

Archival Document Summarization And Structuring

Creating Structured, Searchable and Interactive Artefacts

From the Dharampal Archives

Ashwin Ravi

Agenda

- Overview of the problem statement in the abstract.
 - Simple definition of objectives and constraints.
- Selection of sample documents from the archives
 - Document characteristics and challenges.
- Overview of the Technical Solution
- Walkthrough of Document Segmentation and Entity Recognition
- Walkthrough of specific results.
- Summary of results and other technical details.
- An interactivity prototype using **Retrieval Augmented Generation**.
 - Asking a document questions as if it were a real human.

Problem Definition

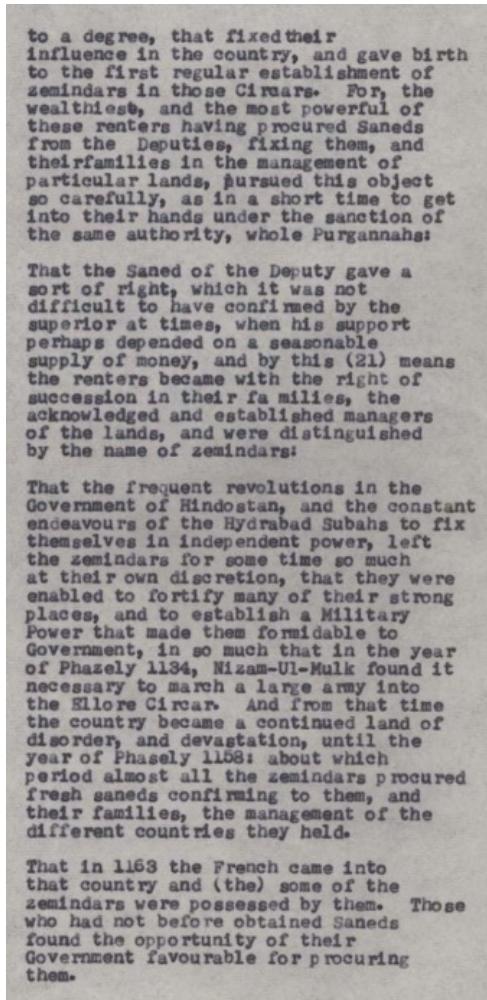
- **Core Problem:** Given a reasonably sized (10,000 – 50,000 pages) corpus of scanned archival material that can potentially be a valuable asset to enthusiasts and academics alike – how can we (a) summarize the information (b) circumscribe the information into some useful structure.
- **Constraints:**
 - All documents are scanned pdfs and are as good as images. The ‘text’ is not digitized.
 - Summarization should happen with no context, *which can then be subject to human review*.
 - Conversion of documents to computer readable text should be fully auditable.
 - Only context provided by documents can be used for summarization.
 - Costs must be *significantly lower* (< 25%) than comparable human effort.
 - Process must scale to complete in a few days.
 - No content must be generated that, if left unaudited can put the reputation of the institution in jeopardy.

Building a Prototype

- To demonstrate that this problem can be solved with tools that are readily available, 4 representative documents were chosen from the archives.
- The choice was driven by perceived difficulty of summarization and quality of the scanned text.

Category	Title	Size (Mb)	Pages
Bound Volumes	Indian Rulers and The British Government (BV-07)	20.2 MB	105 (Large)
Bound Volumes	British Rule in South India (BV-12)	19.4 MB	96 (Large)
Typescripts	Manufacture of Iron and Steel (1680 – 1825) (TS-05)	3.4 MB	15 (Small)
Cow Protection Movement	Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893 (CPM-03)	13.8 MB	50 (Medium)

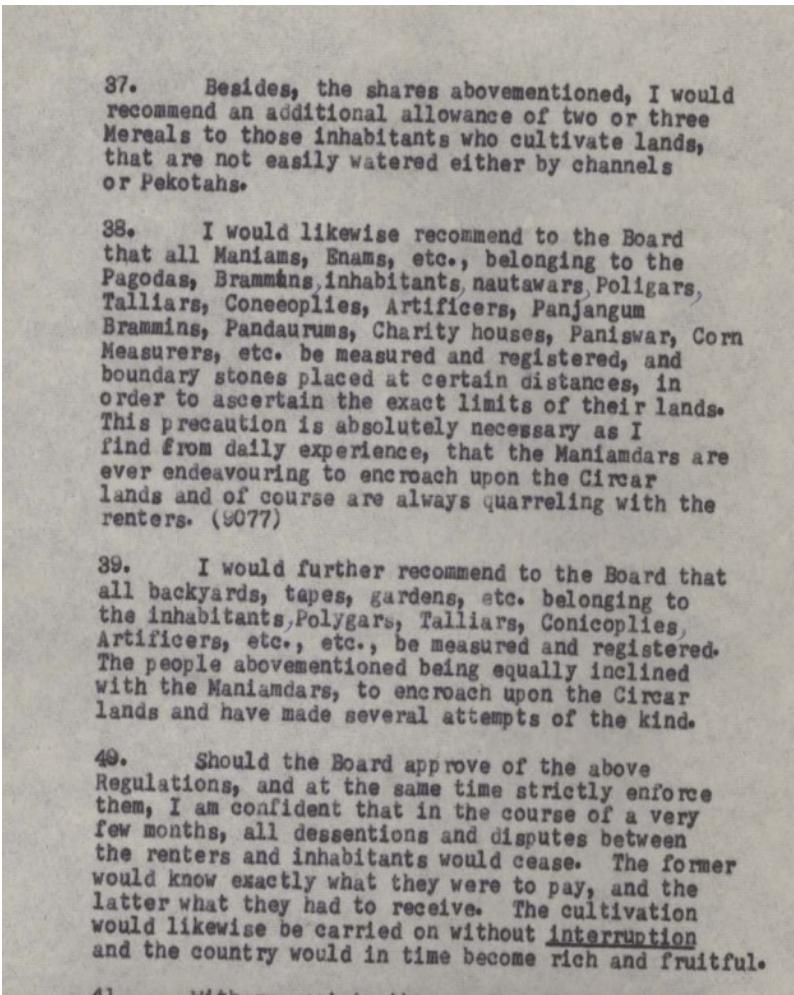
Sample Characteristics (BV-07)



Source: (BV-07) - *Indian Rulers and The British Government*

- Narrow type written text in a single column.
- Scans are blurred.
- Paragraphs are not ‘justified’
- Page numbers, footnotes and CPS watermarks act as confounders.

