

BetterGEDCOM Requirements Catalog

Co-Moderators: [gthorud](#) and [AdrianB38](#)

RULES (changed April 7 - re New entries)

Discussions: All discussions about the content of this page shall appear on the discussion tab for this page. The SUBJECT of the topic shall contain only the ID of the requirement, "space dash space" and the subject of the requirement. There should be only one topic per requirement. Enter the Description and Why (see below) in the first posing in the topic.

New entries: All wiki users can add a new requirement. Please check if there is an existing entry for the same requirement, and if there is a similar one check the discussion of that requirement or contact the Proposer of the requirement to see if the existing one can be slightly modified to cover your requirement. If you are in doubt about which group the requirement should be placed, or if your requirement should be entered, contact the moderators, see the top of the page.

Entry Moderator: The person proposing a requirement is responsible for updating the catalog entry following discussion. Updates shall be "announced" in the discussion topic. See rules in the template below.

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Background

[Background to BetterGEDCOM](#)

Background to these pages:

At the Developers' Meeting of 17 January 2011, it was resolved that BetterGEDCOM's existing list of Goals were not appropriate for Goals and the list should be re-structured to extract a simple Goal and reformat the rest as Requirements. This set of pages is being written to carry out that task.

Personal comment - the sections of this catalogue were used by the original author (Adrian Bruce) as a template for a full-scale IT project. Though trimmed from that, they may still be regarded as over-the-top for a Wiki based project. Having previously got stuck on the argument whether we had goals or requirements, I would rather take too rigorous a path now. Inspiration comes from the Volere

Requirements Specification Template in "Mastering the Requirements Process" by Robertson & Robertson. Note also that I use the term "project" for the BetterGEDCOM work, even though it (so far) satisfies no formal definition of what a project should be.

Goals of BetterGEDCOM

BetterGEDCOM will be a file format for the exchange and long-term storage of genealogical data.

It will be more comprehensive than existing formats and so become the format of choice.

(Note - first sentence is a minor rewording of Goal 1 agreed 3 Jan 2011. Second sentence justifies why BG and not an existing format.)

Clients, Customers, Stakeholders & Users

(This section is here simply to make you think)

- Currently we have no identified Client paying for the project.
- No-one will buy the BetterGEDCOM product itself, therefore we have no Customers in the proper sense.
- Stakeholders potentially affected by BetterGEDCOM are developers of application software that reads or writes genealogical data.
- Since data may be transferred from a BetterGEDCOM file into an application, and then to a genealogy service provider via an API in the application, providers of such networked genealogy services could be affected by the structures in BG, and could therefore seek to influence or control BetterGEDCOM.
- Potential users of BetterGEDCOM include people or organisations currently holding files of genealogical data and people using application software that exchanges or stores genealogical data.
- A very small number of people may manipulate data in a BetterGEDCOM directly - most users will not do so.

Requirements Constraints

(Not all of these may be relevant in practice)

- The application software that will potentially read and write BetterGEDCOM data files is developed and maintained by many organisations, all of which are independent from the BetterGEDCOM project. Therefore the BetterGEDCOM project cannot directly control the match between BetterGEDCOM data files and the BetterGEDCOM standard.
- An uncounted number of files of genealogical data exist in various forms of the GEDCOM file format. The design of BetterGEDCOM *should* minimise the effort required by application

developers to write software to convert those files to BetterGEDCOM format.

- Many of the existing files of genealogical data do not conform to any official version of the GEDCOM standard.
- Many of those files have extended the GEDCOM standard with tags whose function is known only to the developers of the application software concerned.
- Many of those files have extended the GEDCOM standard with events and attributes defined by the user of the application, and their meaning is known only to those users.
- The GEDCOM Standard(s) are under the ownership and copyright of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Naming Conventions & Definitions

See [Glossary of Terms](#)

Assumptions

Scope of BetterGEDCOM product

BetterGEDCOM will produce definitions of the file format in:

- A report (definitely)
- A data model (definitely)
- A codified form applicable to the technology chosen for the file format - e.g. XML schema or DTD (possibly)

BetterGEDCOM should provide a test suite of data that will

- allow software suppliers to assess compliance of their software
- help them to diagnose issues
- assist them to resolve issues.

BetterGEDCOM will not have responsibility for testing application software.

