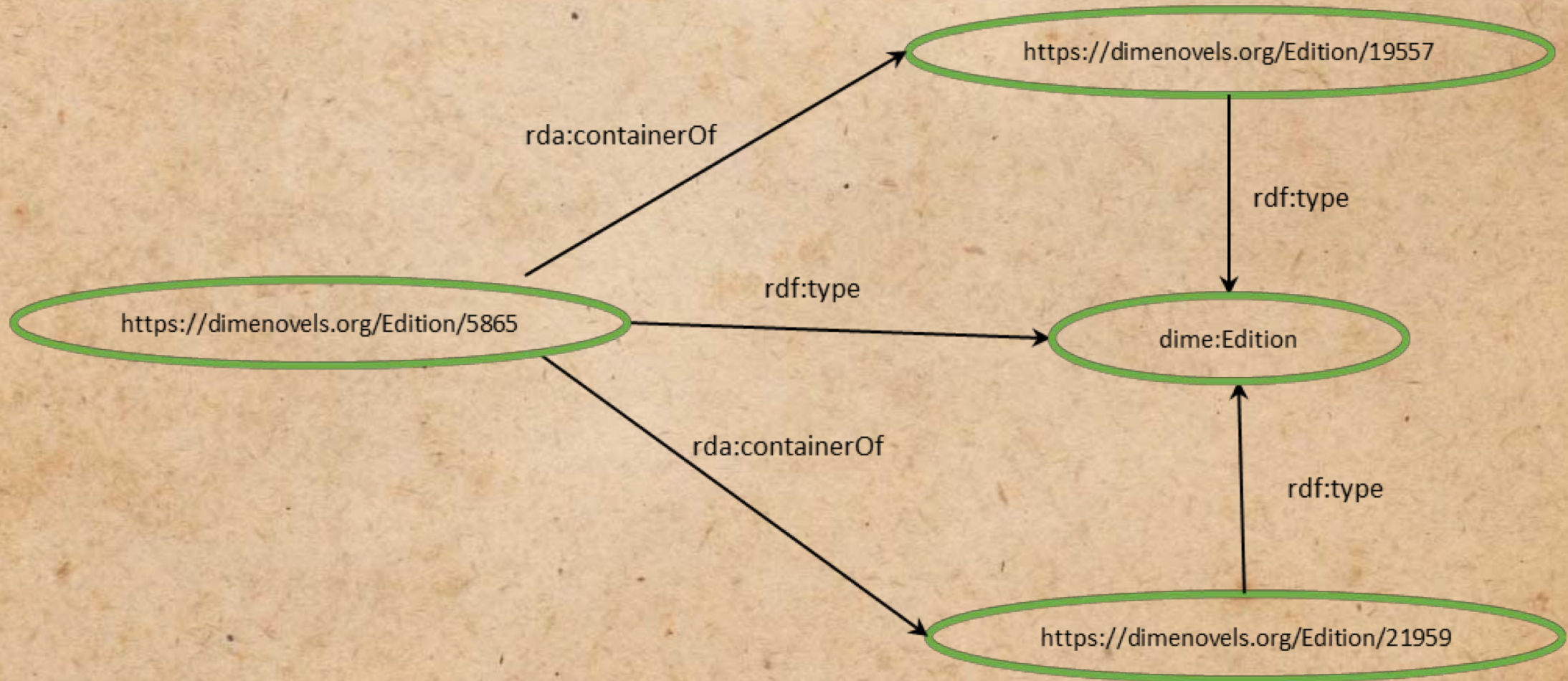
- Includes a limited number of local entities and properties, including CreativeWork, Edition, Copy, and Series
- Majority of properties taken from RDA Unconstrained
- Partial imports of FOAF, SKOS, and Dublin Core