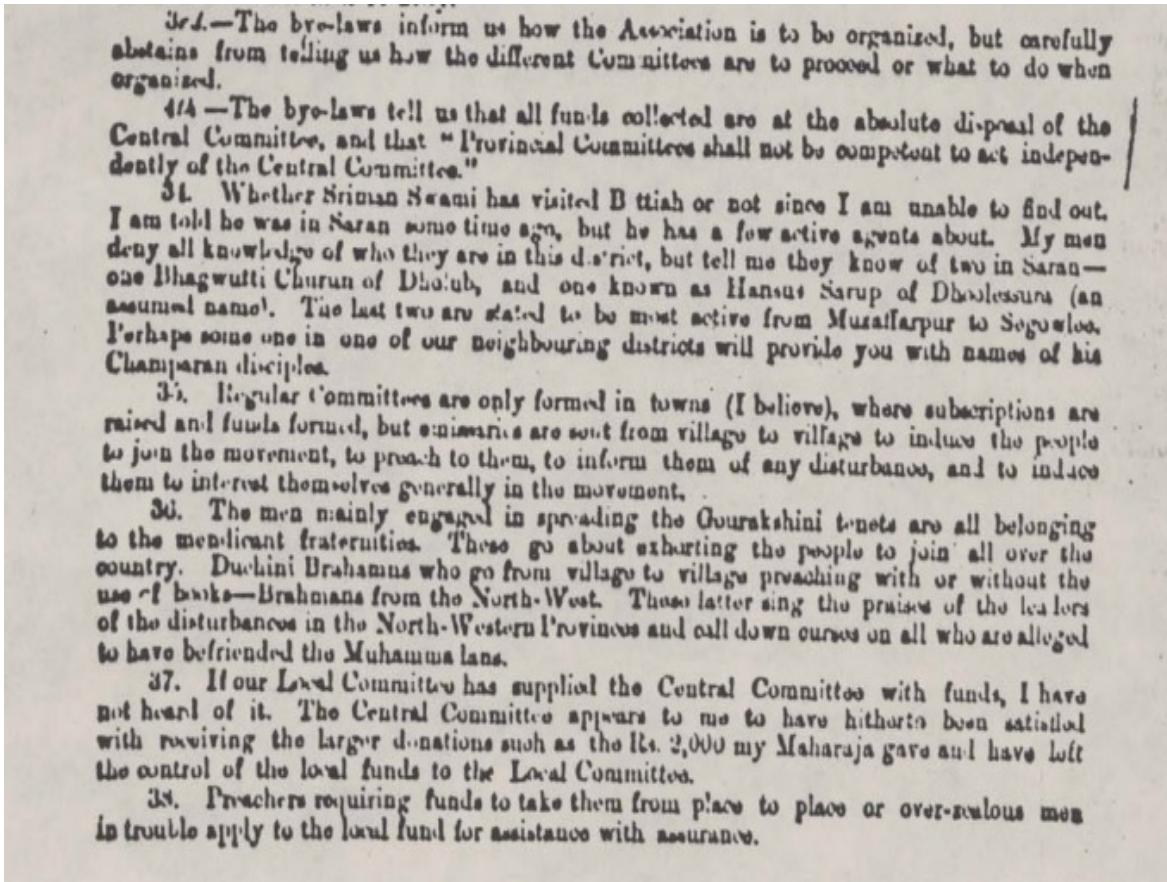
Sample Characteristics (BV-12)



Source: (BV-12) – British Rule in South India

- Text is a collection of numbered paragraphs (Type Written).
- Text is often slanted in the scans (perfect horizontal orientation of text is rare)
- 40% of the pages are blurred.

Sample Characteristics (CPM-03)



Source: (CPM-03) – *Reports of the Agitation in Bihar*
1893

- Text is often unreadable and blurred.
- High degree of slant.
- Presence of Multiple Annotations and hand drawn lines in the columns.
- Poorest quality among samples chosen.
- Text also has potentially controversial anecdotes**

Sample Characteristics (TS05)

It so happened also that my excursion to the diamond mines of Nallavilly, proved favourable (p .) in this respect, for I learned on the road, that many places in the Coonoor Zemindary, furnished iron for common use; and the nearest place to the Nallavilly, was, for obvious reasons, preferred to others more distant. This was Ramankapettah, a village 3 miles from Coonoor to the northward. The way to it from thence, is mostly through a jungle the greater part of which, lies, in the vicinity of some fine large tanks, from which in favourable seasons a very sufficient quantity of water might be furnished to produce a very plentiful harvest of paddy, were their hands enough for cultivation.

A greater number of palmera trees growing in the thickest part of the jungle, sufficiently evince the existence of former villages and greater population.

The soil in the high ground, both cultivated and uncultivated, mixed with gravel and clay, often of the kind which the Gentoos call Rawada, is clay mixed with gravel.

