

6CCS3PRJ Final Year Automated Timeline Extraction

Final Project Report

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Abstract

The abstract is a very brief summary of the report's contents. It should be about half-a-page long. Somebody unfamiliar with your project should have a good idea of what your work is about by reading the abstract alone. -Summary of Project When legal and related professionals examine a case, they receive a substantial number of documents. These documents need to be examined in a useful manner to understand the events occurred. One useful perspective to understand what happened is a timeline of events. However, reading a large collection of documents and producing a timeline can be cumbersome. The aim is to ease this task by producing a system that shows the events depicted in the documents through a timeline.

Originality Avowal

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Oliver Philip Höhn

April 6, 2017

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-Acknowledge Supervisor, Friends & Family I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Jeroen Keppens. The supervision and support he provided was extremely helpful throughout the progression of the project. Also I would like to thank my family and friends for the continued support and encouragement throughout the project. I could have not done it without them.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This is one of the most important components of the report. It should begin with a clear statement of what the project is about so that the nature and scope of the project can be understood by a lay reader. It should summarise everything that you set out to achieve, provide a clear summary of the project's background and relevance to other work, and give pointers to the remaining sections of the report, which will contain the bulk of the technical material. -What is Project About (incl scope)? What is Aim? Background? Relevance to other works? (Pointers to other sections?)

The project aims to facilitate the understanding of a substantial number of documents (especially law related) through a graphical representation. When a law professional is tasked with a law case, they are expected to fully understand the overall structure and occurrence of the events described in the documents. However, when a large collection of documents are involved, this task can be both cumbersome for the employees and financially expensive for the employer. As the documents tend to be extensive and complex, requiring many working hours to understand the underlying story, thus not allowing the professional to progress to the next stage of their work.

1.1 Project Scope

As the system requires analyzing, processing and graphically representing the information in the documents, the main areas of the project are Natural Language Processing (NLP), Data Processing and Data Representation. Their relevance to other works will be discussed in the Background Chapter.

1.2 Objectives

//what is an event (summary, size, subjects, date, etc)

The Objectives are to produce a system that is effective, efficient and simple to use. The system should require as input a selection of documents written in correct English (i.e. in natural language) and produce a timeline with the events described in the documents.

Since the user does not have to be computer scientists or have any technological knowledge, but rather are expected to be law professionals, the system should be approachable for them. Therefore the visibility of what the system is doing, and what the users options are is important.

The timeline should be self-explanatory. The user should understand which events happened during which time periods, and know from the information provided what occurred during an event.

The system should produce responses in an appropriate time based on the input, and allow the user to rectify where the system has made mistakes.

The system should allow users to change the input settings, such as the length of the summary, reference points or how many processors can the program use in parallel (to limit/improve the performance), to allow the user to see how the timeline changes with different input parameters.

The user may consider the need to save the timeline for later use, or further analyzation. Therefore, providing tools to save the data of the timeline as a PDF or as a JSON in the user's system would benefit them. Producing a JSON output would allow the system to be used by 3rd-parties, that may provide their own graphical user interface (UI) using the system to only process the documents; or further process the events identified by the system.

1.3 Report Structure

Following this chapter is a discussion of the background related to this project. This is then followed by a formal presentation of the requirements and specification of the project. Which is then followed by the design architecture and patterns used in the system. Followed by the implementation, testing and evaluation of the system. During the evaluation, it will be discussed to what extent the requirements have been met. In the final chapter, the project will be concluded and improvements for future work will be discussed.

Chapter 2

Background

The background should set the project into context by motivating the subject matter and relating it to existing published work. The background will include a critical evaluation of the existing literature in the area in which your project work is based and should lead the reader to understand how your work is motivated by and related to existing work.

//explain what an event (from what is it built off) //defintion of an event

The resulting system should aim to produce a timeline of events based on the input text. An event is given by its date(s), subjects and a short summary of the text that produced it.

For this system, the text of documents will be split into their sentences, which are analyzed separately. An event is produced when a given sentence contains a date (or temporal expression). Events may contain a range of dates. A range is given by a start and end date. The range describes that the event occurred during that time period. For example, an event that occurred in the 1980s would have two dates, one for the start date: 1980-01-01, and one for the end date: 1989-12-31. While an event that happened on one specific day would only have one date associated with it.

The subjects of an event are given by the "person, place, thing, or idea that is doing or being something"[1]. These are key words that help convey the meaning of an event. They aid the summary of the event, i.e. summary of the sentence that was identified as this event, by providing additional information used to understand what happened.

2.1 Natural Language Processing

-explain what NLP is

The projects primarily enters the field of Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP is the field in Computer Science that focuses on producing systems that understand human readable and spoken language (cite). While there is ground breaking research in the field, many of the systems require the human input to be subject to constraints. As many of the systems use rule sets that are applied to the input to translate it to a useful input for the system. For example, removing ambiguities in text.

For this system it is expected that the documents are written in correct English. This is because every language has their own grammar. The grammar can be used as a rule set for the language. Thereby using them to identify key words such as people, locations, and companies; and also using them to produce summaries in some case [4]. For example, it is to be expected that documents are written in correct English. To expand the system to different languages would require different rule sets to be applied depending on the language to process the text. Different languages would require different algorithms, models and rule sets used.

An issue that may occur in the input documents is that they are grammatically disorganised and incorrect. Many NLP software tools (including StanfordCoreNLP which is used in this project) perform extremely poorly with such input. One example is the performance of NLP tools with Tweets, short sentences used in the social media platform Twitter ¹, that use informal abbreviations due to a character limit. In the paper Named Entity Recognition in Tweets: An Experimental Study [8], they looked at the performance of popular NLP tools on "Tweets". Many of the different NLP tools such as Apache OpenNLP and Stanford CoreNLP performed poorly. This is due to the NLP tools and their algorithms not being able to apply their rules on to the text to identify its different components. Hence, for this project it will be assumed that the input documents will be written in correct English. This is to be expected as the primary use of this tool is for formal documents, such as law documents. In the future this can be further expanded to other languages. -what parts of NLP are involved

NLP is a broad area of study. For this project the focus is on Automatic Summarization, Named-Entity Recognition (NER), and Sentence Breaking.

2.1.1 Automatic Summarization

In Automatic Summarization the aim is to produce a shorter version (a summary) of a given input text. The summary should still hold the same meaning of the original input. The summary can be built directly from the words in the input, or it can built using a dictionary.

¹<https://twitter.com/>

Since in this project an event is built from a sentence that contains a date, the Headline Generation area of Automatic Summarization is focused on. In Headline Generation, a summary is built based on the data provided in the input text (its grammar), where a threshold value is given such that the aim is to provide a summary of that size. For Headline Generation there are two main implementations: statistic based and decision (trimming) based [3].

In the statistic based model, Noisy-Channel models are the most prominent, as shown by the multitude of publications [2, 3, 9]. In noisy-channel models, the belief is that the summary of the given input lies within the text but it is surrounded by unwanted noise (text). These systems require a large collection of annotated data (pairs of input text and their summary), which are used in the calculation of the statistical values used to determine whether a produced summary correctly represents its original text. Examples of these algorithms can be found in the works of [3, 5].

The decision based models, are older than the statistic based models and use the grammar of the input text to trim (remove) parts of the inputs until no more rules can be applied or the summary produced is below a given threshold [4]. This is done by tokenizing, breaking an input text into words, phrases, symbols and tagging them each by an identifier(cite). The tokenized text, which is usually represented as a tree where the leaves are the words in the input text and the inner children the identifiers, is passed through an algorithm which applies rules. These rules remove branches of the tree until no more rules can be applied or the summary text falls below a given threshold. The leaves of the trimmed tree is then used to produce the summary.
//compare statistics to decision

The trimming based models do not tend to produce as good of summaries as the statistic based model, due to them producing, usually, only one summary while the statistic based models produce a selection to choose from. However, as can be seen from the works of Knight and Marcu [5], the trimming based models can produce better summaries than the statistic models in some occasions. For example, stastic based models are domain dependent as their data set is for a specific domain. Thereby placing statistic models in another domain will cause them to perform poorly compared to the decision models that are domain-independent.

The main advantage of the trimming model is their speed, and not requiring a large corpus of data (like the statistic models) by relying on the grammar to build the summary. In newer works of text summarization, neural network models are used. These fall under the statistical based models. They produce extremely accurate results, but as most statistical models they require a large corpus of data. Requiring a large data set causes algorithms to be processor-

heavy because the annotated data needs to be read, and the statistical computations need to be carried out. This is not an issue when it is done for a large set of text, but if it is done for every sentence identified with a temporal expressions, then the computation-work is much larger than the input. Thereby, more work is being done for the computation than required.

Due to the time-constraints, it was decided to use the trimming approach, in specific the algorithm provided by Dorr, Zajic, and Schwartz [4] (Figures 1 and 2). Where the given input text is turned into a tree based on its grammatical structure, with the words in the text as the leaves, and the inner nodes being the identifiers (given by the POS Treebank²), which is then trimmed. Note that removing a parent node, includes removing its children in the tree. -cite

Algorithm 1: Dorr, B., Zajic, D. and Schwartz R, (2003). Hedge Trimmer: A Parse-and-Trim Approach to Headline Generation

Input : A Grammatical Tree T of the Sentence to summarize

Input : threshold: Threshold value

Output: A Summary of the given sentence

```

1 get the leftmost-lower subtree with root S;
2 remove time expressions;
3 remove determiners (e.g. 'a', 'the');
4 while the number of leaves in tree > threshold and there are subtrees to remove with this
   rule do
5   | remove all the children except the first, where the rightmost-lowest subtree with root
   |   XP and its first child also being an identifier XP (where XP can be NP, VP, or S);
6 end
7 while the number of leaves in tree > threshold and there are subtrees to remove with this
   rule do
8   | remove any XP (where XP can be NP,VP,PP) before the first NP found;
9 end
10 get Tree T' from lastRule;
11 from T' create a sentence S by reading of the leaves in pre-order;
12 return S;
```

²https://www.ling.upenn.edu/courses/Fall_2003/ling001/penn_treebank_pos.html

Algorithm 2: Last Rule

Input : A Grammatical Tree T of the Sentence to summarize

Input : threshold: Threshold value

Output: A Grammatical Tree of the Summary of the input after the last rule has been applied

```
1 if the number of leaves in tree > threshold then
2   make a copy of the tree T';
3   while the number of leaves in tree > threshold and there are subtrees to remove with
      this rule do
4     remove any trailing PP nodes (and their children);
5   end
6   if the number of leaves in tree > threshold then
7     while the number of leaves in tree > threshold and there are subtrees to remove
        with this rule do
8       remove any trailing SBARs (and their children);
9     end
10    while the number of leaves in tree > threshold and there are subtrees to remove
        with this rule do
11      remove any trailing PPs (and their children);
12    end
13  end
14  return T';
15 end
16 return T;
```

2.2 Data Processing and Representation

In the grammatical tree formed, the inner leaf identifiers are given by the P.O.S Treebank³. Each word or set of words are given a part of speech tag identifying them. An example can be found below (see Figure 2.1).

On the grammatical tree shown in the figure, the algorithm proposed by Dorr, Zajic, and Schwartz [4] will be applied and the process will be graphically shown in the following figures (see Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5). Note that the value of the threshold does not force the

³http://www.ling.upenn.edu/courses/Fall_2003/ling001/penn_treebank_pos.html

summary to be below it, but it is a length of the summary to which the algorithm is working towards. For the sentence: "On Friday the Washington Post came out with the latest from its long-running investigation into Trump's charitable donations.", the following gramamtical tree is produced 2.1.

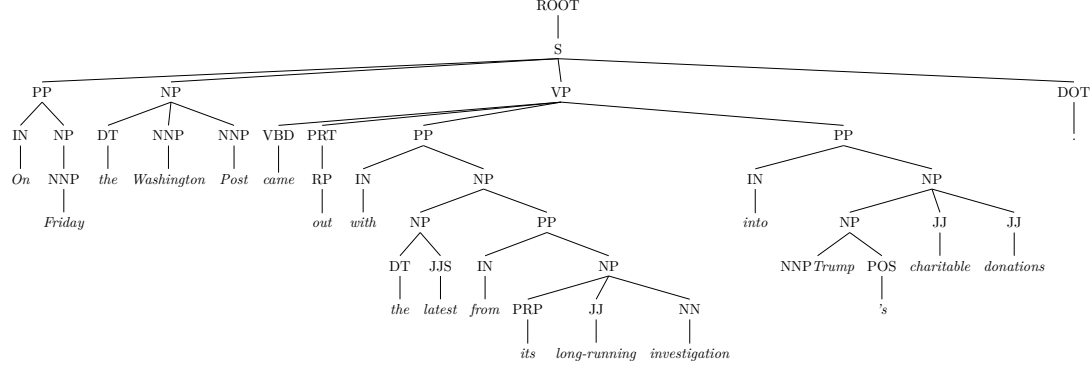


Figure 2.1: P.O.S/Grammatical Tree of: "On Friday the Washington Post came out with the latest from its long-running investigation into Trump's charitable donations."

The inner nodes in the tree are identifiers given by the P.O.S Treebank, and the leaves are the words in the sentence. A parent identifier can be a broader identifier of a collection of sub-identifiers or direct identifiers of a word. Using the Hedge-Trimmer algorithm [4], the tree is processed as follows. First, the lowest-leftmost S must be identified, as can be seen from the figure 2.1 there is only one subtree with root S. This subtree is extracted, and the algorithm is continued. The next step is to remove time expressions, of which there is only one, "Friday". However, when removing it, the "NP" parent must be removed, else there is a grammatically incorrect summary (given by the Hedge-Trimmer algorithm [4]). The result is graphically shown in the Figure 2.2.

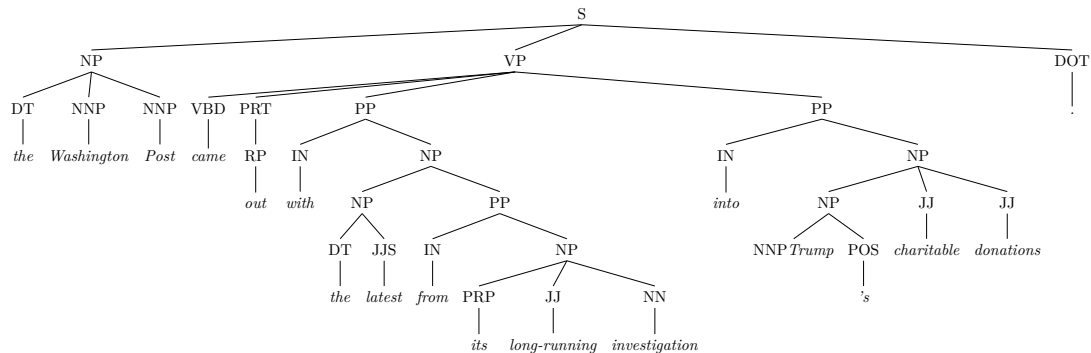


Figure 2.2: P.O.S/Grammatical Tree after removing time expressions

On the resulting tree, the algorithm dictates the removal of determiners. A determiner is identified by the "DT" parent tag. However, not all the parent identifiers with this tag are

removed, only ones that have a child labelled "the" or "a". The resulting tree after applying this rule is given by Figure 2.3.

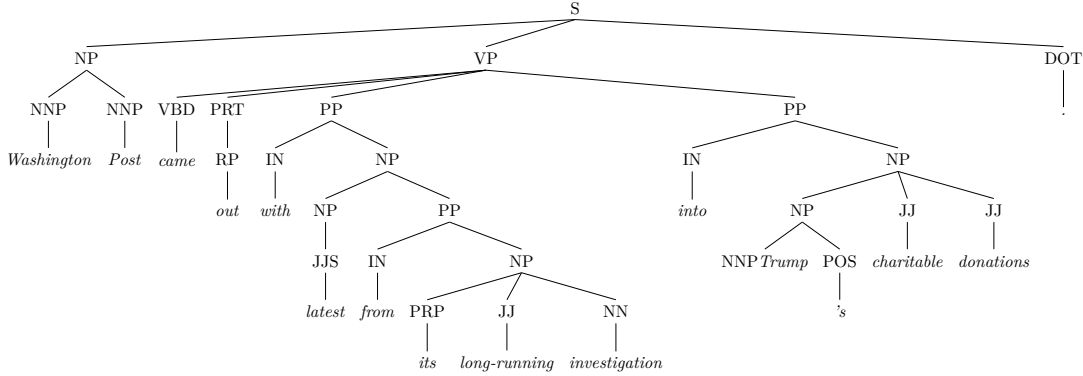


Figure 2.3: P.O.S/Grammatical Tree after removing determiners

The threshold value is used in the following rules. For this example, the threshold value is 10. From the two rules left, only one will be applied as the number of leaves in the resulting tree will fall below the threshold value. Thereby, the summary is below the threshold, so the last rule rule will not be applied. This avoids over-trimming the summary.

The threshold's value importance is of stopping the algorithm from over-trimming or under-trimming. This is done in the sense of there being an optimal summary where the core meaning is kept but if it is further reduced the meaning is lost. When the tree is over-trimmed there is a possibility that the resulting summary does not have the core meaning of the original sentence, or has no meaning at all. The advantage of under-trimming is that the meaning of the sentence is very likely kept, due to the summary sentence being of greater length than the optimal summary. Thereby, having more words and thus retaining the original meaning, as it is closer to the original sentence. However, the aim is to produce a summary, i.e. a short sentence with the same meaning as the original. Under-trimming can ensure the meaning is kept in the summary, but not that the resulting summary is optimal in size (thereby incrementing the time required by the user to view the entire timeline, thus increasing the time the to understand what occurred, which is what the user aimed to avoid with the tool).