BetterGEDCOM will not have responsibility for defining how individual applications should translate genealogical data from their native formats to and from the BetterGEDCOM format, nor from application's own varieties of GEDCOM to and from the BetterGEDCOM format. (Experienced users *may* make suggestions, but the responsibility lies with the application's owners.)

Requirements Introduction

A division between functional and non-functional requirements is traditional in Requirements Catalogues. Functional requirements say what the new system should do (e.g. "Pay staff according to the 1929 Conciliation Staff Agreement") - non-functional requirements say how the system should do it (e.g. "Pay 10,000 staff overnight each Tuesday", or "Run on Windows 2000 Server OS"). As a result the "techno-speak" requirements are part of the non-functional requirements.

Given that the BetterGEDCOM file format does not *do* anything itself, it is debatable how relevant the division is, so, after trying to keep to it, I am putting them all together.

The Requirements below use the following **template**.

Id:	Code to identify the requirement - in bold
Title:	A short description - max 10 words - in bold.
Description:	One or two sentences - use "must" if importance is mandatory; "should" if very desirable; "could" if desirable.
Importance:	One of three values: Mandatory; Very Desirable; Desirable. For the time being, this is the assessment of the proposer.
Why?:	
Source:	If from another page or discussion, please note and link All previous discussions should go here, but the last/current discussion should be linked to in Discussion.
Way forward?:	Comments on possible ways forward
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Proposer:	The creation date for the requirement and wiki ID of the proposer. and optionally name.
Changes:	Date changed (month and day) eg. Feb 21 and user id, comma separated list. Append last change to end of the line, eg: 22 Feb gthorud, 23 Feb userxxx
Discussion:	Link to the current Discussion topic for this requirement. The subject of the topic should be the ID followed by the Title. See top of page.

Copy this Empty template to create a new requirement:

Id:

Title:

Description:

Importance:

Why?:

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Again, acknowledgements are made to the Volere Requirements Shell template in "Mastering the Requirements Process" by Robertson & Robertson

Detailed Requirements

Research Administration

Id:	Admin01
Title:	Research Administration Information
Description:	BetterGEDCOM must allow recording of administrative information needed to organise and document the research work.
Importance:	

Why?:	--- This is a place holder at the moment, details and detailed requirements to be added. ----- See the discussion of this requirement for summaries of the functionality in some genealogy programs.
Source:	
Way forward?:	More detailed solution, see Admin02 onwards.
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	7 March 2011 gthorud
Changes:	
Discussion:	Discussion
Id:	Admin02 (was Task01)
Title:	Research Task
Description:	BetterGEDCOM shall be able to record and track a Task (search or other task) that needs to be done or has been done. Information recorded about the task itself could be a Title/Short description, a full description (formatable). Research tasks can be organized in simple lists or grouped into Objectives, see below.
Importance:	Very Desirable
Why?:	Supports faithful recording of research status and results, and reduces repetition of labors.
Source:	Gramps, GenTech model
Way forward?:	
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	BrianJD

Changes:

Discussion:

[[@message/view/Better GEDCOM Requirements Catalog/34614348|Task01 - Research Task]]

Id:

Admin03

Title:

Task information

Description:

BetterGEDCOM shall be able to record information about a Task, for example used for Categorisation (keyword, category, type (research/correspondence/other)), Progress management (priority, status, dates, comments about dates), Resource use (Expences, number of hours used)

Importance:

Why?:

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id:

Admin04

Title:

Identification of persons, events, places that the task is about

Description:

BetterGEDCOM shall be able to link a task to records representing the person(s), event(s), place(s), source(s) etc. that the task is about, existing when the task is defined (started). A possibility is also to record links to persons, events etc. that are created as a result of the task.

Importance:

Why?:

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id: Admin05

Title: What to search

Description: BetterGEDCOM shall be able to record information about, or link to records representing, WHAT to search – e.g. a source. Possibly an URL pointing to the source.

Importance:

Why?:

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id: Admin06

Title:	Where to do the task
Description:	BetterGEDCOM shall be able to record information about, or link to records representing, WHERE to do the task – Location name (if not linked to), Repository, Place (eg. cemetery), Address
Importance:	
Why?:	
Source:	
Way forward?:	
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Proposer:	
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Id:	Admin07
Title:	Task results
Description:	BetterGEDCOM shall be able to record information about, or link to records representing, the findings and results produced by the task (an overall description of the results, Excerpts, Multimedia, Citations, Filing Cabinet Reference)
Importance:	
Why?:	
Source:	
Way forward?:	The information recorded for this requirement overlaps with the information in the Evidence and Conclusion model.
Dependencies:	

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id: Admin08

Title: Objectives - for grouping of tasks

Description: BetterGEDCOM should be able to group several tasks into Objectives (Target) , each Objective representing a question to be answered or a problem to be solved. An objective is usually defined before the tasks needed to achieve the objective. Objectives should have a description and will be the record pointing to users, events, places etc rather than each task. Some elements of the information recorded for tasks (see above) can be defined for the objective rather than each task,

Importance:

Why?: Questions and problems are in most cases the reasons that one or more tasks are performed.