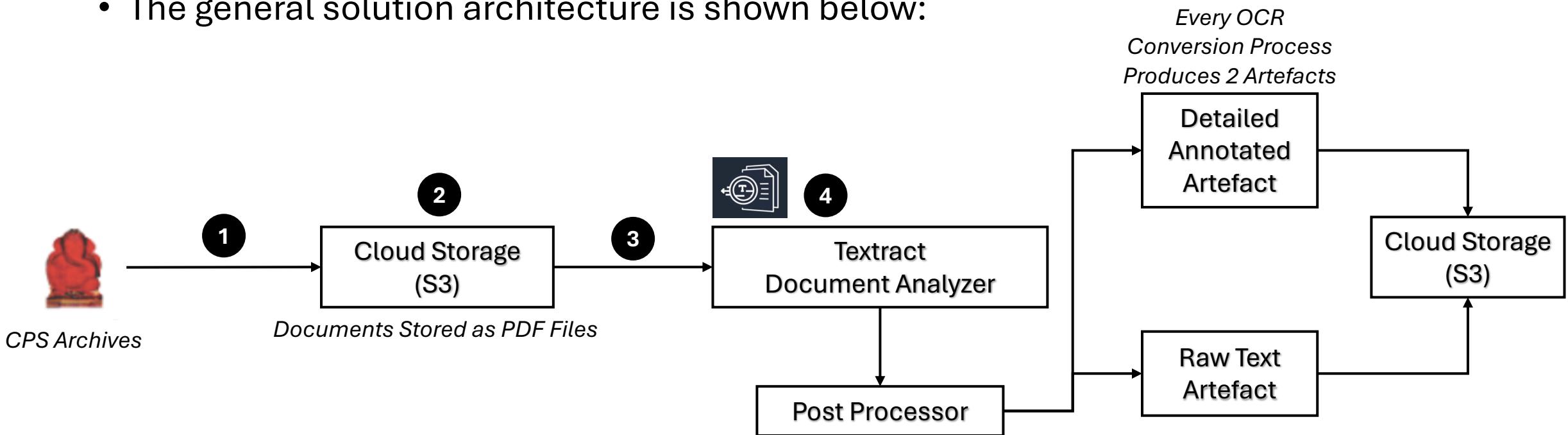
Ramankapettah(p .), has much better buildings than Coonoor. The streets are very broad, and the houses, in the fashion of the natives, good and large. A choultry, one of the best I have seen in the Circars is in the middle of the village, and a fine large tank near it, to the south affords one of the greatest comforts to the inhabitants. The nearest of the hills, are to the eastward; and forms a kind of amphitheatre, opening to the southward. In this lies the village and all the iron mines. Before the famine (G), there were besides 40 smelting furnaces, a greater number of silver and copper smiths, here, who were in a state of affluence; but their survivors are now poor and in a wretched situation.

Source: (TS-05) – Manufacture of Iron and Steel

- Text is often unreadable and blurred.
- Small document size

Technical Solution

- We used the AWS Textract API – an advanced ML based OCR system that can recognize and annotate entities (*Tables, Lines, Footnotes, Forms*) within a document and recognize the language of the document too.
- The general solution architecture is shown below:



Detailed Annotation

- Primarily used for Audit purposes and for *later human correction if needed.* *Is a record of each recognizable entity in the document.*
- Also has a confidence score that the algorithm assigns to the conversion from image to text.
- Contains detailed information on the location of text in the page (coordinates of the bounding box).

```
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Government of India,',
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},
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}
]
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'eadbb10e-0765-418b-86b9-73ffe9b34117'
]
}
],
'Page': 1}
```

Raw Text

- Is a ‘blob’ of un-formatted text that is output by the OCR process.
- Each element of the detailed annotation is processed to remove obvious distractions (such as watermarks) and then joined to form the raw text blob.

Frox II. J. B. COTTON, Esa, C.S.I., Chief Sirretary to the Governme
lcuttu, the 11/A Norrunder 1893. Six, Is submitting, for the informat
ers rota %. Solol 21 connected with the agitation against kine-killi
vision, points disclosed I in directed the correspond- am to state M
thinks that they have been dealt with in the letter to the Commissio
the Hon'ble the Adrocate-General. The question of strengthening the
er 1593. 2. I am to add that Sir Antony MacDonnell does not take the
re an enclosure to the letter from the Commissioner of Patna. I have
he Goet. of Benjul. c K O.-Rog. No. 68170-93-19-11-93 Dated Bankipor
s, Esq., Commisioner of the Patna Division, I HAVE the honour to sub
arding the anti-kine-killing your circular in this division. divido B
received a long and interesting noto from Mr. T. M. Gibbon, divisio
the report into four sections - corresponding with the various topic
lled for in the circular under reply. boen ment.-The in earliest org
ciled Benguli zamindar, in 1837, and sab- by Bhikari the district of
on till 1639. In that year Gayn was visited land Swami, whom preachi
ach the well-known Gaurak- species of scriptions religious caused w
kari. At the same time the sub- on to butchers doctrines regarding t
Vice-Presidents were respectively Babu Deputy Collector, and Babu B
the Society will fure remodelle under Babu Baldeo Lal, Pleader, and
counts wero kept,-one Mahabali Bajpai, an up-country Brahman, being

Entity Recognition Examples

to gross Revenue Pagodas 10,917-12-58 besides Pagodas 3,669-11-47 on account of Russooms and the charges of collection amounted to Pagodas 3,079-24-5, but this source of revenue hath ceased since the 1st September last when Government abolished the (9042) customs throughout the whole of the Jaghire.

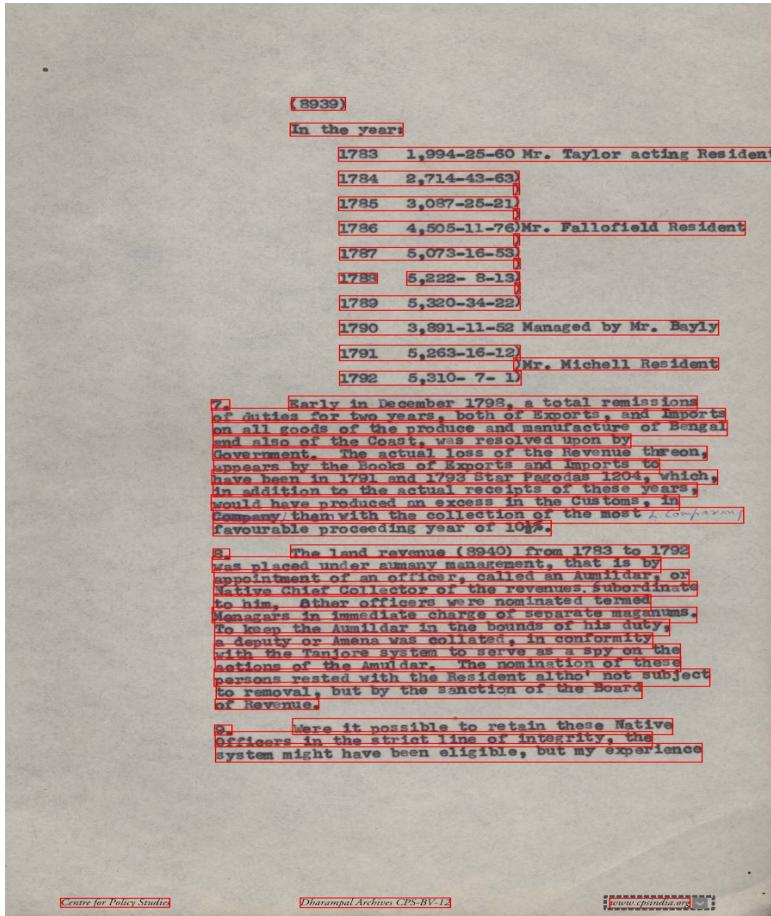
72. Besides the Sibbundy as stated in the above report to be employed by the Cincar in the collection of revenue in the different districts an establishment of a Peshkar, Writers, Peons, etc. to the number of 29 persons is kept up at the Head Cutcharee under the immediate orders of the Collector which amounts to an annual expence of Pagodas 1,741-40-20.