When applying the XP-Over-XP rule, a parent identifier labelled XP (where XP can be NP,VP or S), has a first child identifier of type XP also, then all other children of the parent are removed. This rule is done iteratively until the resulting tree is below the threshold, or the rule cannot be applied further due to there not being anymore parent XP-first child XP pairs. The first iteration of the rule is shown in Figure 2.4, and the second and final iteration in Figure 2.5.

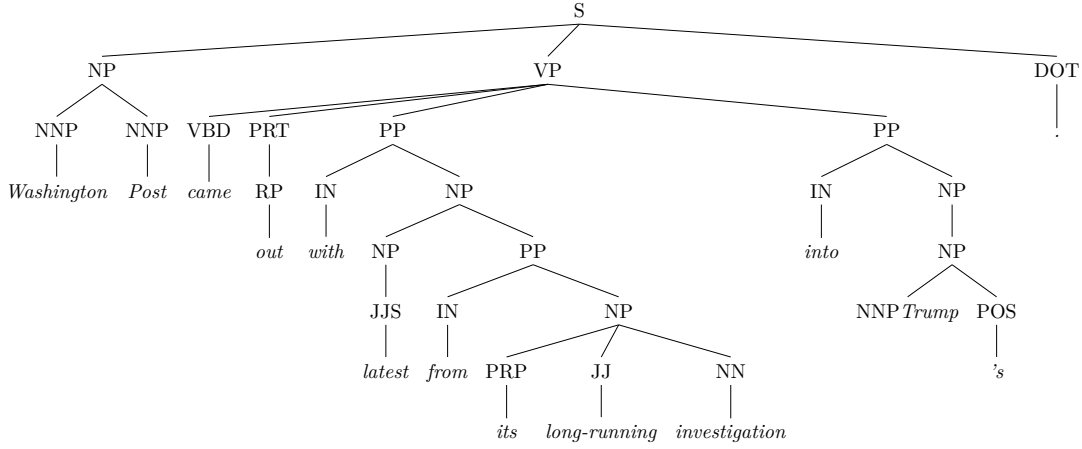


Figure 2.4: P.O.S/Grammatical Tree after XP-Over-XP first iteration

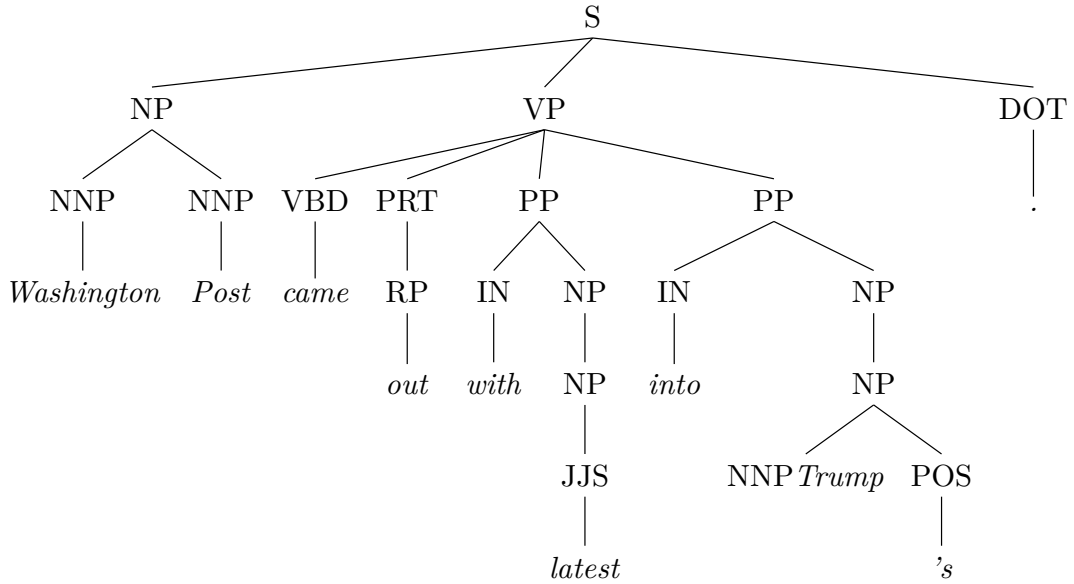


Figure 2.5: P.O.S/Grammatical Tree after XP-Over-XP second iteration

If the number of leaves did not fall under the threshold value, then the next rule to be applied is XP-Before-NP. In this rule, any XP before the NP of the sentence (the grammatical subject) is removed. This would be carried out until the number of leaves falls below the threshold, or the rule cannot be applied further. Finally, the last rule is applied. This rule consists of iteratively removing trailing PP and SBAR subtrees until the threshold value is reached, or the rule cannot be applied further.

The result of applying this algorithm (Hedge Trimmer [4]) on the input text: "On Friday the Washington Post came out with the latest from its long-running investigation into Trump's charitable donations.", produces a summary: "Washington Post came out with latest into Trump's". The original meaning of the sentence, which is that the Washington Post re-

leased a new article on Trump, is kept. However, the resulting summary is not grammatically correct as "Trump's" should be "Trump". Even though the summary is not grammatically correct the summary is significantly shorter than the input text, and does convey the meaning of the original sentence. This is a headline of the input, indicating what the input text was about, and thereby giving a general description of what occurred. -tags are POS (cite) //d -example of input text to tree //d -example of producing summary //d -algorithm //d -what are the options for the summary (Neural Networks vs Decision-Based) //d -give an algorithm for determining the summary, with an example //d

-explain the date problem, with example (determine that it uses an ISO standard)

2.3 Normalizing Dates

An issue when processing documents, and identifying events, is that sentences will not always include the exact date of when an event occurred. These temporal expressions are ambiguous. For example, "Yesterday" or "Last week" have different meanings depending on the context in which they are in. To produce a timeline, exact dates are required to sort the events by their date. This is valuable to the user, as events that occur within the same time era will be grouped and separated from events of other time eras. To determine the exact date of an ambiguous temporal expression, a reference point can be used. For example, if the text was written on the 11th of March 2017, then "Yesterday" in this context refers to the 10th of March 2017, but if the document was written on the 1th of February 1689, then it refers to the 31st of January 1689. Thereby, it is important to be able to infer reliably and accurately the date to which ambiguous time expressions refer.

The reference point (or base date) acts as a context of when an event occurred. Reference points, and similar techniques have been used in other timeline works [6]. The reference point should be the context in which the document was written in, or was aimed to be written in. This can be the publishing date of an article, or the creation date of a document, or any date which allows the exact date of an ambiguous temporal expression to be determined. For exact dates that are described in text, such as "On the 12th of December 1996...", the reference point has no value, as it can be determined without it that this text refers to an event that occurred on 12-12-1996. Therefore, the reference only helps the task of producing exact dates.

An issue that may arise is that temporal expressions point to a range of dates, i.e. "In the 1980s...". While it is not possible to determine the exact date, or dates, in which an event occurred it can be determined reasonably [6] that it was somewhere between the start of 1980s,

i.e. 01-01-1980, and the end of the 1980s, i.e. 31-12-1989. In an attempt to produce an exact date, a range of start and end date can be used for this event. This allows for it to be compared to other events, to then sort, and inform the user the event occurred somewhere within that time period.

Chapter 3

Report Body

The central part of the report usually consists of three or four chapters detailing the technical work undertaken during the project. **The structure of these chapters is highly project dependent.** They can reflect the chronological development of the project, e.g. design, implementation, experimentation, optimisation, evaluation, etc (although this is not always the best approach). However you choose to structure this part of the report, you should make it clear how you arrived at your chosen approach in preference to other alternatives. In terms of the software that you produce, you should describe and justify the design of your programs at some high level, e.g. using OMT, Z, VDL, etc., and you should document any interesting problems with, or features of, your implementation. Integration and testing are also important to discuss in some cases. You may include fragments of your source code in the main body of the report to illustrate points; the full source code is included in an appendix to your written report. -Tasks in project (Design, Implementation, Experimentation, Optimissatio, Evaluation) -present alternatives, compare them, why picked -justify software used -problems identified -important features -testing -stanford corenlp pos tags

3.1 Section Heading

3.1.1 Subsection Heading

Chapter 4

Requirements & Specification

4.1 Brief

-purpose of project -how established requirements

The system should take as input a set of documents, process them autonomously (i.e. without the users involvement), and produce a graphical representation of events in the documents. This requires the identification of sentences in the text that contain dates, providing an exact date (to compare to other events), identifying subjects and providing a summary of the sentence. Requirements are generated from this.

4.2 Requirements

4.2.1 Functional Requirements

The functional requirements of a system are behaviours a system should have¹. In this project the functional requirements are as follows:

1. Process documents of different file types (e.g. .pdf, .txt, and .docx).
2. Identify dates and subjects in text.
3. Summarize sentences.
4. Produce a graphical timeline of the events in the input documents.
5. Modify/Delete events in the timeline.

¹<http://reqtest.com/requirements-blog/functional-vs-non-functional-requirements/>

6. Travel between timeline and relevant document.
7. Save timeline (as .pdf or .JSON).

As the software will require as input documents, the 3 most used document file types² should be allowable file types in the system. Since the aim is to identify events in the input text, and events are identified temporal expressions, then it is necessary to identify these. The subjects of a sentence are required to aid the description of an event. Subjects, in this case, include names of people, locations, and quantities of money (i.e. key words).

The resulting system should enable users to modify events as it can be the case that the summary, subjects, or date determined by the system are wrong. Providing the ability to edit the events would allow the user to correct these mistakes.

The final two requirements do not affect the processing of the system, but are advantageous to users. Being able to switch between timeline and document will provide the ability to go from a general description of an event to the actual, full-detail, and in context description (which is the original sentence of the event). Providing a save to PDF ability allows the timelines to be included in documents, as the PDF files can be merged. More interestingly, producing an intermediate JSON output makes the system compatible with 3rd-party applications that can provide other graphical representations and/or process further the data. Providing two graphical representations of a timeline (in the system and as a PDF) along with a JSON representation should allow the system to be integrated in documents, reports and other applications.

4.2.2 Non-Functional Requirements

Non-functional requirements of a project are descriptions of how the system must perform the functional requirements, and the qualities the system should have. In this project the non-functional requirements are as follows:

1. A responsive and intuitive UI (Visibility).
2. Reasonable output time (Efficient).
3. Identify the majority of events (Effective).

These three requirements will be evaluated to determine if these are met in the produced system.

²<http://www.computerhope.com/issues/ch001789.htm>

Since the system should be used by any kind of user, with no required technical knowledge, it should be intuitive for the user to know how to use it, i.e. the system should be usable. The user if the system will be discussed later. It would be unreasonable that the resulting system is extremely slow. Such would be the case if on an input n it would require a much larger (exponential) time to complete .

Efficiency relates to the task of identifying events. Identifying events is the most important non-functional requirement, and one of the most important general requirements of the system. The system should be able to extract simple events in text where the full date is mentioned, but also be able to extract more complicated events where the temporal expressions are ambiguous.

Extraction and inference of dates on temporal expressions will be further discussed later on. This issue is relevant as in some cases it is known that an event occurred after another, but the specific date cannot be determined. Thereby, producing a timeline of linked events, where an event appears after another not because its exact date suggests so, but the context would allow for the event to be linked in such way. This requires changing models in established NLP tools, and thus will be discussed in the Future Works chapter.

4.3 Limitations

The greatest limitation of the project is time, both in its development and in the execution of the system. As the project time is limited, compromises have to be made. For example, a noisy-channel neural-network summary system would produce different plausible summaries for a given text, of which one should be a reasonable summary. However, as mentioned previously, noisy-channel models require a large amount of annotated data (and thus are domain-dependent). Thereby, providing this set of data would require more development time, which would not allow for the completion of the project. In addition, loading large models of data to summarize one sentence, would have a substantial impact in the running time of the system. From the users point of view, if the system is not significantly faster than producing timelines manually, then they would prefer to do them manually as they are more accurate.

A limitation in all NLP projects is the technology. Modelling context in systems is extremely difficult and non-trivial (cite). For this project it is a clear issue, that for some inputs, poor timelines will be produced as the context of the text was not fully modelled, and thus understood by the system. The issue can be applied to ambiguous temporal expressions, where the exact date referenced in the sentence cannot be determined. Solutions to these problems proposed by NLP researchers include looking at sentences related to each other (instead of independently)

and thereby linking references. However, this still does not mimic the context understood by humans during read or spoken interactions.

4.4 Additional Aims

-open source (with documentation), to be used in 3rd parties and allow the project to be further developed

An aim of the project is to make it open-source by providing it on GitHub along with a license. The license would allow anyone to use the system. This is beneficial as the system can be integrated in other programs (directly, as a library, or indirectly, through JSON). All the libraries used allow for the system to be open-source.

Chapter 5

Design

-objectives -use cases (actors) -architecture of backend -design patterns -gui (with screenshots)

For the design, a clear set of objectives, use cases and architecture have been developed to aid the implementation.

5.1 Objectives

The Objectives of the system are for it to be visible, efficient, and effective.

Visible - It should be visible to the user what functions are available. This includes being able to distinguish actions from informative text. Thereby, providing an application that can be picked up and used with minimal to no training and benefiting the growth of users of the system. This can be achieved by providing a simple and intuitive User Interface (UI), where buttons are highlighted, and actions are not cluttered, instead only necessary actions are provided.

Efficient - The time spent to perform tasks should be reasonable in the context of its input. This can be further expressed in the mathematical notation of Big-Oh. If an algorithm takes an input of size n , and roughly performs n operations to produce a result, then the algorithm is said to have a runtime of Big-Oh of n (visually shown as $O(n)$). This allows the efficiency to be compared between algorithms, as the focus is on how well they scale with larger inputs. The objective is to not have an algorithm that processes the files with an exponential time complexity. With an exponential time complexity, a small n would lead to a large running time, therefore a larger n would result in an infeasible running time. Threads can be used to aid this task. A Thread is a lightweight processor computation unit. Using more than one-thread allows for tasks to be carried out in parallel. Therefore, if the input is n documents, and

there are n threads, then the running time of the system would be the greatest running time of all the documents being carried out. Since all documents are being processed in parallel, completely independently of each other, then the time of the document that takes the longest time to process would result in the time it takes to process the entire set of documents.

Effective - The system should meet its purpose. Which is to require as input documents and process them to produce a timeline. The system should allow the user to perform these tasks through menu options, buttons, and, in addition, produce appropriate responses. When an error occurs the system should not attempt to process the documents indefinitely, and instead produce a timeline with the available events. Effectiveness also involves how correct are the timelines produced by the system. Whether they provide the user the correct information, and if the events are being identified in the documents.

5.2 Use Cases

A use case is a task an actor in the system performs. An actor is any type of user of the system. In this case, the user can be a law professional that uses the system to have a general understanding of a set of documents. Therefore, it can be assumed that the user does not necessarily have experience with NLP. It should be transparent to the user how the documents are being parsed, and only if they are interested would they require to look at the available source-code. The technical skill of the user does not need to be of an expert, as the tasks required are to provide documents, and view and interact with the produced timeline. In some cases, the user may produce their own graphical representation of a timeline and just use the produced JSON of the system. This would be the case if they have developed their own system to interact with this system.

The use cases of the system are given by the requirements, and they are presented below.
//use case stick figure diagram

1. Load Documents

- (a) Primary Actor: User
- (b) Goal: load set of given documents, where the document file types can be .pdf, .docx, or .txt.
- (c) Main Sequence:
 - i. User selects the "Load Documents" option.

- ii. System prompts a File Selector.
- iii. User selects set of documents and the base dates (or reference dates) to use with them.
- iv. System responds with timeline of events.

2. Swap from Timeline to Document

- (a) Primary Actor: User
- (b) Goal: show the sentence, in context, that produced the given event.
- (c) Main Sequence:
 - i. User selects event.
 - ii. System responds with dialog to "Edit Event" or "Go to Document".
 - iii. User selects "Go to Document" option.
 - iv. System opens new window with the text of the document where the event originates from, with the sentence that produced it highlighted.

3. Edit Event

- (a) Primary Actor: User
- (b) Goal: modify the data of an event.
- (c) Main Sequence:
 - i. User selects event.
 - ii. System responds with dialog to "Edit Event" or "Go to Document".
 - iii. User selects "Edit Event" option.
 - iv. System responds with dialog with the data of the event set in fields.
 - v. User edits the data as needed.
 - vi. System validates the entered data, and saves.

4. Save Timeline

- (a) Primary Actor: User
- (b) Goal: save the produced timeline as a PDF or JSON.
- (c) Main Sequence:
 - i. User selects "Save To..." option.

- ii. System responds with option dialog to select the file format to save.
- iii. User selects the needed file format.
- iv. System responds with File Selector.
- v. User selects the location to save the timeline.
- vi. System generates the required data to save the timeline in the desired format and attempts to save it in the system.

//note load documents use case includes adding to an existing timeline, user is the person using the system, edit event incl delete, checks for invalid data, file not available

The main sequence are the steps of the interaction in the use case to reach the goal. An error can occur during the interaction, it should be the systems responsibility to deal with the error appropriately, and not end the execution of the program. The primary actor, is the agent or entity that initiates the use case (cite or footnote).