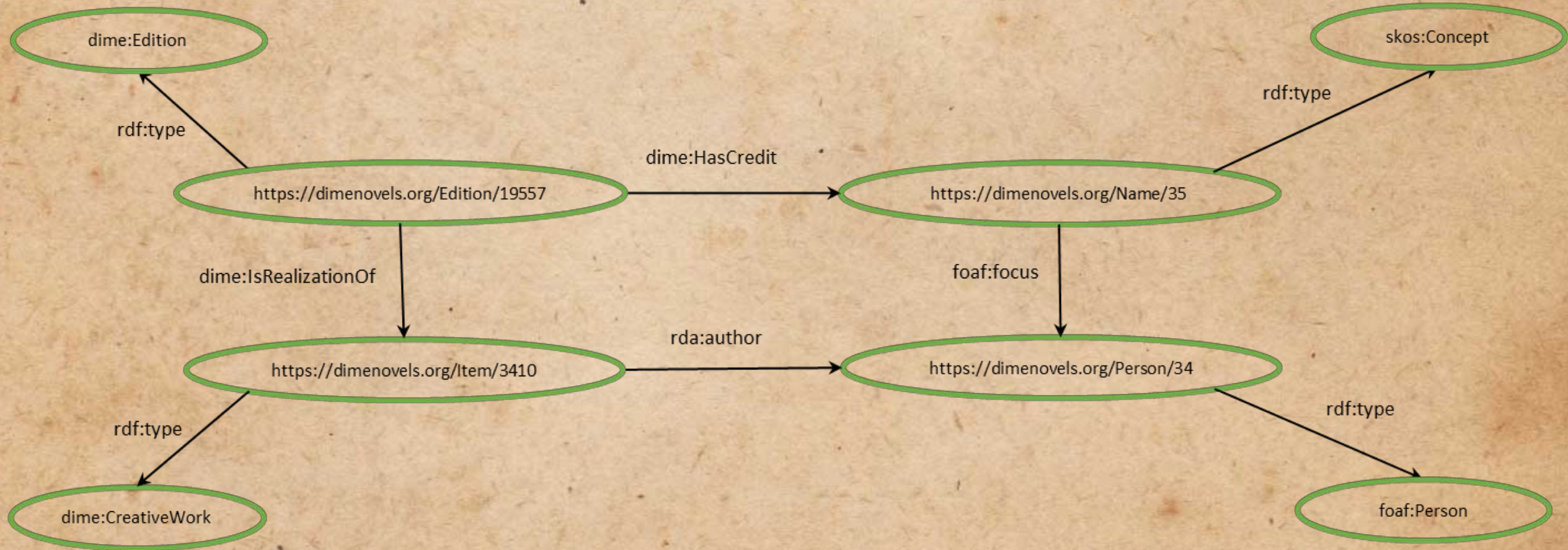
Complex Editions



Complex Containers



Complex Attributions



Publishing dimenovels.org as Linked Data

- Existing schema conceptually similar to ontology, with “pretty” URLs for all entities (CreativeWork, Edition, etc.)
- Mapped existing schema to ontology
- Created alternate views through content negotiation to render linked data at “/rdf”

```
@prefix dime: <https://dimenovels.org/ontology#> .
@prefix dc: <http://purl.org/dc/terms/> .
@prefix rda: <http://rdaregistry.info/Elements/u/> .

<https://dimenovels.org/Item/505>
  a dime:CreativeWork ;
  dc:title "The Bride of the Tomb; and Queenie's Terrible Secret" ;
  rda:preferredTitleForTheResource "The Bride of the Tomb; and Queenie's Terrible Secret" ;
  dime:HasRealizationOfCreativeWork <https://dimenovels.org/Edition/534> .
```

<https://dimenovels.org/Item/505/rdf>

The screenshot shows the website 'The Edward T. LeBlanc Memorial DIME NOVEL BIBLIOGRAPHY'. The main heading is 'Item - The Bride of the Tomb; and Queenie's Terrible Secret'. Below this, there is a small image of the book cover. To the right of the image, there is a table of metadata:

Online Full Text:	Digital Library @ Villanova University Project Gutenberg	View: Combined By Edition
Series:	Eagle Series — no. 426	
Contents:	The Bride of the Tomb; or, Lancelot Darling's Betrothed (Work) Queenie's Terrible Secret; or, A Young Girl's Strange Fate (Work)	
Author:	Miller, Alex. McVoigh, Mrs.	
Date:	June 12, 1905	

Below the table, there is a link to 'Please log in to manage your collection or post a review.' At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with contact information, a Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0), and social media links for Facebook and Twitter. The footer also includes the text 'Site © 2013-2019 dimenovels.org. All rights reserved.' and 'Powered by Geoby-Deely.'.