73. The privileges of the ryots in the division of the crops, vary almost in every villages in the district. For the sake of conciseness therefore, I give the following statement from whence a medium of the rates and rules of assessment may be easily ascertained to different people previous to the measurement of the grain; from 11 to 16% is distributed in charities, which have been long established throughout the whole country and which does not come (9043) into the general distribution of the crop. On the grain being measured, the Government share amounts to from 31 to 49% and the Ryots according to the facility or otherwise of watering the crops from 39 to 61% and Russooms divided amongst churches, cengoes, desmooks, Poligars, etc. from 8 to 12%.

74. With respect to the conduct of the renters to the Ryots, I am happy to say I have every reason to conclude is regular and just, for amongst the multiplicity of disputes that incessantly come before me, not one hath yet originated from an unfair division of the produce and as I flatter myself I have ever been ready to listen with a patient attention to their grievances and to redress them to the utmost of my ability and as no complaints are made to me, I may with propriety conclude

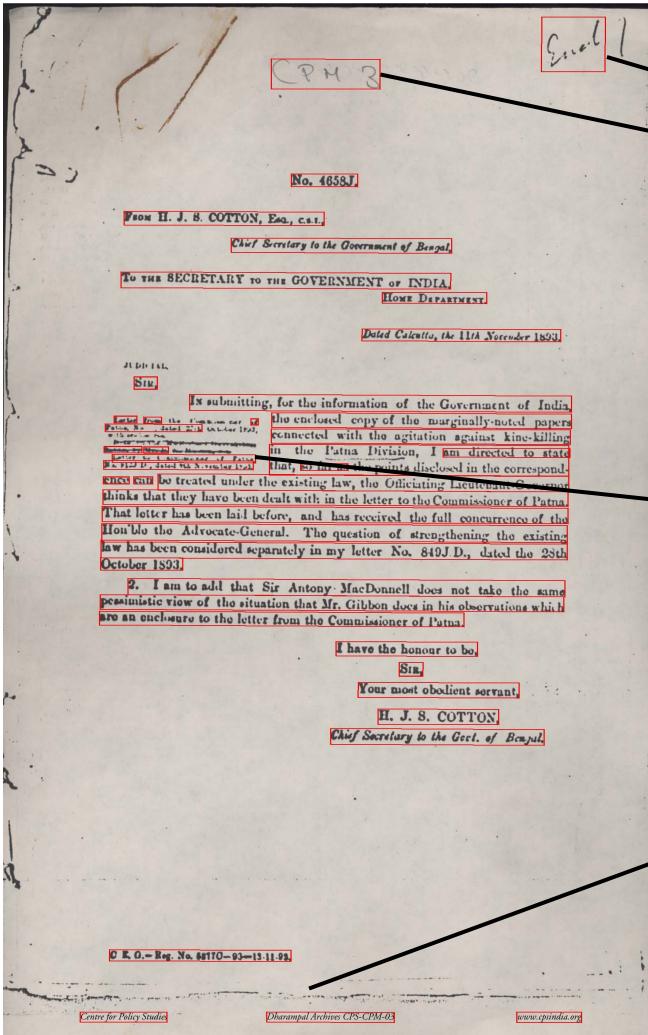
- Bounding boxes have been extracted from the detailed annotation and super imposed in the document.
- Each line is correctly recognized.
- Varying line lengths are well accounted for.

Entity Recognition Examples



- Tabular content correctly recognized.
- Footnotes recognized as discrete entities.
- Tilt in scanned text accounted for by the bounding boxes.

Entity Recognition Examples

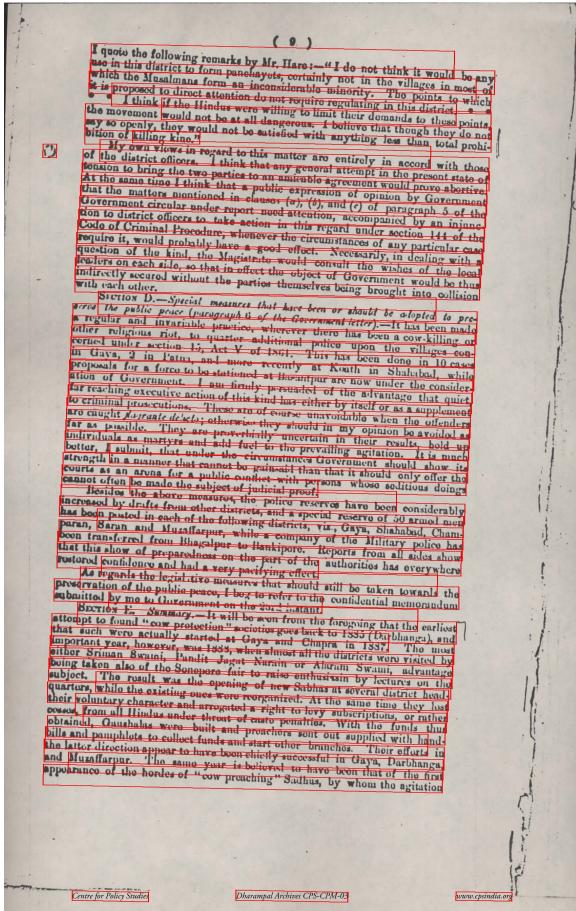


Handwritten annotations recognized

Inlaid text recognized.