Note that loading documents includes both when it is the first set of documents to be loaded, i.e. the timeline is empty, and when there is already a populated timeline. In the latter case, it would be beneficial to discard duplicated events. A duplicated event is one where it is produced from the same file, using the same reference date, and the data is equal. This is done to not clutter the timeline with events that are repeated, as the timeline should be efficient in the data it provides, i.e. describe the events in the document with as little as possible of additional data. It can occur that two documents produce the same event, these should not count as duplicated, as the event may have a different context depending on what file they originate from. Reference dates are included in the check of duplicate events as it may be the case that different events are produced for the same document when different reference points are used, and the user is interested in investigating this.

When an event is being edited, the user should have the option to delete it, as it may be that the system produced an erroneous event or the event is not relevant to the user. Events may not be relevant to the user if the same event occurs in two separate documents. This can occur when the events described in the documents overlap. The duplicate check would not identify them as duplicates as they originate from different files. To ensure the date entered by the user is correct, it is validated. The validation checks are carried out before the changes are saved. An example of invalid data is when the date of an event is modified but instead of a new date being set, other text data is entered. In the case of the event occurring during a range of dates, i.e. it has a start date and end date, a validation check should be that the second date does not occur before the first. The checks should be carried out before the data is saved.

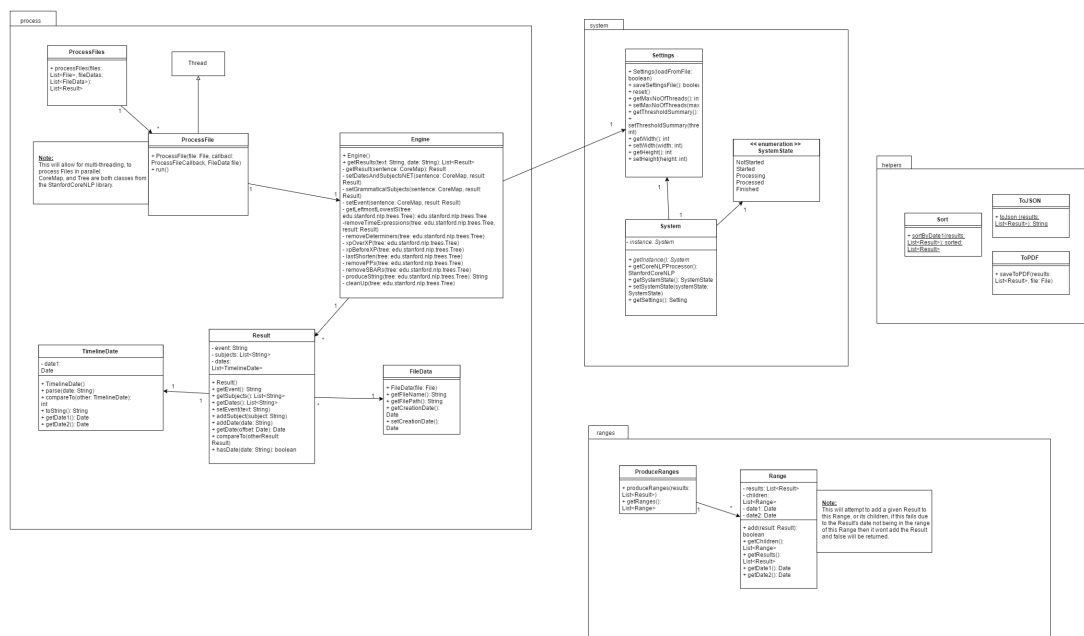
in the case the validation fails, the changes should not be changed, instead the user should be prompted to correct their input.

During the saving use case, the desired location can be unavailable. This can be either because the Operating System does not allow the application to write to that directory, or because a file that is in use is being overwritten (i.e. a lock has been placed on it). Therefore, the user should be prompted to save in another location.

5.3 Architecture

The architecture of a system, is the structure of the components in the system¹. The focus is on the back-end, or logic, of the system as opposed to the graphical, or front-end. A good software architecture is one where the components of the system are encapsulated with other related components. For this project, the software architecture has been produced using Unified-Modelling Language (UML). In UML, components or classes are represented by a rectangle, with their available functions listed. The architecture of the whole system is presented in the figure below (Figure 5.1). Each package will be looked at individually.

Figure 5.1: Full UML Architecture of Automated Timeline Extraction system.

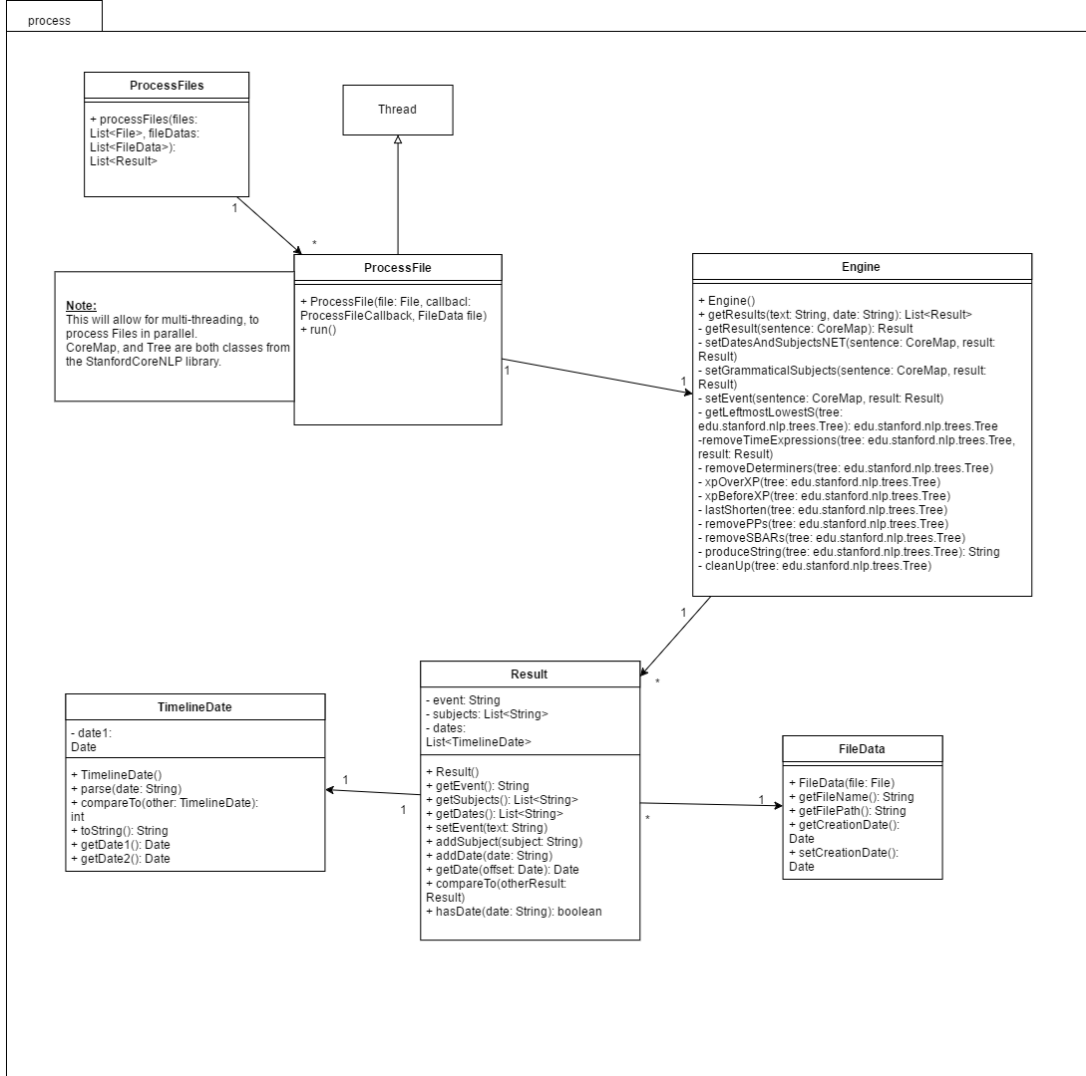


¹<https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-gb/library/ee658098.aspx>

5.3.1 Process Package

The core of the system is the process package (see Figure 5.2). The architecture used here is Business Delegate, where all the interaction to the package is through one component, ProcessFiles, which delegates the work to the other components in the package. A list of files is passed in, along with their data (such as the file name, its path, or the creation/reference date used). Each file is processed in parallel. The maximum number of parallel processing allowed is given by the settings of the system (in the settings package). This is the maximum number of threads that can be ran at any given point. However, in the implementation one more thread should be added to the count, as the graphical user interface always runs on a separate thread. The belief is that with a maximum setting of n threads, then at any given point at most n files are being processed. Whenever one file finishes processing, another begins to be processed. As mentioned before, if n files are allowed to process at any given point, and the input size of documents is n , then the time it takes for the system to process all the documents is given by the greatest maximum time to process one of the n files. The pseudo-code for this is given below (see Algorithm 3), in the implementation semaphores can be used to aid this task. A semaphore is a data structure that limit how many threads run by requiring threads to acquire a lock before performing their parallel processing. The lock is released afterwards by the thread. If no locks are available, threads wait until a lock is available.

Figure 5.2: UML of the Processing Package



Algorithm 3: Algorithm for processing a list of Files

Input : A list of Files to Process

Output: A list of Results

```

1 foreach File in the input list do
2   wait until can run;
   /* if the maximum number of threads running in parallel has not been
      reached then stop waiting, else wait */
3   process the file;
4   add the produced Result to the list of Results to return;
5 end
6 return list of Results;
    
```

For this system, an event is described as a Result that contains date information (represented by TimelineDate), a set of subjects (or key words), and the summary of the sentence that

produced the event.

The TimelineDate component processes temporal expressions identified by the Engine, these are parsed and an exact date is produced which is then used to compare and sort the Results(events).

In this system, the StanfordCoreNLP suite ² is used. It is a well-known and tested tool for NLP. Other tools exist, such as ApacheNLP, however Stanford's tool has a larger set of documentation and support, as well as being thread-safe and efficient. Thread-safe refers to the ability to share this tool between separate processes without having to worry about concurrency issues.

When a file is processed, its text is extracted, which is then parsed through the Engine. The Engine is responsible for producing the Results for a file. It identifies sentences with dates, and for those extracts subjects such as people, locations, money, etc. As well as using the Hedge-Trimmer algorithm, discussed in the Background Chapter, to produce a summary.

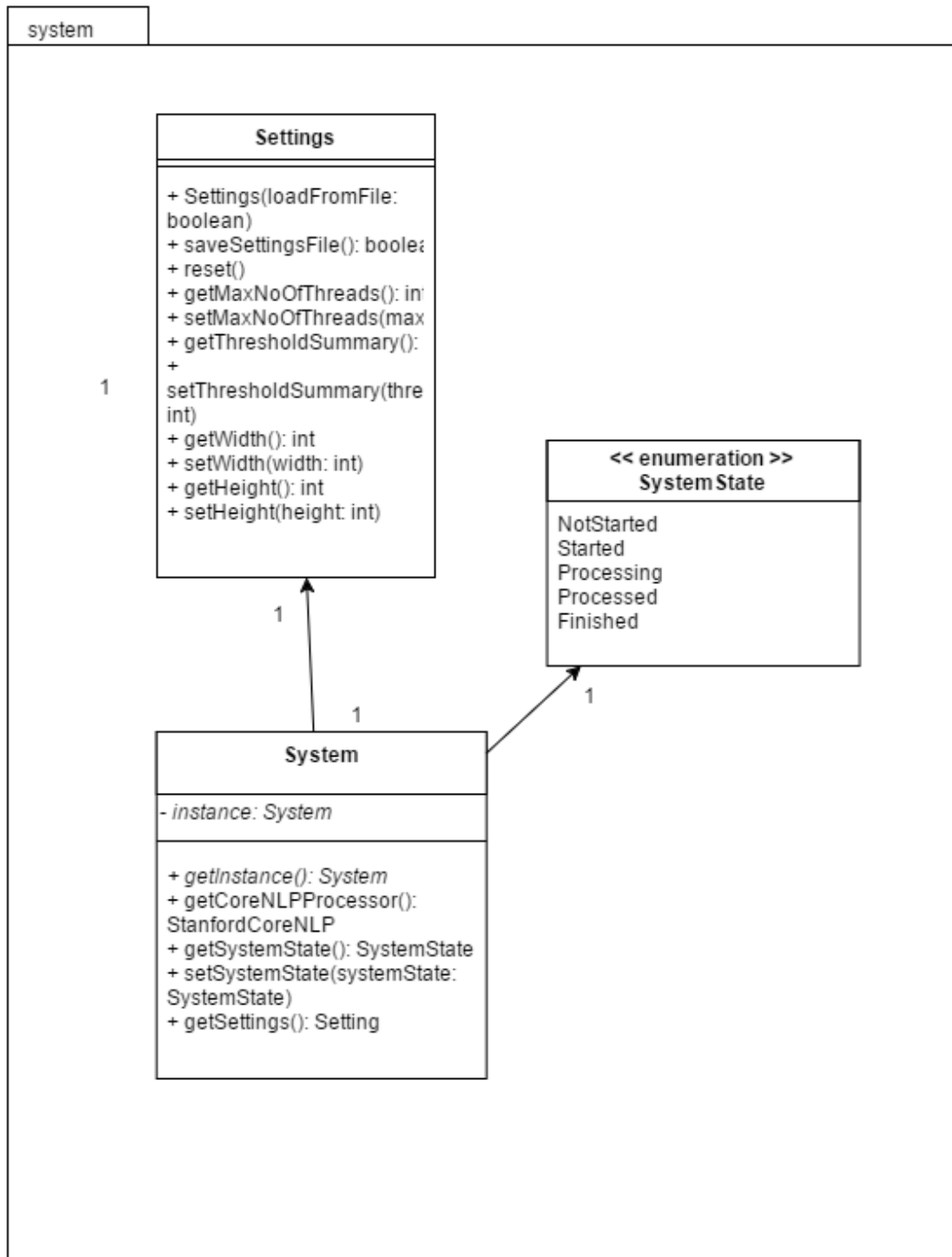
5.3.2 System Package

//talk about system to be shared throughout the system (same data shared)

The system package holds the system and settings components (see Figure 5.3). It is responsible for providing global settings, such as the maximum number of threads to be ran in parallel, the threshold value used in the summary algorithm, and graphical settings. The SystemState attribute is used to identify at which stage the system is in when it is processing files. This allows for the logic of the system to be decoupled from the graphical representation, as it can use the system state to determine which actions are available, when a loading bar needs to be shown, and when the timeline is ready to be displayed. The component is shared throughout the system, as it contains data required in different components (both logical and graphical components).

²<http://stanfordnlp.github.io/CoreNLP/>

Figure 5.3: UML of the System Package



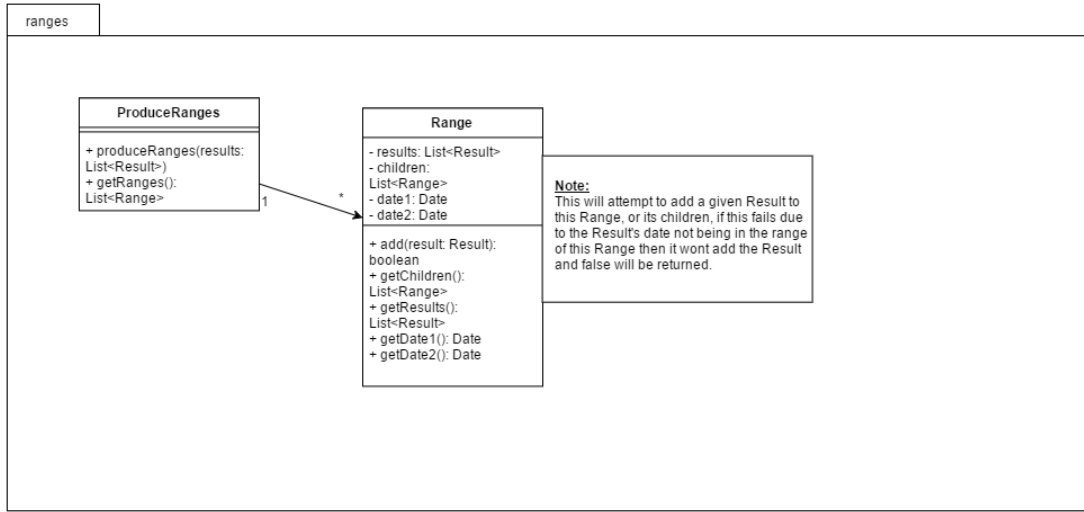
5.3.3 Ranges Package

//trees of ranges with results, algorithm, example, running time

The ranges package was the last package developed (see Figure 5.4). It focuses on placing Results into ranges (see the Algorithm 4), hence the name. A Range is defined by a start and

end date. A Result is placed within this Range if it has the exact same start and end date, if this is not the case then it is attempted to place the Result in one of the children of this Range. If this is not possible, then another Range root is checked. Since Ranges are similar to Trees (as they recursively include other Ranges), there may be a forest of Ranges in the system. The roots is a Range with the largest range of dates that encapsulates its child Ranges (and their Results). Thereby allowing to group related events together, and encapsulating them by their dates.