<https://dimenovels.org/Item/505>

Using Data from *Nickels and Dimes*

- NIU includes identifiers in MODS for names and subjects (through LC's reconciliation service and \$0)
- These identifiers are used to match data between *Nickels and Dimes* and dimenovels.org
- A custom import tool allows thousands of new dimenovels.org records to be created, uncovering numerous errors on both sides in the process



Using Data from *Nickels and Dimes*

```
dkatz@vu61162: /stage/local/gbdb
Adding date: 1890-08-06
Updating address to Beadle and Adams (1872-1898), No. 98 William St., New York
Adding OCLC number: 1021888561
Adding URL: https://dimenovels.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/dimenovels:228210
---
Opening /tmp/pl/304.mods...
Working on Beadle's Pocket Library no. 344...
Added item ID 44317 (drummer sport, or, Captain Dasher's droll dilemma, The)
Added edition ID 81554
Attaching author ID 1508
Adding subject: Paducah (Ky.)
Adding subject: Tennessee River
Adding subject IDs: 849, 886, 1564, 1891, 899, 1557, 1534, 1394, 1803, 152, 1890, 3911, 3912
Adding date: 1890-08-13
Updating address to Beadle and Adams (1872-1898), No. 98 William St., New York
Adding OCLC number: 1021888651
Adding URL: https://dimenovels.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/dimenovels:230322
---
Opening /tmp/pl/305.mods...
Working on Beadle's Pocket Library no. 345...
Found candidate(s) for match with Jaques, the hardpan detective; or, Captain Frisco, the road-agent by
Cowdrick, J. C. (Jesse C.), 1859-1899

A. Dominie Detective, or, The Deedham sensation, The by J. C. (Jesse C.) Cowdrick (confidence: 23%)
B. Billy the kid from Frisco (alt. title for Silver-Mask, the man of mystery, or, The cross of the gold
en keys) by J. C. (Jesse C.) Cowdrick (confidence: 23%)

0. NONE OF THE ABOVE -- CREATE NEW ITEM.

Please select one: █
```


Harvesting Linked Data from dimenovels.org

- Built a linked data harvesting tool called Murpoint (because existing tools were too aggressive)
- Harvests all linked data from a single Internet domain to a single file
- Data is loaded into a Blazegraph instance at NIU for querying



Using Data from dimenovels.org

- An edition URI for the Issue is assigned to each dime novel on *Nickels and Dimes* via the `dime:IsCopyOf` property
- We search Blazegraph for all of the Work URIs that are contained in that Issue, then all related Edition URIs



```
<dime:IsCopyOf rdf:resource="https://dimenovels.org/Edition/63119#issue"/>
```

```
<https://dimenovels.org/Edition/63119#issue>  
a dime:Edition ;  
dime:IsEditionOf <https://dimenovels.org/Item/34673#issue> ;  
rda:containerOf <https://dimenovels.org/Edition/63119> ;  
rdf:label "Beadle's Half-Dime Library edition" .
```

```
<https://dimenovels.org/Edition/63119>  
a dime:Edition ;  
rdf:label "Beadle's Half-Dime Library edition" ;  
dime:HasCredit <https://dimenovels.org/Person/755#name> ;  
dime:IsRealizationOfCreativeWork  
<https://dimenovels.org/Item/34673> ;  
rda:titleProper "Deadwood Dick, the prince of the road, or,  
The black rider of the Black Hills" ;
```

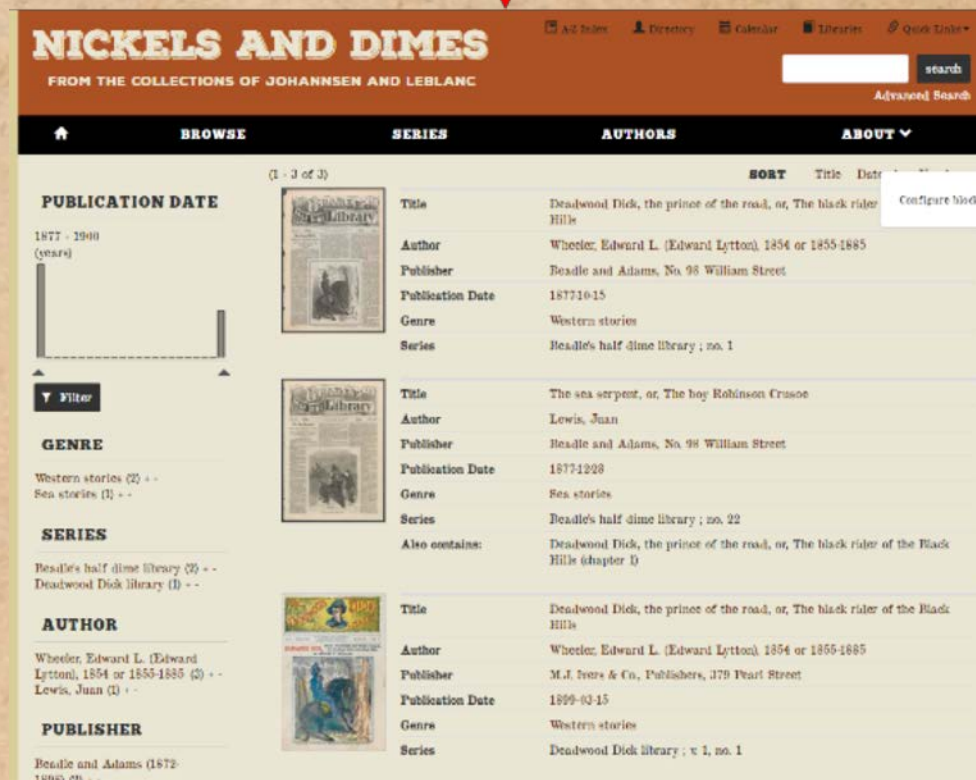
```
<https://dimenovels.org/Item/34673>  
a dime:CreativeWork ;  
dc:title "Deadwood Dick, the prince of the road, or, The black  
rider of the Black Hills" ;  
rda:preferredTitleForTheResource "Deadwood Dick, the prince of  
the road, or, The black rider of the Black Hills" ;  
dime:HasRealizationOfCreativeWork  
<https://dimenovels.org/Edition/63119>,  
<https://dimenovels.org/Edition/63115>,  
<https://dimenovels.org/Edition/79674>,  
<https://dimenovels.org/Edition/64726>,  
<https://dimenovels.org/Edition/64765> .
```