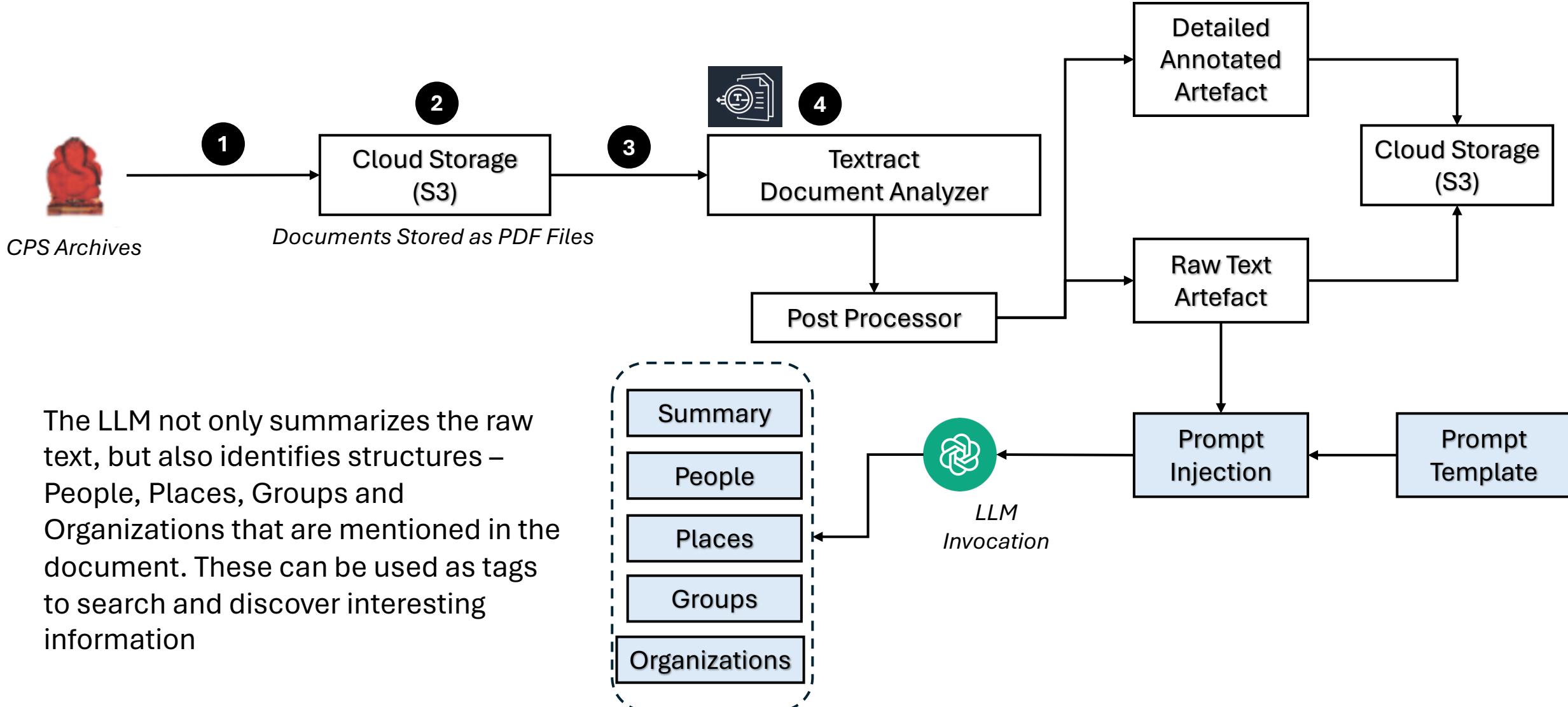
Imposed footnotes
(watermark) and
natural footnotes
recognized.

Entity Recognition Examples



Severe Page Tilt compensated

Summarization Architecture



Result Walk Through

Indian Rulers and The British Government (BV-07)

The text discusses the complex historical and administrative context of the Southern Marhatta country under British colonial rule, highlighting the interactions between British officials and local Indian rulers. It outlines the British strategy of modifying relationships with local states, specifically Nagpore, to better manage the region. The narrative mentions the presentation of a detailed minute by an official, which provides insights into the chiefs of the Southern Marhatta country, reflecting on the administrative challenges and the British officials' views on governance. The minute emphasizes the importance of involving natives in fiscal and judicial roles and maintaining the village system as the foundation of governance. The text also includes correspondence between British officials discussing these administrative strategies and reflecting on their experiences and evolving perspectives regarding the governance of Indian territories.

Places

'Southern Marhatta country',
'Nagpore', 'India', 'Calcutta'

People

'William Bentinck', 'Lord
Ellenborough', 'Duke of
Wellington', 'Sir John Malcolm'

Organizations

'Government of India'

Groups

'Maharattas', 'Mussalmans'

Result Walk Through

British Rule in South India (BV-12)

The text outlines the British administrative practices and revenue management in South India during the late 18th century, specifically focusing on the Madras Presidency under British rule. It details the meticulous reporting and accounting systems established by the British to manage and monitor the revenue collection from various districts. The document highlights the structured approach to administration, including the detailed recording of agricultural outputs, tax collections, and the economic conditions of different regions. The British administration also focused on training and regulating administrators to ensure efficient governance. The text includes various forms and procedural outlines for reporting and managing revenue, emphasizing accountability and systematic governance. Additionally, it mentions the impact of British policies on local agriculture, trade, and commerce, indicating both positive and negative outcomes of colonial administration.

Places

"South India", "Madras Presidency"

People

"David Haliburton", "Walter Balfour", "Mr. Darwall", "Mr. White", "Mr. Cockburn", "Mr. Haliburton", "Mr. Barnard", "Mr. Clerk", "Lionel Place", "William Michell"

Groups

"Brahmins", "Parriars", "Pullies", "Poligars", "Talliars", "Conicopies", "Artificers", "Panjangum Brammins", "Pandaurums", "Corn Measurers"

Organizations

"British Administration", "Board of Revenue", "Company", "India Office Records", "Madras Board of Revenue"

Result Walk Through

Manufacture of Iron and Steel (1680 – 1825) (TS-05)

The text discusses various historical and technical aspects of iron and steel production in India, spanning from the late 18th to early 19th centuries. It includes detailed descriptions of the processes used in different regions and the challenges faced by individuals attempting to establish or improve iron production facilities.