Figure 5.4: UML of the Ranges Package



Algorithm 4: Algorithm for placing Results in Ranges

Input : A list of Results

Output: A list of Range roots, i.e. a forest of Ranges

- 1 sort the list of Results by the number of days in between the start and end date in descending order;
 - 2 **foreach** *Result in the sorted list* **do**
 - 3 attempt to add it to one of the existing Range roots;
 - 4 **if** *failed to add to existing Range* **then**
 - 5 make a new Range using the data of the Result;
 - 6 add the new Range to the list of Range roots;
 - 7 **end**
 - 8 **end**
 - 9 return list of Range roots;
-

The algorithm proceeds as follows. The Results are sorted by the range, the number of days between their start and end date. A Result that only has one date, has a range of 0. The Results with the largest ranges are added first as it is more likely that they encapsulate other Results (does not apply the other way round). This leads to the production of a tree, shown below. The root is a Range with a start and end date that encapsulates all the dates of its

child Ranges. It may be necessary to expand the dates of a Range if it is the case that the dates of a Result partially overlap a Range. An expanded Range has no results, but has two children: the newly made Range for the Result that was being added, and the Range that the Result was previously partially overlapping.

To demonstrate the algorithm an example will be presented with the two Results presented in the table 5.5 and the pre-existing tree in Figure 5.6. First, the Results would be sorted by their range, such that the second result is the first to be added. This produces the tree in Figure 5.7. Then the next Result in the table is added, producing the tree in Figure 5.8. For the resulting tree, it was determined that the Result being added overlapped an existing Range, thereby a new Range was formed that would encapsulate the previous Range and the result being added. This is done by extending the start and end dates appropriately. To place the Result in the tree after the Range was expanded, a new Range was created to hold it, and the previous Range that was partially being overlapped is now a child of the expanded Range.

As can be seen from the tree produced, the largest start-end date pair encapsulates the smaller start-end date pair, this can be done recursively. This allows for a graphical representation where the events are encapsulated by their dates, providing an alternative view to the traditional top-down timeline.

Result	Start Date	End Date
1	12-12-2016	18-12-2016
2	13-12-2016	20-12-2016

Figure 5.5: Example Results Start and End Date

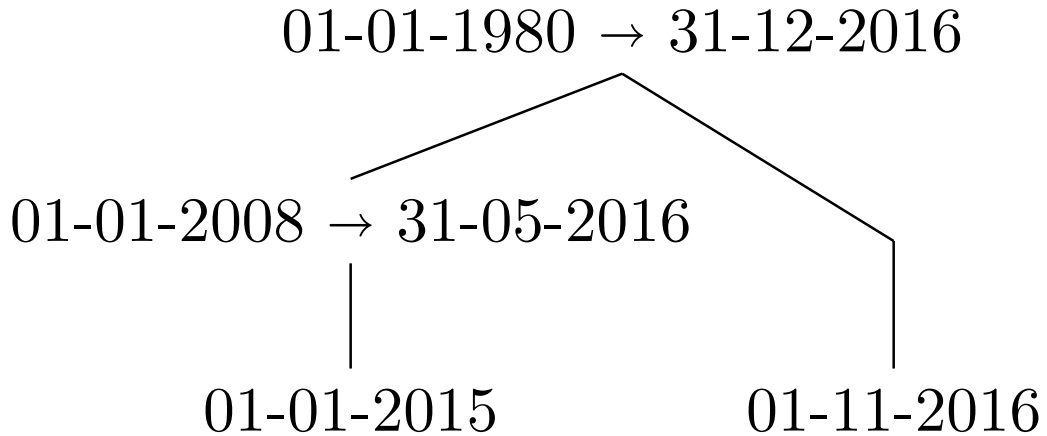


Figure 5.6: Pre-existing Range Tree



Figure 5.7: Resulting Range Tree after adding the Result: 13-12-2016 \rightarrow 20-12-2016

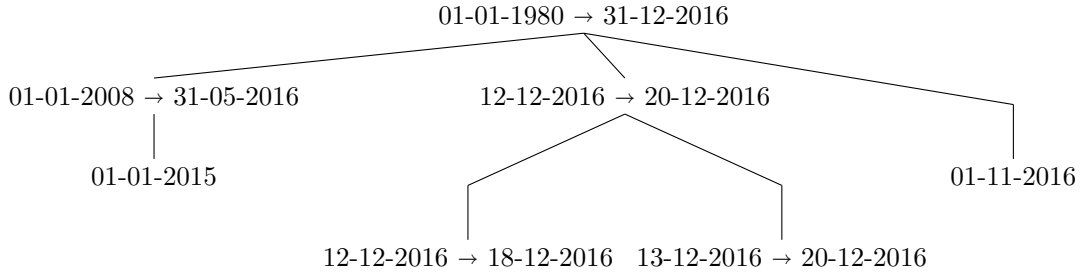
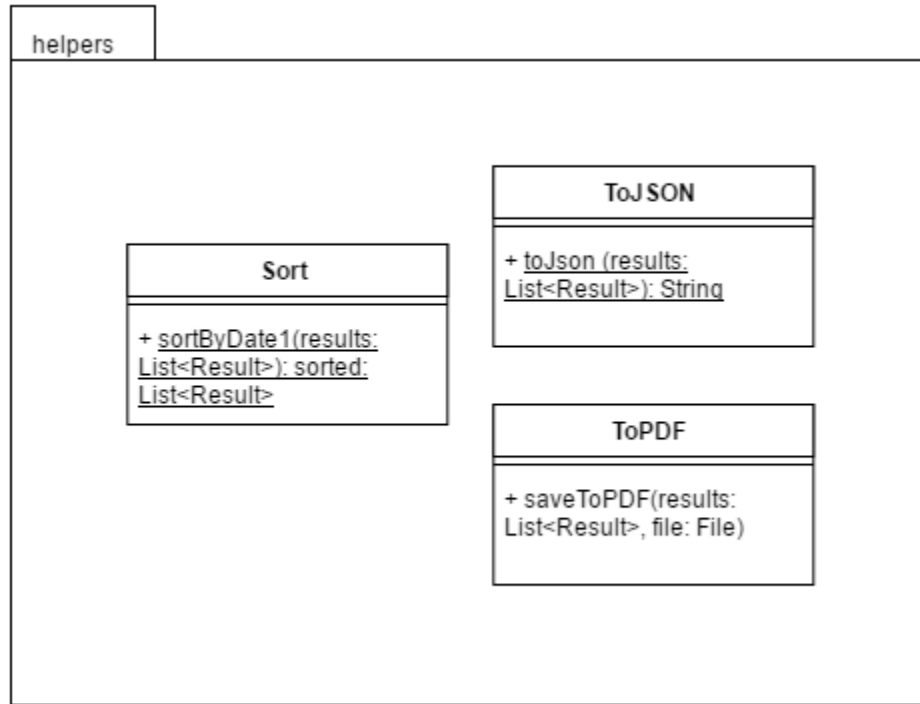


Figure 5.8: Resulting Range Tree after adding the Result: 12-12-2016 \rightarrow 18-12-2016

5.3.4 Helpers Package

The helper package utility components required throughout the system (see Figure 5.9). For example, it provides sorting functions (sorting by the start date or by the range of days in between the start and end date) and saving the timeline in PDF or JSON format. It is a refactored package of reused logic in the system. Refactoring is done to remove repeated components and operations. Thereby having them in one place only instead of being duplicated around the system. The main advantage is that when a change needs to be made, it is made in one place, but if the operations are duplicated throughout the system then that change needs to be carried out at each duplicated occurrence.

Figure 5.9: UML of the Helpers Package



5.4 Design Patterns

Design Patterns are general solutions to common problems in software development³. The solutions usually include a system architecture to follow. For this project, the main design patterns are Singleton and Observer.

Singleton - This design pattern ensures that only a certain number of instances of a component are available⁴. In most cases the number of components is restricted to one. The advantage of this pattern is to provide a universal access for global data throughout the system. For example, in the System component the NLP processing tool is held, along with the system state. These are both used throughout the system, hence it would be reasonable to use a Singleton pattern to ensure their availability, and not reload them into memory each time.

Observer - This design pattern allows an observee to notify a list of its observers. The observee can be a model, and the observers its view. This is used to separate the logic of the system from its user interface. It allows for the back-end of the system to be developed completely independently from the front-end. In this system, the front-end will be notified by the back-end. This is then strengthened further through the system states available. As the

³https://sourcemaking.com/design_patterns

⁴<http://www.journaldev.com/1377/java-singleton-design-pattern-best-practices-examples>

back-end begins processing documents, its state changes. The front-end should then change appropriately in such case, by retrieving the relevant data and showing the relevant for that state. If the system were to be developed further, with other graphical interfaces used or added to the pre-existing UI, then these could be added effortlessly as the logic of the system is independent of its view.

Model-View Controller - It is mentioned as a main design pattern of the system, because it is similar to the Observer design pattern, in that it separates the view from the data (which is a model) through a controller. The controller manipulates the data, and applies the appropriate changes in the view. It separates the logic of the system with its view, like an Observer pattern. This design pattern is enforced by many Graphical User Interface (GUI) frameworks, including the one used in this project (JavaFX⁵).

Other design patterns are available, however these are the most relevant ones for this project. While the solution to ensure safe multi-threading is not a design pattern, it is worth mentioning as it allows for safe independent processing of documents through the use of semaphores (mentioned previously). //singleton, model-view-controller, describe, explain why, and what other options were available

5.5 UI

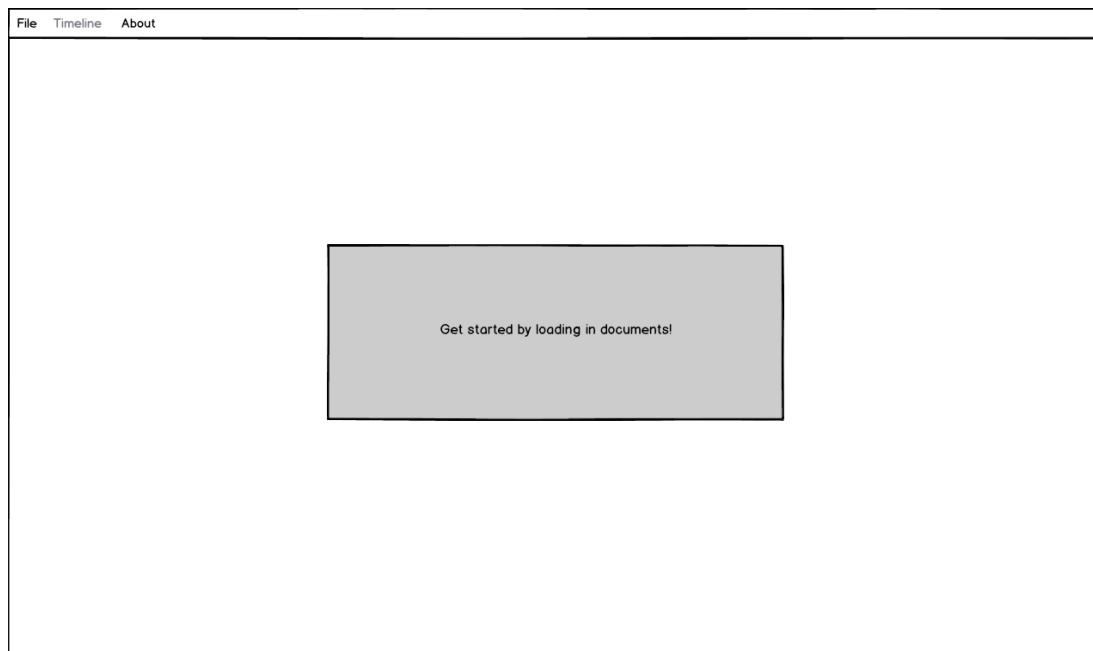
The system is intended to be used by law professionals. However, it can be used by anyone that requires its services of producing timelines, as it will be open-source. These considerations are taken into account during the development of the User-Interface. For example, as the main data representation of the system is the timeline of events, it is clear that it should occupy the majority of the screen. Options that are not relevant to the current state of the system should not be available, while options that are most likely to be used should be highlighted. The aim is to build a UI that is visible and easy to use for the user.

Actions that are made unavailable ensure that the user is not overloaded with buttons and menu options that do not make sense within the current state of processing the system is in. For example, when the system is initially launched, no timeline can be presented as no documents are available to be processed. Instead the user is invited to load documents, as can be seen by the Wirefram Figure 5.10. Wireframes are colourless screenshots of what the UI of a system should aim to look like, it is used by the front-end designers.

From the start up screen, the user can load documents and the reference points used for

⁵<http://docs.oracle.com/javase/8/javase-clienttechnologies.htm>

Figure 5.10: Wireframe of System at Startup



the documents through a dialog displayed after the files have been selected. As this is being done, the system can load any resources it requires (such as models) before the files are to be processed. After the documents have been processed, the timeline is displayed (see Figure 5.11).

For each event produced by the system, a timeline row will be produced. With each event, options to edit (which will open a dialog that allows also for the deletion of events, as seen in Figure 5.12), and view the sentence that produced the event in its own context (see Figure 5.13). The user is also provided with additional information of which documents have been loaded, along with the ability to load more or remove some of the documents, and save the timeline. Note that the timeline menu item is unavailable when there is no timeline displayed (see Figure 5.10), but when one is displayed it is available (see Figure 5.11).

In the Document Viewer (see Figure 5.13), note that the relevant sentence that produced the event, which the user interacted with to view this, is highlighted. This allows the user to see in context the event, as they can read the text surrounding it, giving them a better understanding of what occurred. This also allows the user to swap between the system and the documents. In addition it allows the user to view how each event has been produced and judge for themselves how effective the system is. The user can also jump through the document using the timeline by selecting the view function from an event. Therefore, the user is no longer required to read the entire document or scroll through it if they are only interested in certain

Figure 5.11: Timeline of System

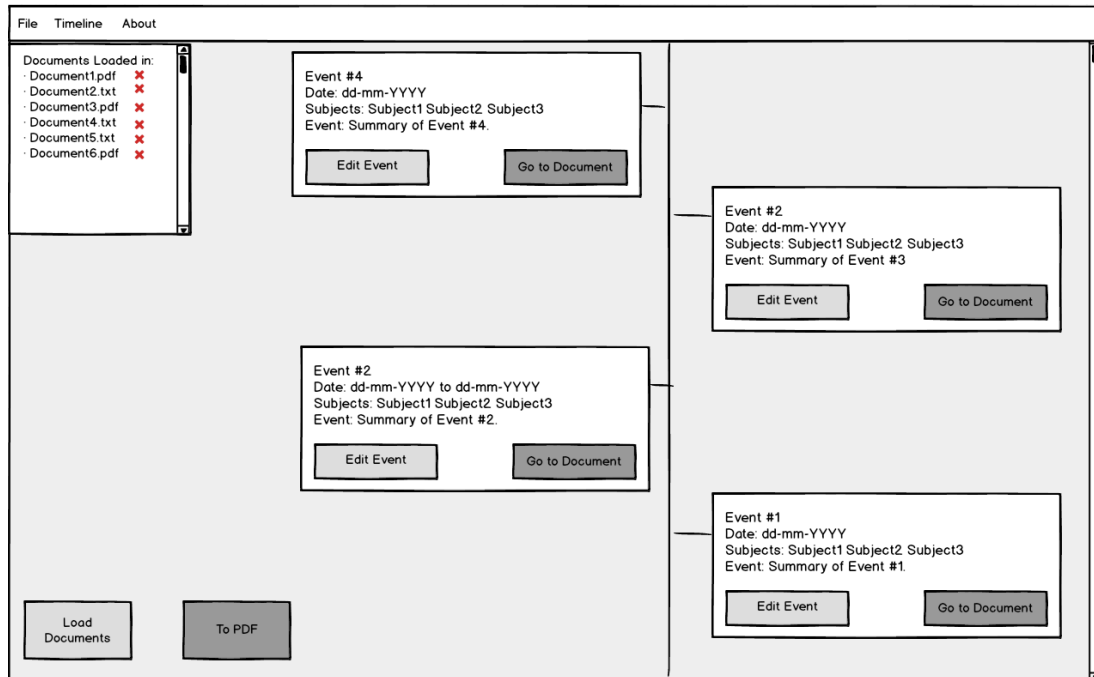
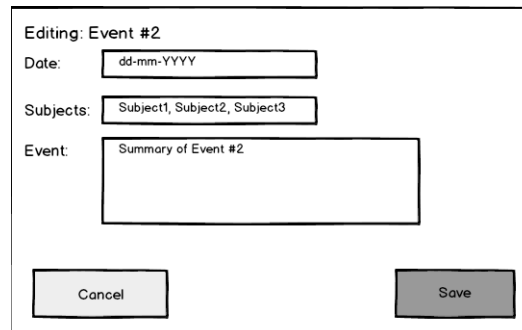
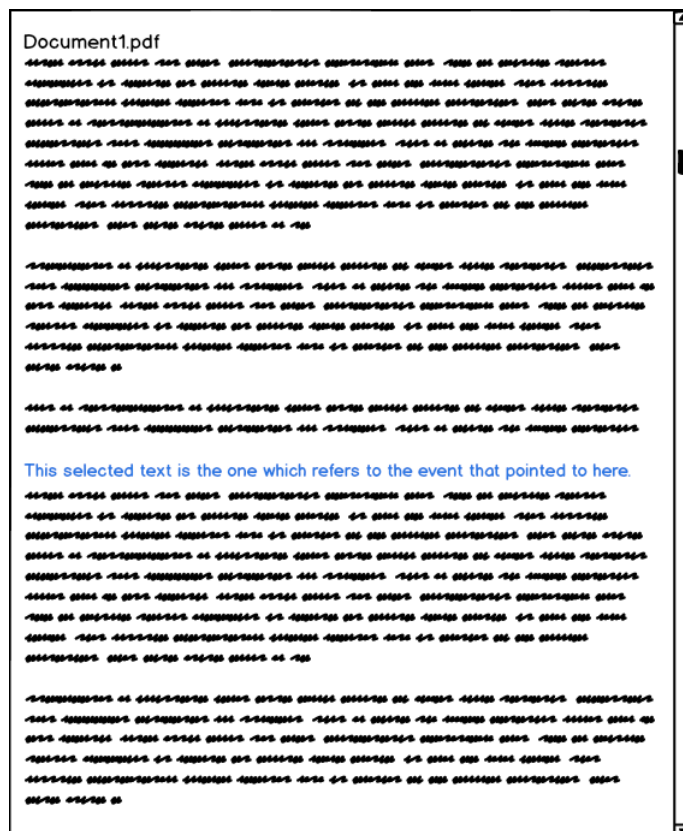


Figure 5.12: Edit Event Dialog of System



areas of it. This is extremely beneficial for large documents which are cumbersome to read, as the user can focus on specific areas of the document (i.e. the text surrounding the sentence that produced the event) instead of having to re-read the chapter, or even the whole document. Note the tool should not replace the reading of highly sensitive and critical law documents (or any other kind of documents), as the user may require the full context of the document, but it can serve as a time-effective tool to skip through the document event-by-event, focusing on certain aspects of the documents being revisited. //wireframes, reason for this, why no color, why no other layout?, update to new system

Figure 5.13: Document Viewer of System



Chapter 6

Implementation

-How implemented

6.1 Approach

The development approach focused on the business-logic, or back-end, of the system. From the two main development methodologies, Waterfall and Agile, the latter was used. In Waterfall, the development process is sequential. Development is a sequence of phases that are completed one after the other. When a stage is completed it is not returned to, as like with a Waterfall, it is not possible to go up to the previous stage (cite). Agile development focuses on adaptive planning, evolutionary development, and continuous improvement. The advantage of using an Agile approach over a Waterfall approach is that unpredicted features and issues are dealt with when they arise. This does make Agile difficult to manage, as there is no clear indication of when the project will be completed.