Source:

Way forward?: An objective record may contain elements of the info mentioned in Admin03

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id: Admin09

Title: Projects - for grouping of objectives

Description: BetterGEDCOM could be able to group several objectives into projects. Projects could be split into sub-projects. Each (sub-)project should have a name, elements of task progress listed above, completion grade (%) and description.

Importance:

Why?:

Source:

Way forward?: A project record may contain elements of the info mentioned in Admin03

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id: Admin10

Title: Correspondence log

Description: BetterGEDCOM could be able to record information about letters, emails, phone calls or other correspondence related to the research. Item in the log can have a type (call, email etc), direction (in/out), researcher, correspondent, subject, date, reference to filing system and details about the correspondence. Contact information (address, phone etc) could also be recorded..

Importance:

Why?:

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id: Admin11

Title: Researchers

Description: BetterGEDCOM could be able to record information about the researchers using the program or other cooperating/corresponding researchers. Researchers can have a name, languages, registration number (?), notes, media (photo) and contact info. A researcher can be linked to a person in the database. The Gentech model also links researchers to assertions, i.e. who made the assertion.

Importance:

Why?:

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Confidence and Accuracy

Id: ConfAcc01 (Confidence and Accuracy) (was

Data03)

Title	Support for approximately known values
Description:	BetterGEDCOM must allow the recording of approximately known values in all appropriate contexts.
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	GEDCOM already allows dates to be "about yyyy". Note - this is <i>not</i> the same as assigning a probability to a value - e.g. "Probably 1812" is not the same as "About 1812", and this requirement is <i>not</i> intended to cover concepts like "Probably 1812".
Source:	Tom Wetmore's Goal and Requirements plus various discussion pages.
Way forward?:	See Data-Date01 for this requirement on dates. See Data-Place01 for this requirement on locations. Work on the data model needs to establish if there are any other values that either need or would benefit from, the ability to record approximation.
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
<i>Note that in this Catalogue, we use the term "Characteristic" to refer to what have been referred to as properties, facts, attributes, characteristics or traits. See PFACT in Glossary. Again, my use of this term does not imply that it should be the term used in the Data Model.</i>	
Id:	ConfAcc02 (was Data04)
Title:	Levels of Confidence in Database Conclusions
Description:	BetterGEDCOM should allow the recording of recognized levels of confidence associated with database conclusions
Importance:	Very Desirable
Why?:	Supports faithful recording of research status and results. This uncertainty / level of confidence can apply to various sub-items, including, but not

necessarily restricted to, dates ("Probably 1812"), places ("Likely London, England") and relationships ("Possible father is ...").

Source: Evidence Explained, 2007, p. 19, "certainly," "probably," "possibly," "likely," and "apparently," "perhaps"

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer: GeneJ

Changes: 2011 Feb 21 - created
2011 Mar 21 - add examples to "Why".

Discussion: <http://bettergedcom.wikispaces.com/message/view/Better+GEDCOM+Requirements+Catalog/34591890>

Id: **ConfAcc03** (was Data05)

Title: **Universal Qualifier Symbol ("?")**

Description: BetterGEDCOM should incorporate methods allowing users to apply the universal qualifier "?" before dates (or parts of dates), locations, names, etc.

Importance: Very Desirable

Why?: Supports faithful recording of research status and results.

Source: Hoff and Leclerc, Genealogical Writing in the 21st Century (2006), p. 115, "Commonly used Symbols," for "?" as, "uncertain interpretation of original text."

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer: GeneJ

Changes: 2011 Feb 21 - created

Discussion: <http://bettergedcom.wikispaces.com/message/view/Better+GEDCOM+Requirements+Catalog/34592276>

Id: **ConfAcc04**

Title: **Document Rejected Conclusions**

Description: BetterGEDCOM could allow the recording of rejected conclusions.