The first part of the text describes a traditional method of steel production from iron, involving the use of crucibles and a specially constructed furnace. This detailed account includes measurements and specific techniques used to ensure the transformation of iron into steel, such as maintaining the furnace's temperature for 24 hours and managing the crucibles.

Dr. Benjamin Heyne's report from 1795 provides insights into the iron production in Rananakapettah, detailing the process and the economic context of the region. His observations highlight both the potential and challenges of the iron industry in India, including the impact of famine on local communities and production capacities.

Overall, the text provides a comprehensive look at the historical development of the iron industry in India, the technological practices involved, the individuals who played pivotal roles in its evolution, and the socio-economic factors that influenced its progress and challenges.

Places

"Beerbboom", "Burdwan", "Calcutta",
"Doohaung", "Berrye", "Nurwur",
"Dologur", "Gudlier", "Rananakapet-
tah", "Madras"

People

"J. Farquhar", "Warren
Hastings", "R. Barwell", "E.
Wheler", "Mr. Francis", "Alex
Higginson", "Dr. Benjamin
Heyne", "J.M. Heath", "Thomas
Munro"

Groups

"English",
"Council of Revenue",
"Provincial Council of Burdwan"

Organizations

"British East India Company",
"Madras Government",
"Court of Directors", "Bengal
Government"

Result Walk Through

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893 (CPM-03)

The documents primarily discuss the concerns and administrative responses related to the anti-kine-killing agitation in Bengal during the late 19th century, specifically around 1893. The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, H. J. S. Cotton, communicates extensively with various officials, including the Commissioner of the Patna Division, regarding the disturbances caused by the agitation and the involvement of various caste and community groups. The agitation, which was initially religious and peaceful, advocating for the protection of cows, gradually became a source of significant civil unrest, involving coercion and violence, particularly from itinerant propagandists from outside the province. The involvement of government officials in these societies, either directly or indirectly, is criticized, and there is a strong directive to disassociate government personnel from these groups to maintain impartiality and effectiveness in administration. The documents suggest implementing strict measures including monitoring and controlling inflammatory propagandists, ensuring that police forces are adequately equipped to handle disturbances, and possibly reassigning police reserves to more strategic locations. The communications also highlight the need for legal actions against those inciting violence and suggest that district officers should actively work to regulate areas where kine-killing is customary to minimize Hindu-Muslim tensions. The overarching theme is the need for proactive and stringent administrative actions to manage the agitation and prevent further escalation of communal unrest.

Places

'Bengal', 'Patna', 'Bihar', 'Darbhanga',
'Madhubani', 'Arrah', 'Muzaffarpur',
'Gaya', 'Saran', 'Champaran',
'Bankipore', 'Shahabad', 'Bhagalpur',
'Benares', 'North-Western Provinces',
'Azimgarh', 'Ballia', 'Gorakhpur',
'Chapra', 'England', 'Allahabad',
'Calcutta', 'Dumraon', 'Motihari',
'Dumri', 'Juggernath', 'Ajodhia',
'Lucknow', 'Faizabad', 'Rampore',
'Nepal', 'Nagpur', 'Deo', 'Sheohar',
'Gidhaur', 'Khaira', 'Burdwan',
'Rajhowli', 'Rajnugger', 'Sasaram',
'Nasrigunj', 'Blubba', 'Sakurbigha',
'Gupalpur', 'Shurgatty', 'Runigunj',
'Aurangabad', 'Jamhor', 'Obra', 'War',
'Saran', 'Chapra', 'Sikondrapore',
'Ballia', 'Baikantpur', 'Gorakhpuro',
'Nagra', 'Siwan', 'Patar', 'Titurs',
'Mairwa', 'Maharajganj', 'Kimanpali',
'Kochus', 'Ranisagur', 'Bettiah',
'Motihari', 'Segowlie', 'Gobindganj',
'Sitamarhi', 'Hajipore', 'Lalganj',
'Bairagnia', 'Rajipore', 'Paliganj',
'Bikram', 'Phulwari', 'Fatuha',
'Mashaundi', 'Dinapore', 'Hilsa',
'Konth', 'Basantpur', 'Darauli',
'Mahamjan', 'Bishmia', 'Juluhatola',
'Barharia', 'Firozpur', 'Maharajganj',
'Basantpur', 'Hutwa', 'Gonda',
'Majhaul', 'Darbhanga', 'Laheriasarai',
'Tajpur', 'Madhubani', 'Rosera',
'Dalsingsarai'

'H. J. S. Cotton', 'J. B. Cotton', 'Sir Antony MacDonnell', 'Mr. Gibbon', 'Mr. Macpherson', 'Mr. Williams', 'Mr. Mullick', 'Rai Matadin Singh Bahadur', 'Thakur Prasad Kalwar', 'Pandit Jagat Narain', 'Udit Chaubo', 'Ramnath Singh', 'Jagden Bahadur', 'Mohabir Upadhy'a, 'Babu Nasidan Lai', 'Babu Jai Narain Bajpai', 'Rai Kallin Kissen', 'Mansuk Rai', 'Choto Lal', 'Joj Raj Bahadur', 'Jawahar Mal', 'Babu Raghunath Persiad', 'Mr. Hare', 'Mr. Phillimore', 'Mr. Cox', 'Babu Durgadut Singh', 'Harakhadhari Singh', 'Lal Behari Lal', 'Mohabir Pershad', 'Babu Tulapati Singh', 'Kali Pada Banerji', 'Lal Singh', 'Ramhari Lal', 'Bisewar Marwari', 'Babu Brahmaaloo Narayan Singh', 'Babu Jwala Singh'

Result Walk Through (Contd)

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893 (CPM-03)