Scrum is an Agile approach that uses Sprint cycles, which are short development periods. In the development cycles, a set of features must be implemented and tested. Testing allows to ensure that when new features are developed, the older features continue to work as expected. At the end of each cycle, meetings are held discussing what are the next steps, and what issues arose during the previous cycle. For this project, the meetings were with the supervisor.

The Agile approach proved to be useful when a new timeline view had to be implemented. A clear example of the advantage of this system was when a new timeline view was suggested. In this new view, events are grouped by their start and end dates, such that events that occur within the time period of other events are encapsulated by the longer event. This could be

implemented in the system, due to the separation of the business logic and the view, and the development approach used. In a Waterfall model, the development is more structured, and thereby it is extremely useful for static requirements, i.e. requirements that will not change. However, in this case it would have caused issues in implementing the new view as it would require going up the Waterfall if the view of the system had already been implemented, or waiting until that step of the waterfall had been reached.

Note that the Agile methodology is used in software development teams. However it can be applied to individual developments, since the structure of the project allows for sprint cycles and review meetings with the supervisor, as well the possibility of new requirements.

6.2 Tools & Software Libraries

-development environment -why used that environment -software libraries (include an example use) -why

The development environment of the project includes a 64-bit Windows 10 machine, with an Intel Core i7-6700HQ CPU at 2.60GHz and 16.0GB of Random Access Memory (RAM). It includes a Java Intelligent Development Environment (IDE), with Git for version-control, and Gradle for dependency management.

The use of version-control allows development of features to be separated from the current working version of the code through the usage of branches. New features are added to the working version of the code, only if the required tests pass. Note this follows a Git flow development. In Git flow, a develop branch is made with the newest working features of the system, and new features are developed on separate branches. A master branch will only contain the latest fully implemented working version of the product. Using branches allows for bugs and development mistakes to be pin-pointed to the development of a specific feature, and allows the rollback to a previous, bug-free, state.

Gradle allows for libraries to be regarded as dependencies of the project. When the system is ran on a separate machine, Gradle will retrieve the missing libraries used in the project before compiling and running the program. This allows for the system to be shared to other users, without having to include the libraries with the distribution of the code, as the required libraries and the version will be downloaded to the users system when they run the command:

gradlew run.

Where gradlew is a wrapper for Gradle, such that the user does not even have to have Gradle installed in their system to run the application. Thereby, providing advantages in portability

and general use.

As mentioned in the Background chapter, multiple libraries exist to aid the task of NLP. These are especially needed for the Named Entity Recognition(NER) and Text Summary tasks. An NER annotator will tag certain words, or collection of words into predefined categories such as People, Companies, Locations, and Money. These tools also aid in tagging words using the POS Treebank, which is a requirement to use the Hedge-Trimmer algorithm [4] to produce summaries. Using an NLP library speeds up the production of the system, as manually building an annotator requires multiple developers and years of work. As can be seen from the release history of the StanfordCoreNLP, where development began in 2010 and the latest release was in 2016¹. The main two NLP tools available are Apache's OpenNLP² and Stanford's CoreNLP³. For this project the Stanford's tool was used in the implementation, as it provides an extensive documentation and examples, along with specific sections describing their annotators in detail.

The Stanford tool is the main library used throughout the project, as the project is reliant on its NER and POS annotators (cite the stanford annotators). It comes with models, that are loaded during the initialisation of the system. These models are used in the stastical calculations in the annotators to determine whether certain words fall in predefined categories, or which POS tag should be given to them.

Due to the two main NLP libraries available being Java implementations, the decision was made to build the system in that language. It would be problematic to build the system in a different language to its libraries, as it would require to make the two programming languages communicate with each other, which can cause unpredictable problems in the development and execution of the system.

Additional libraries in the development include JUnit for Unit testing. This allows for features to be tested. Testing is used in Git flow, to ensure that new features developed do not affect the correctness of older features, and are only merged together if the test succeeds. Thereby, ensuring the system functions as expected.

Libraries for text extraction of .pdf and .docx file types are required, as the encoding of these files is not in plain text. The Apache POI⁴ and the Apache PDFBox⁵ are used. In addition to text extraction, the PDFBox library along with the Apache Commons library allows the creation of PDFs (with text wrapping). This allows to save timelines as PDF documents.

¹<http://stanfordnlp.github.io/CoreNLP/history.html>

²<https://opennlp.apache.org/>

³<http://stanfordnlp.github.io/CoreNLP/index.html>

⁴<https://poi.apache.org/>

⁵<https://pdfbox.apache.org/>

The Google GSON⁶ library is used for the creation of JSONs, to save the timeline in a JSON file. The RichTextFX⁷ library along with JavaFX library are used to build the Graphical User Interface (GUI) of the system. It was ensured that the libraries used have licenses that allow their use in this project, and its later release to open-source.

6.3 Issues

Two main issues occurred during the implementation of the system: the creation of exact dates from named entity dates, and the creation of an encapsulated timeline. A minor issue is also explained, which is based on the input documents being grammatically incorrect.

6.3.1 Named Entity Recognition (NER) of Dates

The StanfordCoreNLP tool, allows the resolution of temporal expressions. To explain this, an example is presented. The Stanford tool allows for reference dates to be used when a document is processed. When the tool tags a temporal expression as a DATE, it attempts to normalize it. Note the annotator treats each word in the sentence as a mention. To identify its named entity recognition tag, the following is done on the mention:

`mention.get(CoreAnnotations.NamedEntityTagAnnotation.class).`

If it is a temporal expression that was tagged, the result of the operation is a String DATE (to identify it as a date). Thus, from the mention, it can be normalized using:

`mention.get(CoreAnnotations.NormalizedNamedEntityTagAnnotation.class).`

The Stanford tool will attempt to produce a date in the ISO 8601⁸ format. As can be seen from the format, it can produce exact dates of the type dd-MM-yyyy, where dd is an integer value from 1 to 31, MM is the month as an integer value from 1 to 12, and yyyy the year. If BC dates are used, at the start of the normalized result a '-' is added (indicating a minus date). Using the ISO standard, an algorithm was written to process these dates. Note that, in addition to the possible dates given by the ISO standard, the Stanford tool produces 3 additional possible normalization outputs.

Normalizations refer to the attempt to produce a date from a temporal expression. It may be that, even with a reference point, the tool does not produce an exact date. For example, the temporal expression "now" would produce a normalized NER: "PRESENT_REF", i.e. a reference to the present moment. For a temporal expression that refers to the past, e.g. "...they

⁶<https://github.com/google/gson>

⁷<https://github.com/TomasMikula/RichTextFX>

⁸<https://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mgk25/iso-time.html>

once used to...", "once" would be normalized to "PAST_REF", i.e. a reference to the past of this moment. For a temporal expression that refers to the future, e.g. "In the future...", "future" would be normalized to "FUTURE_REF", i.e. a reference to the future after this moment.

The issue is that these normalizations do not allow for the comparison of events, which is required to sort them (as the start and end dates are not comparable). To allow for comparison, the most possible general dates for these references are derived. Since a "PRESENT_REF" refers to the present moment, it can be deducted that it represents the moment in which the text was written in, as that is the time context in which the author wrote it. Thereby, the decision was made to produce as a general date for "PRESENT_REF" a date that is the reference point provided by the user. As the reference point is supposed to be the date in which the text was written in. Note that the user can change the reference point to when-ever they would like, not just the assumed written date of the document.

For "PAST_REF" and "FUTURE_REF" a range of dates is used, i.e. a start and end date. For the former, the start date of the era is used, i.e. 01-01-0001, and an end date to the reference point is used. This is because it can be determined that an ambiguous mention of the past would fall anywhere within that time period, however an exact determination cannot be made due to the temporal expression not being precise enough. For the latter, the start date is the present moment, i.e. the base date, and the end date is the last possible allowable date in the system, i.e. 31-12-9999. This is because it would be appropriate for a mention of the future to refer to a moment between now (i.e. the present moment in which the text is presumed to be written in), and until the end of times. However as a limitation to our system, the end of times is considered the date 31-12-9999. A snippet of the implementation of the algorithm is presented in Figure 6.1.

Note that even though the StanfordCoreNLP library is well documented, it was difficult to find all the different outputs for the normalization of NER dates. It was after the discovery of Stanfords TimeML usage that a document describing the possible outputs of normalized NER dates was found⁹.

⁹<http://www.timeml.org/timeMLdocs/TimeML.xsd>

```

private ArrayList<Date> getDate(String date) {
    ...
    /* Set up variables for processing */
    if (onlyPastRefPattern.matcher(date).matches()) {
        //past so make range from 0001-01-01 -> base date (range)
        if (yearMonthDayPattern.matcher(baseDate).matches()) {
            //base date has the format yyyy-MM-dd
            /*split it and set the values in date1,month1, year1 of
the start year 01-01-0001*/
            /*and the end date values of date2, month2, year2
to the base date data*/
            ...
        }
    } else if (onlyPresentRefPattern.matcher(date).matches()) {
        if (yearMonthDayPattern.matcher(baseDate).matches()) {
            //base date has the format yyyy-MM-dd
            /*set day1,month1,year1 to the data in the base
date data*/
            ...
        }
    } else if (onlyFutureRefPattern.matcher(date).matches()) {
        if (yearMonthDayPattern.matcher(baseDate).matches()) {
            //set the day1,month1,year1 to the base date data
        }
        //set year2,month2,day2 to the end year 31-12-9999
    }
    ...
    /* date1,date2,month1,month2,year1,year2 are
then used appropriately to generate dates used
for the event that holds this Timeline Date */
}

```

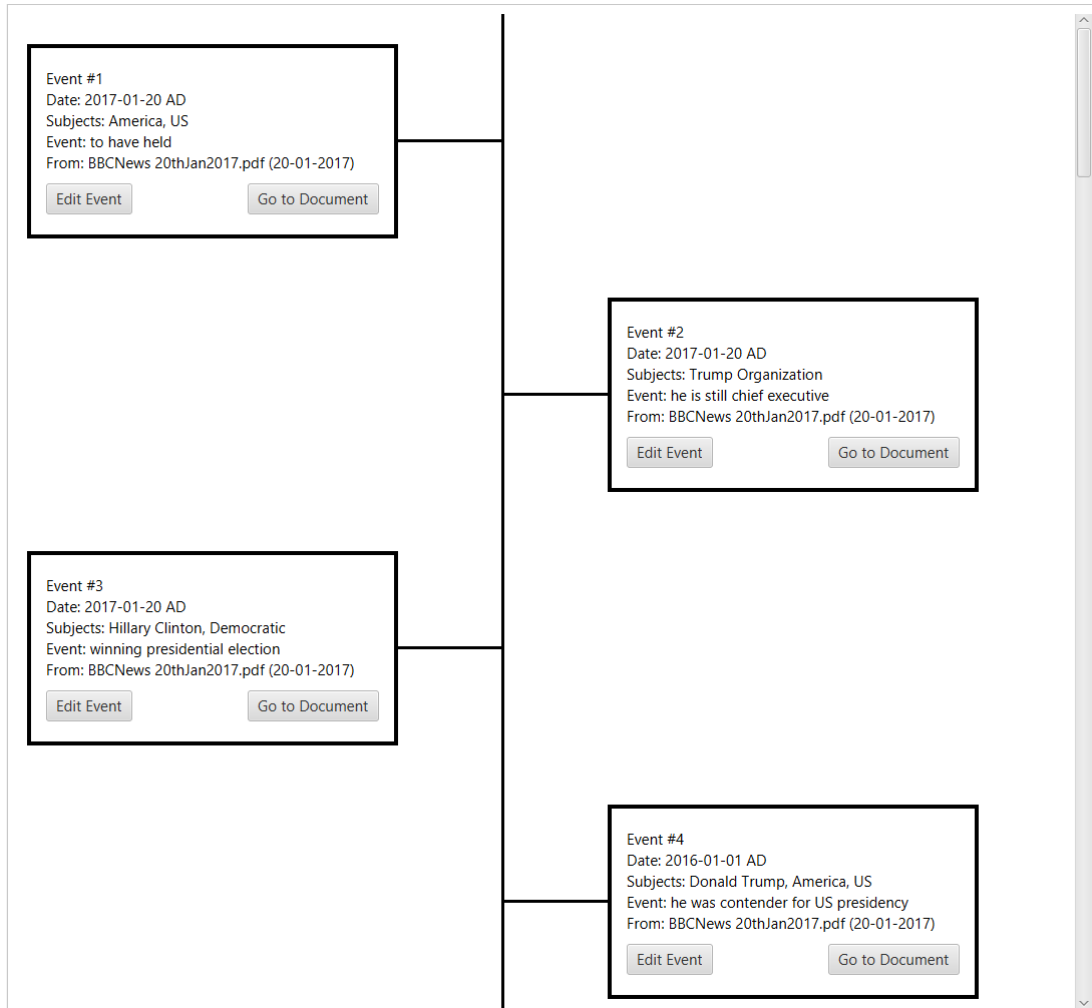
Figure 6.1: Part of the Implementation of Resolution of Normalized NER Dates

6.3.2 Encapsulated Timeline View

The initial representation of the events was a traditional timeline (see Figure 6.2). This view is effective when the events are on separate time periods, as it presents them one after the other in a sequence. However, when there are multiple events that occur during the same time period, they still appear one after the other. The issue is that unless the user specifically looks at the dates associated to the event, it is not possible for them to determine that the events

occurred in the same time period, but instead that one occurred after the other. This clearly violates the visibility objective of the system. A solution to this issue is to provide two views: the traditional timeline view which is effective at displaying events that have disjoint dates, and another view where the dates encapsulate the events. For example, if there is more than one event that occurs on the "25-01-2017", then instead of listing them both, one after the other, they are grouped visually by their date. However, visually grouping the events may lead to a "bin-packing" problem. The "bin-packing" problem consists of a set of bins, in this case a set of graphical views, which need to be fit in a finite space, in this case a box of fixed width and height. To deal with this issue, scrollbars can be used in the containers that hold the event layouts. Scrollbars allow for a container to be of infinite height (and/or width). Thus, being able to place the bins (graphical representations of events) in the container without considering the space limit. This view has been given the name "Range View". It requires placing the Results (the events of a set of documents) in Ranges (a data structure that can have one date, or a start and end date). The algorithm was discussed in the Design Chapter.