Using Data from dimenovels.org

- Edition URIs are used to search *Nickels and Dimes* for digitized copies
- If multiple editions or parts exist, those are presented to the end user for browsing
- No need to consult bibliographies or other reference sources!

BROWSE ALL EDITIONS

- Deadwood Dick, the prince of the road, or, The black rider of the Black Hills



The screenshot shows the website interface for 'NICKELS AND DIMES'. The header includes navigation links for 'All Index', 'Directory', 'Calendar', 'Libraries', and 'Quick Links'. A search bar is present with a 'search' button and a link to 'Advanced Search'. The main navigation bar has tabs for 'BROWSE', 'SERIES', 'AUTHORS', and 'ABOUT'. The 'BROWSE' tab is active, displaying a list of items. On the left, there are filters for 'PUBLICATION DATE' (1877-1900), 'GENRE' (Western stories, Sea stories), 'SERIES' (Beadle's half dime library, Deadwood Dick library), and 'AUTHOR' (Wheeler, Edward L., Lewis, Juan). The main content area shows a table of results with columns for 'Title', 'Author', 'Publisher', 'Publication Date', 'Genre', and 'Series'. The first result is 'Deadwood Dick, the prince of the road, or, The black rider of the Black Hills' by Wheeler, Edward L. (Edward Lytton), published by Beadle and Adams in 1877. A 'Configure block' button is visible next to the first result.

Publication Date	Title	Author	Publisher	Publication Date	Genre	Series
1877-1900 (years)	Deadwood Dick, the prince of the road, or, The black rider of the Black Hills	Wheeler, Edward L. (Edward Lytton), 1854 or 1855-1885	Beadle and Adams, No. 98 William Street	1877-10-15	Western stories	Beadle's half dime library ; no. 1
	The sea serpent, or, The boy Robinson Crusoe	Lewis, Juan	Beadle and Adams, No. 98 William Street	1877-12-08	Sea stories	Beadle's half dime library ; no. 22
	Deadwood Dick, the prince of the road, or, The black rider of the Black Hills	Wheeler, Edward L. (Edward Lytton), 1854 or 1855-1885	M.J. Fears & Co., Publishers, 379 Pearl Street	1899-03-15	Western stories	Deadwood Dick library ; v. 1, no. 1

Next Steps

- Map more data from dimenovels.org to ontology properties
- Make use of author and attribution data in *Nickels and Dimes*
- Enhance data and/or presentation with other data sets (DBPedia)
- Seek further grant funding to continue expanding the collection



Useful Links

Nickels and Dimes: <https://dimenovels.lib.niu.edu/>

Edward T. LeBlanc Memorial Bibliography: <https://dimenovels.org/>

Villanova Dime Novel Collection:

<https://digital.library.villanova.edu/Collection/vudl:24093>

Geeby-Deeby: <https://github.com/demiankatz/Geeby-Deeby>

Murpoint: <https://github.com/FalveyLibraryTechnology/Murpoint>