The documents primarily discuss the concerns and administrative responses related to the anti-kine-killing agitation in Bengal during the late 19th century, specifically around 1893. The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, H. J. S. Cotton, communicates extensively with various officials, including the Commissioner of the Patna Division, regarding the disturbances caused by the agitation and the involvement of various caste and community groups. The agitation, which was initially religious and peaceful, advocating for the protection of cows, gradually became a source of significant civil unrest, involving coercion and violence, particularly from itinerant propagandists from outside the province. The involvement of government officials in these societies, either directly or indirectly, is criticized, and there is a strong directive to disassociate government personnel from these groups to maintain impartiality and effectiveness in administration. The documents suggest implementing strict measures including monitoring and controlling inflammatory propagandists, ensuring that police forces are adequately equipped to handle disturbances, and possibly reassigning police reserves to more strategic locations. The communications also highlight the need for legal actions against those inciting violence and suggest that district officers should actively work to regulate areas where kine-killing is customary to minimize Hindu-Muslim tensions. The overarching theme is the need for proactive and stringent administrative actions to manage the agitation and prevent further escalation of communal unrest.

Result Walk Through (Contd)

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893 (CPM-03)

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Groups

'Brahmans', 'Marwarias',
'Bannia', 'Brahman', 'Kayasths',
'Brahmin', 'Ahirs',
'Kshatriyas', 'Sudras',
'Chatis', 'Muhammadans',
'Hindus', 'Christians',
'Kayasth', 'Baniya', 'Pleaders',
'Mukhtears', 'Maulvis', 'Rais',
'Zamindars', 'Traders',
'Muhaarirs', 'Tahsildars',
'Jamadars', 'Piyadas', 'Sadhus'

Result summary

- Text extraction followed by summarization and ‘tag’ generation produced fairly impressive results, with minimal experimentation.
- There are some configuration sweet spots and further optimizations that can be made. Summaries may require some human feedback.
- Total cost: **\$2.57**.

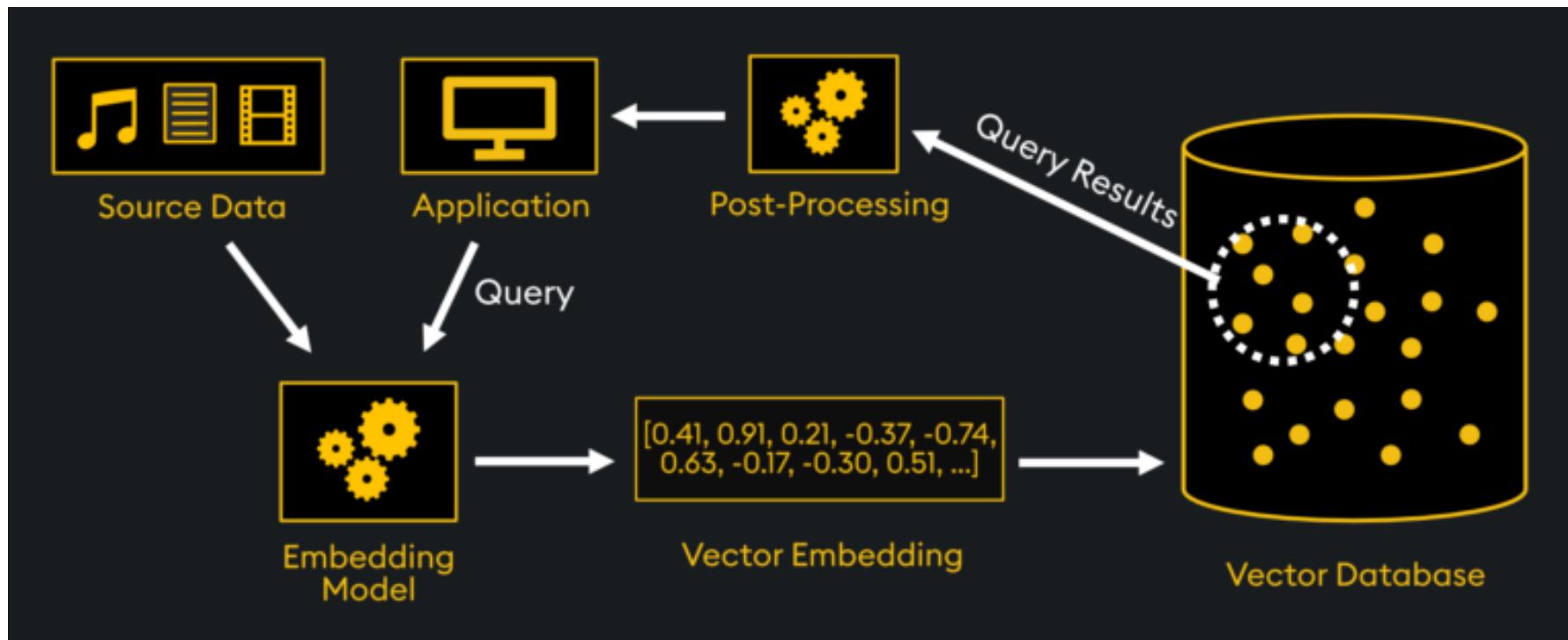
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Extending To Interactivity