Figure 6.2: Screenshot of the Traditional View of the Timeline of Events



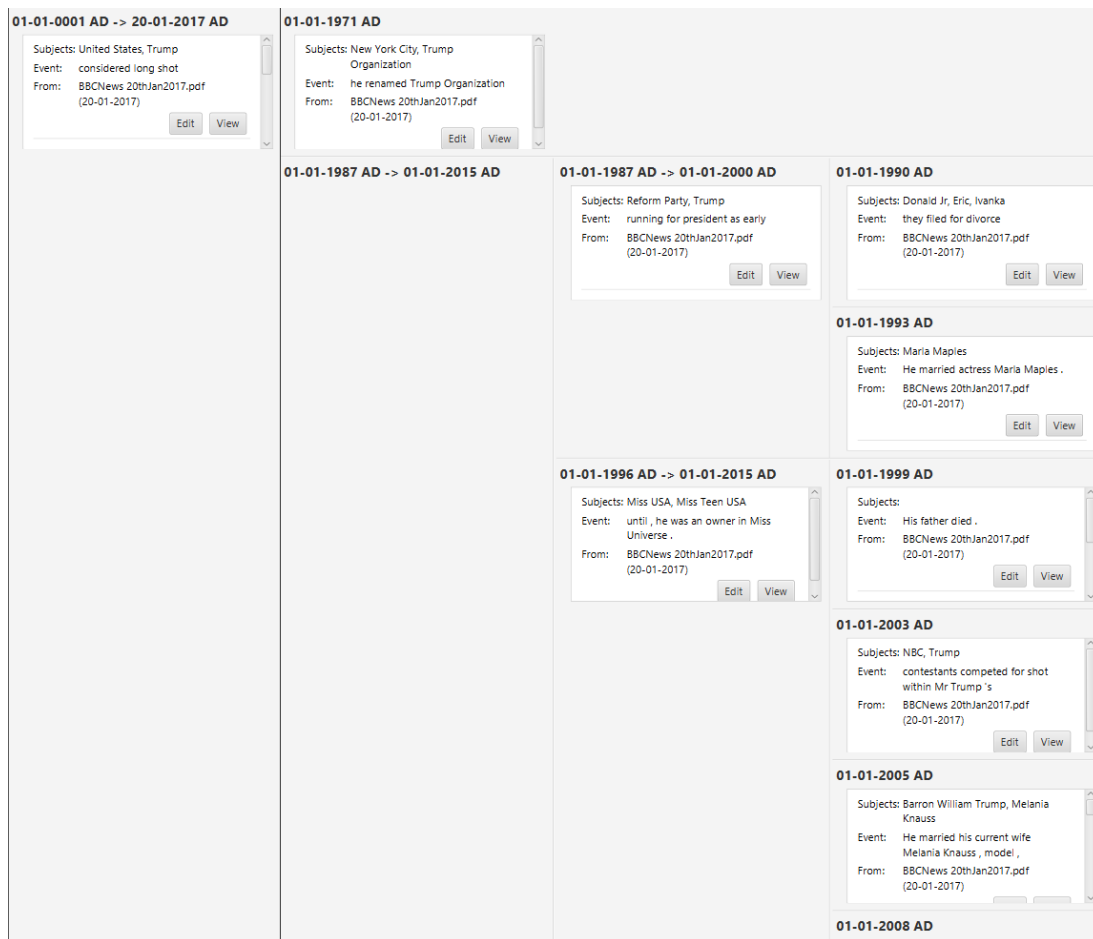
The algorithm behind the Range View, is having a list of Ranges, where each Range is a root node of a Tree of Ranges. Each Range may hold zero or more Results (i.e. events), and a set of children Ranges (zero or more). When the timeline needs to be produced, the list of Range roots is iterated over, assuming the list of Ranges has been sorted in the order of the start date. For each a GridPane is made. A GridPane is a layout which consists of rows and columns that can contain subviews (where a subview is a view, i.e. a graphical component). In the first column, the current Range's data is placed (i.e. the date(s) and the Results held), and in the second column the layouts of the child Ranges are recursively set. The algorithm is presented in Figure 5. It is carried out for each Range root in the forest of Ranges.

Algorithm 5: Pseudo-Code of the Recursive Production of the Range Layout

```
1 function getRangeLayout(list l);  
   Input : A list of Ranges, of size  $n$ , to add in the first column  
   Output: a layout that encapsulates the Ranges passed in the input, and their child  
           Ranges  
2 GridPane toReturn;  
3 toReturn set the number of rows to the size of the input;  
4 toReturn set the number of columns := 2;  
5 for  $i := 0 \rightarrow n$  do  
6   Range := input list at  $i$ ;  
7   set up layout for this Range, and set it in toReturn at position  $(i, 0)$ ;  
8   set its column span at  $(i, 0)$  to remaining;  
9   get layout for the children of this Range := getRangeLayout(range.children);  
10  set this layout in toReturn at position  $(i, 1)$ ;  
11 end  
12 return toReturn;
```

In the implementation, it was decided to include 3 columns, so as to have a separator between a Range and its children. Thereby, improving the visibility of the timeline, as the user can differentiate between the Results of a range of dates, and the Results of a sub-range. The individual layout of a Range is listing the Results it holds, and the start and end date for this Range. An example look of the Range View can be found in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3: Screenshot of the Range View of the Timeline of Events



6.3.3 Incorrect Input Documents

An important issue relating to the input documents is their format and grammar. NLP tools such as StanfordCoreNLP require certain constraints to be applied onto the input documents to be able to annotate them. These tools apply grammatical rules, thereby it is important that documents are grammatically correct to be able to correctly annotate them. This was discussed in the Background Chapter with a discussion on NLP tools being applied to Tweets. For this implementation, the documents are required to be in English as only the English models are loaded for the Stanford tool. Other languages are supported by the tool¹⁰ (such as German, and Spanish), however these require their own models. In addition, the algorithm applied to produce the summaries only works on English written text, as it uses the English grammar. In the future, the system can be extended to other languages.

An issue discovered, was that sentences that are separated by a period, but are not followed

¹⁰<http://stanfordnlp.github.io/CoreNLP/human-languages.html>

by a space, are treated as a single sentence. Thereby, it may be possible that only half the events are detected, if every two sentences are only separated by a period (and not a space). In addition, the summary would be applied to second sentence, as the rule of the algorithm details that the lowest-leftmost "S" subtree (i.e. sub-sentence) is picked. The start and end date, would therefore be the lowest date of the two events, and the highest date of the two events, due to how the dates of events are encapsulated in a TimelineDate object (that parses Normalized NER Dates, and updates the start and end dates it holds if a new minimum or maximum is found).

This issue cannot be prevented, as it would require manipulation of the input documents, and it can be the case that the user does not want the system to manipulate the input, but rather process it. Hence, it is advised to users to ensure the documents are in grammatically correct English, for the best results possible. Since the system will be used by law professionals, that are handling formal documents, it can be assumed that these documents would follow this format. -ner dates (explain, then present how to solve it through examples of code) -new timeline view (present how to solve it through examples of code) -minor issue of incorrect text

6.4 Testing

Unit Tests were the testing focus in this project. A Unit Test is when individual units (or pairs) of source code of a system are tested to determine whether they are working correctly (cite). As the system was implemented in Java, the library used to aid this is JUnit¹¹. Unit tests are primarily done on the back-end of a system, as the focus is on correctness in the logic, not in the UI. Automated tests carried out on the UI are called Instrumentation Tests. They involve emulating the users interaction with the system, i.e. pressing a button or filling in a text field. Both Unit and Instrumentation tests are automated, such that they are carried out one after the other without the involvement of the developer.

The reason as to why only Unit Tests were used, is that the systems primary focus is its processing of documents, and not its graphical representation. The representation is used to display the results, however, the system could also be used to process texts. Thus, the resulting intermediate JSON would be used in a third-party visual representation. Therefore, Instrumentation tests were not carried out.

A total of 35 tests were developed. The main advantage of these, is that when new features are developed, tests are ran to ensure the rest of the system functions as expected. If the test

¹¹<http://junit.org/junit4/>

cases are extensive and appropriate, then it can be assumed that the system will work correctly with the new features. In addition, this is aided through the use of Git (in Git flow), where the features are developed on separate branches, and are only merged to the current working version of code if all the tests pass.

The focus was on the Engine (the component that takes as input text, and produces lists of Results), the processing of Files (test files were used in this case), the production of Ranges, the changing of the systems states throughout the processing task, the parsing of Normalized NER dates, and the production of JSON's from a list of Results (a timeline). Tests perform assertions. Assertions are when an actual output of code is checked with an expected output.

Tests were divided into three categories: a simple test, an intermediate test, and a complex test (where all possibilities of input are tested). For example, for the production of Ranges, the complex test case expects multiple Range trees of different heights to be produced. Due to the benefit of Gradle, the tests can be ran using the command:

gradlew test¹².

In the build command, Gradle will not only run the test cases, but also produce the executable JAR which can be used to distribute the system as an executable to its non-developer users.

6.5 UI

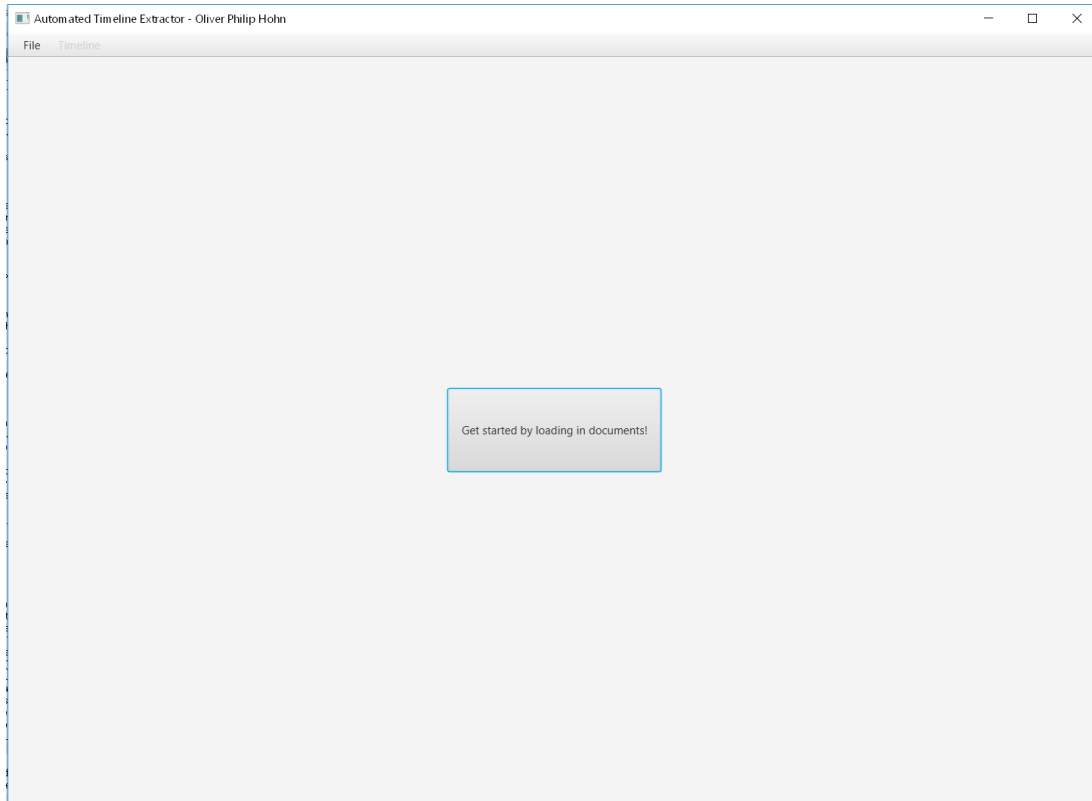
//implementation of the UI.

From the wireframes presented in the Design Chapter, the actual User Interfaces(UI) was developed. The screenshots of the different windows are presented in the Figures below (see Figures 6.4, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, and 6.6). Note that the interfaces provide the requested functionality through the use of buttons and menus. Color is missing as the focus was on functionality, visibility and simplicity, instead of the UI being aesthetically pleasing. The system is aimed to be used for task completion, not enjoyment. The UI was, thus, developed to accomplish these tasks.

Note that the Range view (see Figure 6.3) is zoomable (i.e. can zoom in/out). This allows the user to have a broader image of the Range View, if it is required. Therefore, allowing the user to obtain a general picture of what occurred.

The data presented of an event includes its subjects (key words) and summary. As the events are encapsulated in Ranges, it is sufficient to show the date(s) for the Range at the top. This demonstrating to the user that the following events occurred during the given time period. This separates meta data (e.g. when an event occurred), from the actual event, which

Figure 6.4: Screenshot of the Start Up View



is what occurred in the event. Each event is accompanied by two buttons, the operations are: to edit the event (which includes deleting it, as can be seen from Figure 6.5), and viewing its document.

An advantage of the Traditional View over the Range view, is memory efficiency. Since the Range view has the function of being zoomable, due to programming language constraints, it cannot be implemented through a ListView. A ListView is a layout data structure where objects of a list are placed row by row. The ListView is memory efficient. It only produces the layout for a row when it needs to be shown. For example, for a list of 10000 items, it is very expensive to hold in memory the individual layouts of 10000 rows, especially if only 5 are being shown. Instead, only the 5 that are being shown are held in memory, and the rest are generated when needed. This is not the case with the Range View, due to it having the zoom function, and thus not being a ListView. As the memory capacity of personal computing systems (where the tool is intended to be used, but is not limited to) is large, this would not be an issue for the processing of tens or hundreds of events, however for larger sets this would cause memory issues. For large sets of events, the traditional view is recommended.

Figure 6.5: Screenshot of the Edit Dialog View

Editing Event

Event #1

Date: 01-01-1987 -> 01-01-2000

Subjects: (+)

Reform Party Trump

Event:

Maximum 100 characters

Delete Save Cancel

6.6 Important Algorithms

//highlight algorithm implementation: processing of files through semaphores, adding to ranges, pdf save and json save

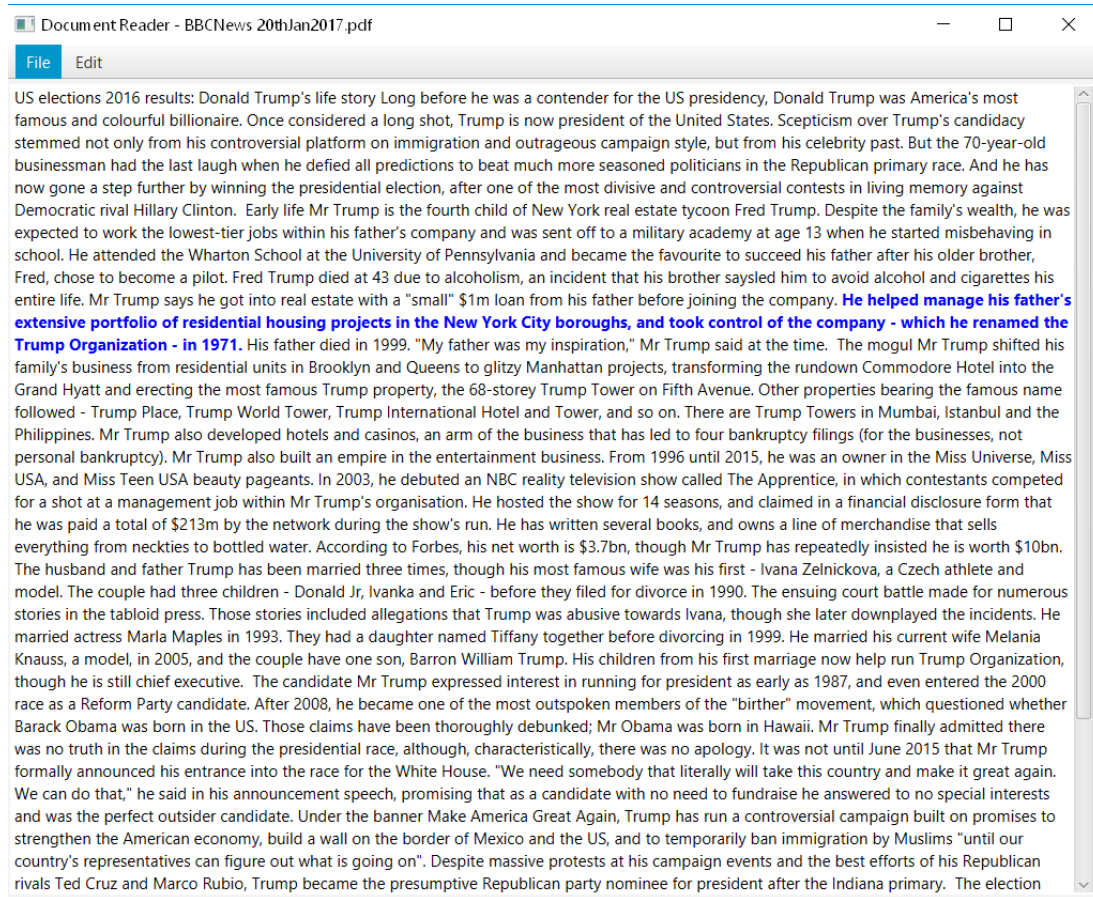
This section presents note-worthy algorithms, in specific their implementation.

6.6.1 Processing Files

The pseudo-code of processing files was presented in the Design Chapter. The use of semaphores was also mentioned. Semaphores enforce that only n processes can acquire their lock, with the $n+1$ process having to wait until another process releases its lock. However, the implementation is not trivial.

The system must allow a certain maximum number of threads to be ran in parallel to process documents. Processes must not fall in deadlock, which is when the processes are indefinitely

Figure 6.6: Screenshot of the Document Viewer



allowing other processes to run, such that no run, or starve, which is when a process waits indefinitely to run. This can occur when semaphores are used, and they are not released when a process finishes its task. To ensure the semaphores are released, a callback is given to the threads, which is to be used at the end of the threads parallel processing. If an error occurs, the semaphore is still released, allowing the next thread to run. Multi-threading precautions must be considered. When the callback is used, data is also transferred (specifically the Results of processing the document) which can cause concurrency issues when two threads attempt to add a result list at the same time. Fortunately, Java provides the **synchronized** keyword for methods (see Figure 6.7). This ensures that no two threads may run the method at the same time. One thread must finish its execution of the method before another one can begin its execution.

```

public synchronized void callBack(ArrayList<Result> results, FileData fileData) {
    //we finished processing a file
    filesToGo--; //one less to look at
    //add the results to the list held
    this.results.addAll(results);
    //release semaphore
    semaphore.release();
    //check if we have processed everything,
    //if so release the finished semaphore
    if (filesToGo == 0) {
        //has processed
        BackEndSystem.getInstance().setSystemState(SystemState.PROCESSED);
        //has returned the results so we finished
        BackEndSystem.getInstance().setSystemState(SystemState.FINISHED);
        semaphoreFinished.release();
        //value is now 1, so the thread that was acquiring can continue
    }
}
}

```

Figure 6.7: Implementation of Callback after Files have been processed

Threading precautions have been taken throughout the project. Where sets of data are processed by threads, it was ensured that the data items in the set can be processed independently of each other. This cannot be possible in all situations, in such cases synchronization and semaphores are used to ensure concurrency.