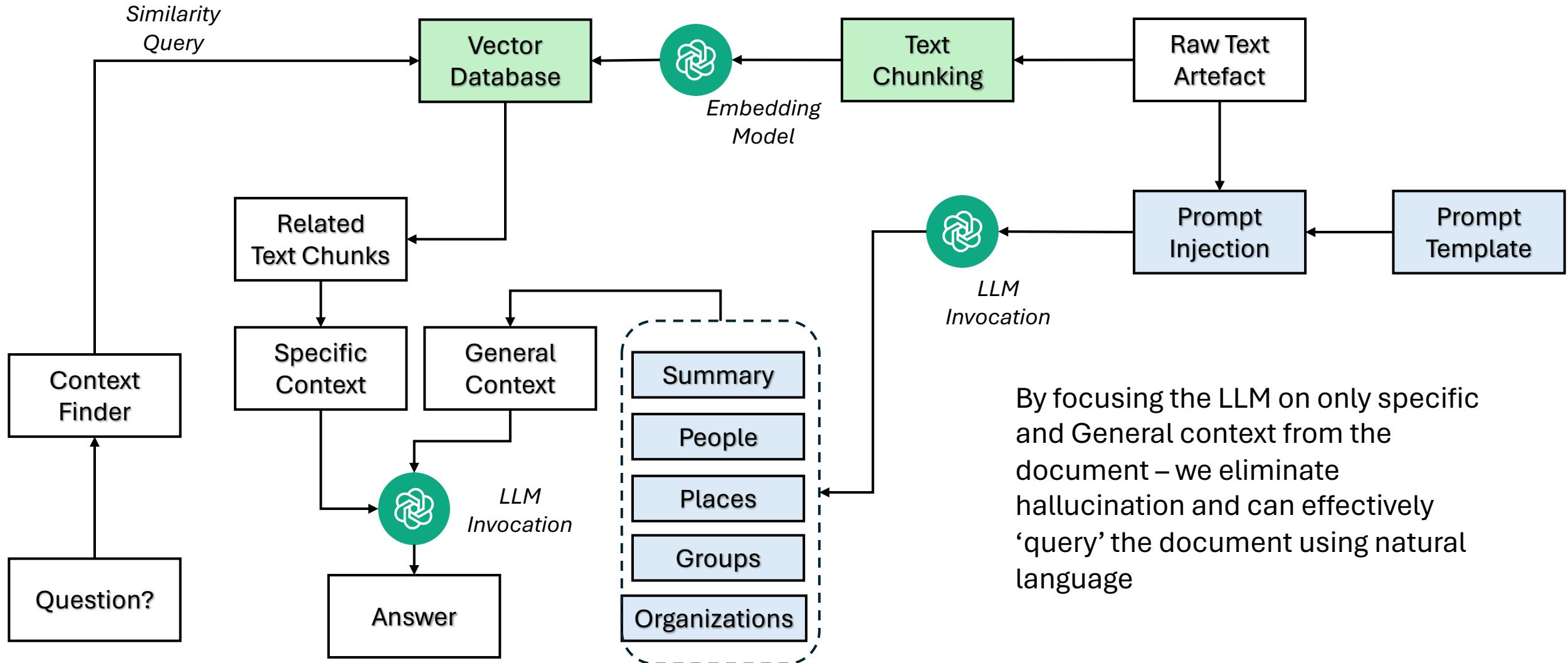
- While summarization is a handy feature, deeper research may require some form of interaction with the document.
- This will require the document to take on the role of an expert in its own content and then answer questions asked by the reader.
- This is a more powerful tool than summarization, where specific topics can be discovered and interesting anecdotes unearthed.
- But this requires an architecture that is more sophisticated than the one presented so far.
- In the next section, we show how Retrieval Augmented Generation can help answer questions from within the context of the document.

Detour : Vector Databases.

<https://kdb.ai/learning-hub/articles/vector-database-101/>



Extending the Architecture



Talking to The Archives - Example

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893

What are these agitations about?

The agitations discussed are about the anti-kine-killing movement, which initially started as a religious and peaceful advocacy for the protection of cows but later escalated into significant civil unrest. This unrest involved coercion and violence, particularly from itinerant propagandists from outside the province. The agitation led to tensions between different community groups, prompting the need for stringent administrative actions to manage and prevent further escalation of communal unrest.

Talking to The Archives - Example

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893

Name a prominent person who participated
in these agitations. Just one is enough

Gopalanand Swami

Talking to The Archives - Example

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893

What role did Gopalanad Swami Play?

Gopalanand Swami played a significant role as an organizer of Sabhas and a preacher of their doctrines. He was involved in the anti-kine-killing agitation, where his preaching led to significant unrest and eventually to his arrest and imprisonment for two years. He was known for his ability to organize and promote the doctrines of the Sabhas, which contributed to the spread of the movement and the associated disturbances.

Talking to The Archives - Example

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893

What is the approximate time frame and locations of these agitations?

The approximate time frame of the agitations is primarily around the late 19th century, specifically highlighted around the years 1891, 1892, and 1893. The locations of these agitations include various districts and towns across Bengal and the surrounding areas, such as Gaya, Patna, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Shahabad, Muzaffarpur, and others mentioned in the broad context.

Talking to The Archives - Example

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893

Did any muslims participate in these agitations?

Yes, some Muslims did participate in the agitations.

Talking to The Archives - Example

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893

Name a few muslims who participated in these agitations and their role?

The Muslims who participated in the agitations include Moulvi Maniralam, who was described as a rabid anti-Englishman and joined the Hindus in other agitations. Another participant was a Maulvi from the district of Azamgarh, who was involved in a discussion at a fair and was confounded by Pandit Jagat Narain's responses. Additionally, four Muslims named Mohammed Ali, Race, Tikiq Ali Bakhah of Dumraon, Ali Mohammad of Buzar, and Khuda Bakhah of Balia renounced the use of flesh following the discomfiture of the Maulvi from Azamgarh.\

Talking to The Archives - Example

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893

Were Brahmins not active as Banias and Kshatriyas?

Yes, Brahmins were active as Banias and Kshatriyas. The specific context mentions various activities and roles taken by Brahmins, such as being appointed as accountants and curators of Gaushalas, participating in agitations, and preaching against kine-killing. This indicates their involvement in activities typically associated with the Bania (trader) and Kshatriya (warrior) roles, such as managing funds and leading social movements.

Talking to The Archives - Example

Reports of the Agitation in Bihar 1893

What happened in the Brahmapur Fair?

At the Brahmapur Fair held on 25th April 1893, a group of preachers set up their tent and began preaching. Notable attendees included Pandit Jagat Narain, Pandit Kishori Lal, Pandit Har Narain, Pandit Mahabir Pershad, and others from various locations such as Benares and Arrah. The fair was significant for the anti-kine-killing movement, as the lives of several cows and bullocks were saved from being sold to butchers. Donations were collected to support the cause, and the event proceeded peacefully under the supervision of a Joint-Magistrate. However, a previous fair in April 1891 at Berhampore saw a violent incident where a large mob of armed Hindus attacked butchers, leading to police intervention and the arrest of a key agitator, Gopalanand Swami.