6.6.2 Building Ranges

The algorithm for building Ranges out of Results was presented in the Design Chapter. However, it was not described how it can be checked whether or not a Result can be added to an existing Range. When a Result is attempted to be added to a pre-existing Range, a **add()** (see Figure 6.8) method is called. In this method, it is initially checked whether the Result should be added to this Range. This check involves looking at the dates of the Result and checking whether they are fully or partially encapsulated by the Range's dates. If this is not the case, then the attempt of adding the Result fails. If the Result's dates are encapsulated by the Range then it will be checked whether the Result can be added to any of the nodes of the Range tree. This would occur if there is any node in the tree that holds the same exact dates as the Result. If this is the case then the Result will be added to that node. If this is not the case, then it can

be determined that the Result belongs to this Range, however its position in the tree needs to be created. It can be the case that there is a Range that partially encapsulates the Result, if so the Range would need to be expanded. In both cases, the tree needs to be traversed to find the optimal position for the Result.

```
public boolean add(Result result) {
    TimelineDate timelineDate = result.getTimelineDate();
    //check constraints
    if (!shouldAdd(timelineDate)) {
        //check constraints if we can even add to this range
        return false;
    }
    //attempt to add through an existing range
    Range toAdd = checkCanAdd(result);
    if (toAdd != null) {
        //add to the results of the given range
        toAdd.results.add(result);
        return true;
    }
    //now we try to extend the range
    return createRangeAndAdd(result);
}
```

Figure 6.8: Implementation of Adding Results to a Range

6.6.3 Saving Results

Saving the results of the processed documents, is divided into two parts: saving them as a PDF, or as a JSON.

In the PDF, the file that is saved, is a graphical representation of the events, using the traditional timeline view. It is aided through the use of the Apache PDFBox and Commons library. The libraries work like a painting tool. The pages are canvases, where lines and text can be drawn on at specific positions. These positions are given by coordinates (x, y) , where the top left of the page is the origin, i.e. $(0, 0)$, and the x values increment towards the right of the page, and the y values towards the bottom of the page. To build a dynamic system, that can create a pdf for any number of Results, certain constraints are required. For example the maximum number of events to be displayed on each page, and the size of the text of the summaries and subjects (i.e. how many characters). Due to tool limits, it is not possible to continue on the next page of the PDF document, hence events cannot overflow onto the next

page. However, since the text that is used in the summary should be short, assumptions can be made. For example, the maximum size of a container that holds an event. Knowing this, it allows the drawing of containers of maximum size on the document. Thus, ensuring that all the data for each event will fit in a container. Therefore, the system can be considered as drawing containers on the page and filling them with their event data. This is repeated for all the events, and where necessary creating a new PDF page to fill more events. Hence the task, has been broken down to moving the x and y positions, writing text (the event data), and drawing the rectangle (container). Since in the traditional view, the layout of the events are one on the left of the page and the other on the right of the page, the tasks have to be changed minimally to allow for this. In Figure 6.9, the implementation, to draw an event on the right of the page, is provided.

```
private void drawOddEvent(Result result, PDPageContentStream contentStream, int
    position) throws IOException {
    //initially y is the top right where this needs to
    //be shown, x starts from the middle
    currentY -= padding; //add some padding to y
    currentX = (int) widthOfPage / 2;
    contentStream.moveTo(currentX, currentY);
    //write the text for the Event
    int lengthOfHorLine = (int) ((widthOfPage / 2) - (padding + widthOfRectangle));
    currentX += lengthOfHorLine;
    writeText(result, contentStream, currentX, position);
    //draw the rectangle to surround the text
    drawRectangle(contentStream, currentX, currentY - heightOfRectangle);
    //draw the horizontal line connecting event timeline
    currentY -= heightOfRectangle / 2;
    contentStream.moveTo(currentX, currentY);
    contentStream.lineTo(widthOfPage / 2, currentY);
    contentStream.stroke();
    currentY -= (heightOfRectangle / 2) + padding;
}
```

Figure 6.9: Implementation of drawing for a Result in the PDF timeline

The JSON implementation, is aided by the use of the Google GSON library. JSON provides a clearly defined key-value data format that can be interpreted by any system. The advantage of this library is that it allows for a flexible creation of JSONs. Specifically, it allows the developer to specify how an object of a given type should be serialized (see Figure 6.11), i.e.

how its data should be extracted into JSON format. In this case, the objects to be serialized are Result objects. The data extracted from a Result includes its start and end date, its list of subjects, its summary, and its file data. This is done through an adapter. The adapter defines how the data of the Result object is extracted, and how a JSON Object is created. For a list of Results, this will be carried out for each Result, and thereby, a resulting list of JsonObjects will be produced, i.e. a JsonArray. This can then be saved by the user in a file, and can then be interpreted by any third-party system. The format of a JSON of a Result is given in Figure 6.10. Where G, in the dates, is the ERA (i.e. BC or AD) of the date.

```
{
  "date1": "dd-MM-yyyy G",
  "date2": "dd-MM-yyyy G",
  "subjects": [],
  "event": String,
  "from": {
    "filename": String,
    "baseDate": "dd-MM-yyyy"
  }
}
```

Figure 6.10: Structure of Result (event) JSON

```

public JsonElement serialize(Result src, Type typeOfSrc, JsonSerializationContext
    context) {
    //json object for this result
    JsonObject jsonObject = new JsonObject();
    //adding the range dates (which can be null)
    /* whenever a value is null, the key-pair will not be included in the final JSON */
    jsonObject.addProperty("date1", src.getTimelineDate().getDate1FormattedDayMonthYear
        ());
    jsonObject.addProperty("date2", src.getTimelineDate().getDate2FormattedDayMonthYear
        ());
    //adding the subjects
    JsonArray subjectJsonArray = new JsonArray();
    for (String subject : src.getSubjects()) {
        subjectJsonArray.add(subject);
    }
    jsonObject.add("subjects", subjectJsonArray);
    //adding the event
    jsonObject.addProperty("event", src.getEvent());
    /*adding the file data (excluding the path, since this can be used on other system
        where files are elsewhere)*/
    JsonObject fromJsonObject = new JsonObject();
    FileData fileData = src.getFileData();
    if (fileData != null) {
        fromJsonObject.addProperty("filename", fileData.getFileName());
        fromJsonObject.addProperty("baseDate", fileData.
            getCreationDateFormattedDayMonthYear());
    }
    jsonObject.add("from", fromJsonObject);
    return jsonObject;
}

```

Figure 6.11: Implementation of the Serializer used in the Adapter to generate JSON for a list of Results

-main algorithms: for building events, building ranges, pdf save, json save, processing files

Chapter 7

Professional and Ethical Issues

Either in a separate section or throughout the report demonstrate that you are aware of the **Code of Conduct & Code of Good Practice** issued by the British Computer Society and have applied their principles, where appropriate, as you carried out your project. -no user data is collected (public interest) -project will be open source so the licenses applied can be used, however commercial would require a specific license -how dealt with ethical approval? (news-papers used, etc.) -in analysis kept testers anonymous -if used on cloud and use inappropriate setting may use a lot of resources

During the development and evaluation of the system, great care has been taken to follow the Code of Conduct¹ and Code of Good Practice² issued by the British Computer Society. This must be done to avoid serious legal and ethical problems.

Importance has been given to state explicitly which software libraries and academic papers have been used throughout the development. The information and services of these have been used and modified to meet the requirements of the project. All the software produced consists of my own work, except where it is explicitly said otherwise.

As the system is intended to be released as open-source, it has been confirmed that the libraries allow this. If the system were to be used commercially, a license would have to be produced that would encapsulate the project and its libraries.

The developed system does not collect user data, thereby abiding to the public interest of the Code of Conduct. In addition, for the evaluation phase it was checked whether ethical approval would be required. It is not. Since the test participants are kept completely anonymous, and the data sources used, are publicly available.

¹<http://www.bcs.org/category/6030>

²<http://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/cop.pdf>

It should be noted that if the system is moved onto a server to produce timelines from large sets of documents, the processing power used would increase substantially, and may affect other systems running on the same machine. This can be avoided by modifying the settings of the system, e.g. the number of threads used, to reduce the number of processes running.

Chapter 8

Evaluation

-present how did analysis, why?, other options (relate to work) -results of analysis -conclusion

As was presented in the Design chapter, the objectives of the system are: visibility, efficiency, and effectiveness. To evaluate each of these the chapter is split into three sections. Each section addresses each keypoint.

8.1 Visibility

-explain expert heuristic -knowledge of expert -that this is the least important of the three as the ui can be built by third party and only processing is used.

To evaluate the visibility of a system a expert heuristic aided by the Nielsen usability heuristics [7]. It involves having an expert evaluate the user interface of a system using a set of principles, which have been tested, and then discussing the system for each principle in a document. The evaluation can be formal or informal. The former was chosen to evaluate the system, because it was done at the end of the development. Informal evaluation is done when analysis needs to be done during the iterations of design, as it provides feedback sooner and allows for designers to discuss the problems. Formal evaluation is done, usually, at the end of the development cycle when the system is evaluated on whether it met its objective. In this case, visibility. The heuristics do not only focus on visibility, as some principles focus on error prevention. However, these are also important for a system that is to be used by any kind of user.

Other heuristics exist, however the Nielsen set is the most known set¹. Another prominent design evaluation are cognitive walkthroughs. They consist of giving experts scenarios to go

¹<https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/heuristic-evaluation.html>

through, and during their progression they answer three questions related to design issues (cite).

Due to time constraint, one in-depth expert heuristic could only be carried, as opposed to having multiple experts that discuss with each other to produce one document that discusses the principles in context of the system. The expert has had experience in using the principles, and has knowledge in the field of Computer Science. It should be noted that because of the background knowledge of the expert, they are not considering the system from a completely novice user perspective. However, an expert must only consider the principles and not how the system functions. The experts possible bias is a known problem with expert heuristic, however design is a subjective area. It is hoped that the main issues of the system are spotted by the expert user, as the principles are intended to guide them.

The data collected from the expert review is qualitative data. Qualitative data are statements, observations and subjective judgements. In this case, they are possible issues in the system with possible solutions, or ways the system fulfills certain principles. It is different to the quantitative data collected in the Effective section.

The main principles for this system are visibility, match with the real world, consistency and error prevention. Where the main focus is on visibility. For the visibility principle, where the focus is on the user knowing the systems state, the design succeeds according to the expert. The user is aware of the actions available to them as the system progresses through its states of processing files. This is from when the system only provides loading actions to the user on startup, to when they are being processed by not providing any functions at that time, to functions relevant to editing the timeline when its produced. The use of red borders in input fields and the disabling of submit buttons when the data inserted is not valid, informs the user of an error in their input, which has to be fixed to proceed. In addition, this design matches the error prevention principle, as it informs the user of input errors, and highlights where the error was made for them to change it. In the case where the user does not know what the correct input is, hints are given. These consist of the date format or by how much they exceeded the allowed character limit for the summary of an event. These are consistently used throughout the system, along with the clearly marked and always to the left "Cancel" buttons to allow the user to not commit their changes. In addition, confirmation dialogs are used whenever costly actions are being performed (e.g. the deletion of an event, subjects for an event or the removal of documents from the timeline). These along with the non-technical language used throughout the project should allow the system to be accessible by any user.

The expert suggested to improve the visibility in the removal of subjects in the edit dialog,

as pressing on the subjects to prompt the delete dialog is not intuitive. In addition, the zooming in function of the range view should be accompanied with an indicator showing the amount of zoom by a percentage value, as this is standard with any zooming in function in other systems (e.g. Adobe Reader, Microsoft Paint, etc.). To aid the user in recognising the actions available to them suggestions were made to include icons for actions (e.g. an upload icon for loading documents). A minor suggestion in the processing files was to change the progress bar, to a horizontal bar that fills up as documents are processed. However, these are not as accurate as one file can require more or less processing power and time than another document, but in the progress bar they would have equal impact.

From this evaluation it can be determined that the system fulfilled its aim of producing a system that is visible to its users. Users are informed of the systems progress during the processing of documents, and are assured that the system is not frozen during this time. They are provided with clearly marked exists and cancels, along with indicators of where errors have been made and how these can be solved. It should be noted that while this was one of the main objectives of the system, it is the least important one, as the system could be used to produce event data as an intermediate JSON, which is then used in a 3rd-party graphical representation. Therefore, the graphical representation of the system should be useful and effective for the user that decides to not use a 3rd-party representation. However, these are welcomed in the system.

8.2 Efficiency

Efficiency relates to the time it takes for the system to produce an answer. A system is efficient if it produces a result in an appropriate amount of time based on its input.

A way to evaluate this is to run the system on different inputs and record the time taken to produce a timeline. However, the time recorded is specific not only to the machine that the system is being run on, but also the other workload the machine has. If the system is ran with many other 3rd party tasks running in the background then the time will be longer than if it is the only process running. In addition, different machines with different hardware parts may be faster or slower depending on the number of cores of the system, and how the workload is scheduled (cite). The Operating System could also affect this (cite). Also, not all different input sizes can be tested, as the document set size can be infinite. The solution is to consider the time complexity of the main algorithms of the system. The time complexity of an algorithm is, the number of operations that need to be carried out for an input of a given size (cite). This allows to determine how well the system scales with larger inputs, by only considering how

many operations are performed as a function of the input.

Time complexity focuses on the worst case situation, and does not consider low-order operations. For example, if for an input n an algorithm performs $3n + 2$ operations, the low-order term 2 and the co-efficient 3 can be omitted. This would result in a time complexity $O(n)$ (where O is called big-Oh). In general the highest order-term is taken, and all the rest are omitted. For example, for $4n^2 + 10n + 2$ would have time complexity $O(n^2)$. The low-order terms are omitted as with a very large input, or as $n \rightarrow \infty$ the effect of the number of operations of the low-order terms becomes smaller to irrelevant. The co-efficient of the high-order term is omitted, as a machine can be 4 times faster, or 4 times slower, so it does not affect the greatly the number of operations performed.

To measure the efficiency of the system, the time complexity of the front-end (graphical part) and back-end (logical part) of the system have been computed separately, as the system can be used as a library to produce a list of events to then use in a separate 3rd party graphical representation. The complexity of each algorithm is presented in the table below (see Figure 8.1).

Algorithm	Information	Time Complexity
Document Processing	n - number of documents s - number of sentences w - number of words	$O(nsw^2)$
Range Production	n - number of Results	$O(n^2)$
Range Timeline View	n - number of Results	$O(n)$
Traditional Timeline View	n - number of Results	$O(n)$

Figure 8.1: Time complexity of main Algorithms in System

8.2.1 Back-End

Processing Documents

The two main algorithms are the processing of documents, and the production of Ranges. The complexity of each will be presented and discussed. It assumes the complexity of annotating the text in the documents is $O(w)$ (for all w words in the document), and that the documents are annotated before being processed.

The algorithm of processing documents is presented below (see Algorithm ??). For a list of n documents, it processes each. It can process x documents in parallel at a time. Depending on the users setting value x can be 1 or $x \rightarrow \infty$ (x tends to infinity). If $x \rightarrow \infty$, then it can be determined that the complexity of the algorithm is given by complexity of processing 1

document (the largest). As all documents are processed in parallel.

When a document is processed (see algorithm ??), each sentence is checked for a temporal expression, before a summary or any other processing is done. In the worst case, all sentences s in a document have to be fully processed. In such a case, the date, the subjects, and the summary need to be performed. These are all done after each other, so it can be determined that the computation complexity of processing one sentence is given by $\max(\text{getDate}, \text{getSubjects}, \text{getSummary})$. Where \max will return the greatest time complexity of the three operations.

To get the date of a sentence, with w words, each temporal expression needs to be processed. The processing of a temporal expression is linear (see the `getDate` algorithm presented in the Implementation Chapter), as it does not depend on the input directly, it performs less than 3 steps depending on how much the temporal expression can be broken up to. In the worst case, every word in the sentence is a temporal expression (which does not happen normally in a sentence of well-written document, but it can still occur, and the focus is on the worst case). Thereby, the time complexity for `getDate` is $O(w)$.

To select the subjects of a sentence, the NER(footnote) annotator is used to determine which words are of interest. In the worst case, all words can be of interest. The words are not processed when selected, thereby the time complexity of selecting all the subjects in a sentence is $O(w)$.

To create the summary of a sentence, with w words, the hedge-trimmer algorithm is used (see the Algorithm presented in the Design Chapter). In the paper, the time complexity of the algorithm is not presented as the algorithm is not explicitly provided, but rather explained. Thereby, the algorithm implemented was analyzed. As a grammatical tree is produced, and each word in the sentence is a leaf. The structure of the tree varies, however it can be assumed that the worst case grammatical tree produced is a full-binary tree. If there are w leaves in the tree (i.e. each word in the sentence is a leaf), then there are $2w - 1$ nodes in the tree. The rules of the algorithm are applied one after the other. Thereby, the time complexity is given by the rule with the highest time complexity. The first two rules traverse the tree once (at most), hence have a complexity $O(2w - 1) = O(w)$. The last step, where the tree is iteratively shortened, it is done until the tree is below the threshold. In the worst case, the threshold can be 0 (not allowed in the program as the minimum threshold value is 0). Note that the threshold value is the number of leaves. At each step, for the algorithm to continue, at least one node needs to be removed. However, if an inner node is removed then its children (including the leaf

is removed, thereby getting closer to the threshold value of 0). At each step the tree needs to be traversed. Thereby, traversing a tree (as presented earlier) has complexity $O(w)$, which is done in the worst case w times (i.e. a word is removed each time, until the word count is 0, and the threshold has been reached). Thereby, the complexity to create a summary is given by $O(w^2)$.

Therefore, the processing of a sentence with w words is given by $O(w) + O(w) + O(w^2)$, which can be simplified to $O(w^2)$ (removed low order terms). Assuming that the set of n documents is processed one after the other (i.e. at most 1 document can be produced in parallel), and that all the documents have s sentences (or less). Where each sentence has w words (or less). The running time of processing one document is $O(sw^2)$. Then the running time of processing n documents is $O(nsw^2)$. Where it is not known whether n , s , or w is the high-order term. The time complexity of annotating a document is omitted as it can be considered that $sw^2 > w$.

If the system consists of many documents, with less sentences that do not have many words, then the running time is given by $O(n)$. Which is extremely efficient for processing n documents, as it suggests that the system will increase in processing time linearly with the input size of the number of documents. Thereby, producing a high efficiency as it scales linearly with input.

Range Production

Ranges are produced with the algorithm presented in the Design Chapter (??). Based on an input of n Results, they have to be sorted, added to existing Ranges or create new Ranges, and then sort the Ranges.

Sorting Results in Java has a complexity of $O(n \log n)$. This is due to Java using merge-sort when comparing the results (footnote). Merge-sort consists of recursively breaking down the problem space in half (which produces the $\log n$ part), and then building the sequence back up (which produces the n). However, it should be noted that with sequences that are almost sorted Java 8+, will have a time complexity of $O(n)$ as it uses TimSort².

Each Result needs to be added to the trees. As before it is added to a tree, it is checked whether or not it should be added to that Range tree (by checking if the dates of the Result and Range overlap), not all trees need to be traversed completely to add the Result. In the worst case, all trees at that point need to be checked and a new tree needs to be generated to hold this Result. This can be the case when the dates of events are all completely disjoint. In such case, the amount of Trees that need to be checked increases by 1 for each Result added. Assuming

²<https://bugs.openjdk.java.net/browse/JDK-6804124>

that the time complexity to check whether a Result can be added to a tree is $O(1)$, then the time complexity is given by the sum of 0 to n . As in the first step, no Ranges exist so nothing needs to be checked. Then one tree needs to be checked, then two trees, and so on. Where at the n th Result, $n - 1$ trees need to be checked, each with a complexity $O(1)$. Thereby, the total complexity is given by the sum of 0 to n , which is given by $n(n + 1)/2$. This produces a time complexity $O(n^2 + n/2)$, which is $O(n^2)$.

After all the trees have been produced, then the Ranges need to be sorted. Where in the worst case there is one full expanded tree. Which is a tree where for each Result it had to be expanded, because the dates overlapped (but where never fully contained within each other). This leads to a full binary tree due to how the trees are expanded by producing a expanded node, with a new node that holds the new Result, and the older subtree on the left. Where the n Results are on the leaves, so there are $2n - 1$ nodes. Which using the Java sorting algorithm leads to $O(n \log n)$.

Thereby, the time complexity of the Range Production algorithm is given by its greatest complexity of its operation. Which the adding of Results to the tree. Therefore, its time complexity is $O(n^2)$.

8.2.2 Front-End

In this section the focus is on the creation of the range and traditional timeline views.

Range View

As can be seen by the algorithm to produce the Range view (??), it considers each Range separately when building it. In the worst case, there is one Range with a fully expanded tree (i.e. a full binary Range tree). If the tree holds n results, which are held at the leaves, then it has a total of $2n - 1$ nodes. For all nodes it must produce a layout, which includes the production of its children recursively. Therefore, $2n - 1$ layouts are produced, so the time complexity is given by $O(n)$.

There can be performance issues, as there are embedded layouts, and many views being created and graphically shown. However, the focus in this section is to consider the time for the system to produce the UI, not how heavy it is for the system's memory.

Timeline UI

The creation of the timeline view is trivial. For a list of n results, the layout for each row of the listview is produced. Hence, n rows are produced. This leads to a time complexity of $O(n)$.

It should be noted that the ListView used in the system does not hold all rows in memory at once. The layout of a row is only produced if it needs to be shown, i.e. that part of the ListView is visible to the user (cite). Hence, the time complexity to produce the timeline view is less than $O(n)$, as the system does not show all the Results. Only when the size of the ListView is smaller than the amount of allocated screen space it is given, will it have to produce n rows, and thereby have a time complexity of $O(n)$.

8.3 Effectiveness

-how did you test? -participants data? -safeguard participants -data set -why test this way

The effectiveness of the system is how well it is at producing timelines. This requires an experimental testing to determine whether the produced timelines are correct. The following section explains the testing process and presents the data.

8.3.1 Testing Preparations

In order to test the effectiveness of the timelines, test participants were asked to build manual timelines given by a document. These were compared with the produced timelines to check the percentage of matched events, the percentage of different dates, and the number of events that were not picked.

There is no perfect timeline. Each timeline produced by test participants will have differences. The aim is to aggregate them, and compare them to the manual timeline, in order to determine whether the system had the same general sense.

Participants were kept anonymous during the entire process, and will be kept anonymous during the presentation of data. The participants came from different academic backgrounds, were of different ages, and had different levels of exposure to the document data sets. A clear limitation in the data gathering was the availability of participants. Therefore, further data could not be gathered.

The data sets consisted of publicly available newspaper articles of different domains: politics, criminal cases, and short bibliographys. To ensure that a substantial amount of data could be gathered, articles that were rich in temporal expressions were picked. This allowed for lower

inaccuracies and determining how close the system was in producing similar timelines.

Keeping the participants anonymous, and the data sets being publicly available, led to the project not requiring an ethical approval. As well as following the provisions from BCS, in protecting user data and fair use.

8.3.2 Testing

Participants were provided the document, and were asked to select events line-by-line. It was important that the events selected came from individual sentences, to be able to compare to the system, which follows the same approach.

There was no time limit for the participants, as the aim was for them to produce correct timelines instead of producing timelines quickly, as the system would be at a clear advantage in that regard.

The manual events produced by the participants, included the date of the event and a short summary of what occurred. It would occur that the dates were sometimes ambiguous, in which case the participants identified after/before which events they believed this event occurred. This is an area that the current system lacks, as it cannot establish links between events.

The manual timelines were collected and were each compared to the system timeline for the same document. The document data set was of 3 documents.

8.3.3 Analysis

The comparison of the manual timelines consisted in: the number of events collected, the percentage of matched and unmatched sentences, the percentage of mismatched exact dates, and the similarity in summaries.

The number of events allows to determine what are the expected amount of events for a given document, and how close the system was in reaching it. This can be combined with the other data to determine if the timeline is too broad in its event generation, or too specific.

The matching and unmatching of sentences, consists of identifying which sentences the users used in their generation of events and which the system used (as in the system it holds the original sentence that produced the event). This allows to pinpoint the systems weakest components. If the events do not match the events of the manual timelines, but they come from the same sentences, then it can be determined that the issue is not in the identification of events in the documents but the production of them.

Mismatched dates consists of determining how accurate the system is in producing exact

dates for events. It is expected that the system will perform in extremely ambiguous temporal expressions that can only be linked to other temporal expressions, but cannot be pinpointed to an exact date. For test participants this is not a problem, as they understand context and can apply their own thinking to determine whether an event occurred before or after another event, even when there is no temporal data to support this. This is done by checking system event dates to participant dates for events originated from the same sentence.

The similarities in summaries determines how effective the system is in conveying the meaning of the original sentence that produced it. This is done by comparing the system produced timeline with its summary and subjects, and the manual summary, and checking whether they convey the same key idea. This is generally done by checking whether they have the same keywords.

The results of the following are presented in the table below (see Figure 8.2). The name of the article used is provided, along with its source and its published date.

It should be noted that in the vents produced by the same sentence considers the amount of events in the manual timeline that are produced from the same sentences as the events in the automated timeline. This aims to check how many of the manual timeline events are produced from the same text as the automated events.

It can be concluded that for this data set the system produced an above ?? certainty in selecting the correct event sentences. The unknown dates were not picked up by the system, as they did not contain temporal expressions, but were related to other events, which the participants detected. It is clear that the production of summaries is not optimal ?. It shows the weaknesses of decision-based headline generation algorithms, and the reason for the growing prominence of statistic based models. An effective point of the system was the production of exact dates from temporal expressions. This value is ignoring the events that were not picked by the system. For the temporal expressions selected by the system, the exact dates produced match the dates given by participants for those events.

Therefore, the system does not produce perfect summaries that convey the same meaning as the original sentence. However, the system is effective in the production of exact dates from temporal expressions, and has an over ?? in the identification of events in text.

Comparing System to Manual Timelines From...	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Difference In collected events (+/-) (19 events collected by system)	+5	-1	-3
Percentage (%) of events produced by the same sentence	66.7	83.3	87.5
Percentage (%) of events produced by other sentence	33.3	16.7	12.5
Percentage (%) of mismatched dates	0.0	6.7	0.0
Percentage (%) of similar summaries (matching keywords)	75.0	73.3	78.6
Unkown Dates of Manual Timelines From...	4	2	2

(a) BBC: US elections 2016: Donald Trump Life Story (Published 20th of January 2017)

Comparing System to Manual Timelines From...	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Difference In collected events (+/-) (4 events collected by system)	+5	0	+3
Percentage (%) of events produced by the same sentence	44.4	100.0	57.1
Percentage (%) of events produced by other sentence	55.6	0.0	42.9
Percentage (%) of mismatched dates	0.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage (%) of similar summaries (matching keywords)	50.0	50.0	50.0
Unkown Dates of Manual Timelines From...	0	0	-1

(b) Guardian: British Toddler Abducted, Police believe (Published 5th of May 2007)

Comparing System to Manual Timelines From...	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Difference In collected events (+/-) (6 events collected by system)	+2	+1	+1
Percentage (%) of events produced by the same sentence	75.0	88.5	71.4
Percentage (%) of events produced by other sentence	25.0	12.5	28.6
Percentage (%) of mismatched dates (on matched events)	33.3	16.7	0.0
Percentage (%) of similar summaries (matching keywords)	66.7	66.7	80.0
Unkown Dates of Manual Timelines From...	1	0	1

(c) Guardian: Madeleine McCann detectives arrive in Portugal to question 11 suspects (Published 9th of December 2014)

Figure 8.2: Manual vs Automated Timelines Comparison

Chapter 9

Conclusion and Future Work

The project's conclusions should list the key things that have been learnt as a consequence of engaging in your project work. For example, "The use of overloading in C++ provides a very elegant mechanism for transparent parallelisation of sequential programs", or "The overheads of linear-time n-body algorithms makes them computationally less efficient than $O(n \log n)$ algorithms for systems with less than 100000 particles". Avoid tedious personal reflections like "I learned a lot about C++ programming...", or "Simulating colliding galaxies can be real fun...". It is common to finish the report by listing ways in which the project can be taken further. This might, for example, be a plan for turning a piece of software or hardware into a marketable product, or a set of ideas for possibly turning your project into an MPhil or PhD.

-what have you learned? -how can the project be carried further (neural net for summary, building on the StanfordCoreNLP for detas depending on others)

9.1 Conclusion of Project

In conclusion, the project aimed to build an automated event extraction from documents, and then produce a timeline with the events. It was largely built on top of the StanfordCoreNLP tool, that was used to categories sets of words into predefined categories (NER annotator) and build grammatical trees (POS annotator). In addition, a trimming algorithm was used to produce headlines of sentences (i.e. summaries). The use of multi-threading allowed for parallel processing of documents, and thereby quicker result times in producing the timeline as opposed to processing the documents one after the other.

The project is aimed to be open-source, as it may be required by some of the libraries used,

and allows for its integration into other projects, where another appropriate graphical view is required, or the event data is processed even further. This is eased through the use of Gradle, and its produced wrapper, as it retrieves the appropriate libraries for the user and allows them to run the system with a simple command¹. An effort was made to produce a documented set of code, that is independent of its graphical counterpart. Especially through the use of the produced intermediate JSON for the timelines. Thereby, the back-end of the system can be integrated as an API (Application Programming Interface) into other projects.

Issues occurred, and new requirements appeared during the production of the system. These include the creation of exact dates from normalized dates, wrong input documents, and the encapsulation of events for a new timeline view. These issues were identified and appropriately solved. Ofcourse, as with any project, the initial design was changed, but through using an Agile methodoly this could be tackled and did not hinder greatly the implementation of the system. Changes include minor changes in the systems architecture to allow for the independence between the logic of the system and its graphical representation.

The use of running time complexity allowed the system's efficiency to be evaulated independently on the system in which it will run, and on the data size. Providing an expert a herusitic allowed for the evaluation of the front-end of the system, as the heuristics have been clearly tested priorly and are a standard. From the effectiveness evaluation it can be determined that the system is effective at identifying events in documents of different domains (especially newspaper articles), however the summary of sentences that are identified as events requires further work (discussed in the following section). Ofcourse, with additional time and resources new features (such as the ones discussed in the Future work section) could be developed, and more test participant data can be gathered to perform statistical analysis that can point to how significant the results gathered are (using a t-test).

9.2 Future Work

-neural bet, cloud, building on tool to link to ambiguous dates that are related to other possible known ones, edit events (machine-learning in addition to neural net)

Future works consist of areas of possible development that would improve the overall effectiveness of the system. The areas are described below. Implementing any of these would be an improvement, however the challenge is in being able to combine them all to produce a system that can be used at a commercial level, and would be unrivalled by other systems.

¹gradlew run

Neural Net - As mentioned in the Background Chapter, there is a heavy use of Neural Nets for text summarization, as can be seen from the works of [2] and [9]. These are often combined with noisy-channel models that use data sets for statistical computation of summaries. The main benefit of such a system would be to provide better summaries. The reason for them not being used in the project is the large data set required and the amount of computation done to produce a summary of one sentence.

Machine Learning - Machine learning allows a system to become more accurate by incrementing its data set, and it then being used to produce outputs (cite). It is similar to Neural Nets. In this system it could be used in the production of events, as follows. When a user edits an event it can be assumed that they produced a corrected event. This data can then be used and considered in the creation of other events by the system, to produce more precise ones. Thereby gradually improving the system.

Cloud - A cloud allows a service to be provided independent of its software and hardware (cite). This is done by deploying the system on a remote server, and giving clients an interface to interact with it. Thereby it is not required for the client to have a powerful machine, and it does not affect their systems performance. The downfall is the cost. However, the performance could be improved as specific hardware could be used to improve the efficiency and it could be combined with Machine-Learning and Neural Nets to allow the system to improve in its event identification and production.

Extending StanfordCoreNLP - An issue in the tool used, is that it does not attempt to link ambiguous temporal expressions. For example, it may be known that an event occurred before another. For example, a person has to be born first before they can work (example taken from [6]). In the system when an exact date cannot be given an ambiguous one is produced. For example, for both born and working it could produce a "PAST_REF". This would then cause the system to assign both events to the same range of dates, i.e. 0001-01-01 up to the reference point used for the document. However, these can be made more precisely. Since a person has to be born first, and be over the age of 16 to work. Thereby the range of dates for the work event could be identified more precisely. The problem arises, from the tool and the produced system considering each sentence independently of each other. It would be beneficial if the events were to be linked one after the other, such that it may not be known when someone was born or when they worked, but that the event of them working is after the event of them being born. This would require building on the NLP tool used in the system.

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Appendix A

Extra Information

A.1 Tables, proofs, graphs, test cases, ...

The appendices contain information that is peripheral to the main body of the report. Information typically included in the Appendix are things like tables, proofs, graphs, test cases or any other material that would break up the theme of the text if it appeared in the body of the report. It is necessary to include your source code listings in an appendix that is separate from the body of your written report (see the information on Program Listings below).

Appendix B

User Guide

B.1 Instructions

You must provide an adequate user guide for your software. The guide should provide easily understood instructions on how to use your software. A particularly useful approach is to treat the user guide as a walk-through of a typical session, or set of sessions, which collectively display all of the features of your package. Technical details of how the package works are rarely required. Keep the guide concise and simple. The extensive use of diagrams, illustrating the package in action, can often be particularly helpful. The user guide is sometimes included as a chapter in the main body of the report, but is often better included in an appendix to the main report. -how to set up (commands) -how to use given pieces of sample text -images

Appendix C

Source Code

C.1 Instructions

Complete source code listings must be submitted as an appendix to the report. The project source codes are usually spread out over several files/units. You should try to help the reader to navigate through your source code by providing a “table of contents” (titles of these files/units and one line descriptions). The first page of the program listings folder must contain the following statement certifying the work as your own: “I verify that I am the sole author of the programs contained in this folder, except where explicitly stated to the contrary”. Your (typed) signature and the date should follow this statement.

All work on programs must stop once the code is submitted to KEATS. You are required to keep safely several copies of this version of the program and you must use one of these copies in the project examination. Your examiners may ask to see the last-modified dates of your program files, and may ask you to demonstrate that the program files you use in the project examination are identical to the program files you have uploaded to KEATS. Any attempt to demonstrate code that is not included in your submitted source listings is an attempt to cheat; any such attempt will be reported to the KCL Misconduct Committee.

You may find it easier to firstly generate a PDF of your source code using a text editor and then merge it to the end of your report. There are many free tools available that allow you to merge PDF files.