Importance: Desirable.

Why?: If a conclusion is rejected, it can be useful to record the rejected conclusion.

- This should help to stop the researcher revisiting their own mistakes in future, when they have forgotten previous research;
- Negative evidence can be useful in itself (e.g. "Thomas' mother was not Mary, so must have been Margaret or Molly");
- Erroneous conclusions listed on the Internet are the bane of many genealogists' lives. It may be useful to have a refutation to hand.

Source: Extension of Data04 "Levels of Confidence in Database Conclusions"

Way forward?:

Dependencies: Data04 "Levels of Confidence in Database Conclusions"

Approval status:

Proposer: AdrianB38, 2011 Mar 21

Changes:

Discussion:

Conversion

Id:	Conversion01
Description:	The coverage of the types of genealogical data must allow faithful import of data from all current, common genealogical software with no material manual intervention, subject to the limits of the applications involved.
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	If users cannot move their data to BetterGEDCOM formats, they will not use BG
Source:	
Way forward?:	The data model for BetterGEDCOM must be rich enough to allow software companies to write routines to copy data from their internal file formats and / or their versions of GEDCOM to the BG format. Therefore, the BetterGEDCOM data model must include everything in the current GEDCOM data model - but not necessarily in the same format - e.g. in-line sources could be converted to source records.
Dependencies:	We are dependent on the software companies writing that conversion code.
Approv. status:	

Data

Note - The prefix "Data" is used for generic requirements that do not appear to be obviously applicable to only one group.

Id:	Data01
Title	Backwards compatability
Description:	The data model that underlies BetterGEDCOM must

be a superset of the models used by existing major, genealogical applications to the fullest extent deemed possible during design

Importance:

Mandatory

Why?:

BG compatible software must be able to import data from existing applications and must be at least as good as existing applications in relation to its model.

Source:

[Tom Wetmore's Goal and Requirements](#)

Way forward?:

Produce a data model to do this.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Id:

Data02

Title

Support for all conventional genealogical processes

Description:

The data model that underlies BetterGEDCOM must provide a set of data entities that will allow genealogical applications to support all conventional genealogical processes.

Importance:

Mandatory

Why?:

BG compatible software must be able to carry out normal processes

Source:

[Tom Wetmore's Goal and Requirements](#)

Way forward?:

Produce a data model to do this.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Data03, 04 and 05 has been moved to Confidence and Accuracy.

Id:

Data06 (was Usage01)

Title:	Transfer between one user's programs and to other users/services
Description:	BetterGEDCOM should support data that needs to be exchanged between 1) one user's applications possibly from different vendors or 2) several user's/service provider's applications.
Importance:	
Why?	<p>The requirement in these cases may be different, but betterGEDCOM must support both. For example a program may support management/classification/grouping of collection of media, e.g. photos. The grouping may not be of interest to other users, but should be transferred when the user transfer media between her/his own programs. Another example genealogy project management information, eg. planed lookups in a source, that may not be of interest to other users – but should be possible to transfer to the user's other programs. Thus, all info stored by a program is a candidate for exchange.</p> <p>Management data intended to be transferred between one user's applications are not likely to be transferred to network services, and are thus not restricted by specifications that can be transferred to such services.</p>
Source:	
Way forward?:	Create this in the Data Model.
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	gthorud
Changes:	22 Feb gthorud
Discussion:	
Id:	Data07

Title:	Independent record collections
Description:	BetterGEDCOM shall be able to record eg. only records containing information about places, without any person records or other types of records.
Importance:	
Why?:	Independent record collections allows exchange of collections of source meta info, source data, place info, media meta data, media, timelines etc. This could facilitate projects where user could collaborate to create such collections, without having to rely on network services or other parties to provide the necessary facilities.
Source:	(Originally proposed by Tom in some discussion I can't find)
Way forward?:	
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	22 Feb gthorud
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Data08 - unsigned, se the discussion	

Characteristic

Id:	Data-Char01 (Characteristic)
Title	
Description:	BetterGEDCOM must support the recording of the characteristics of persons, families, groups, places, "ships" etc.
Importance:	Mandatory

Why?	Current GEDCOM allows the recording of attributes for individuals and families.
Source:	Various discussion pages.
Way forward?:	Create this in the Data Model.
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Id:	Data-Char02 (was Data09 for Characteristics)
Title	Record locations for characteristics
Description:	BetterGEDCOM must support the recording of location values applicable to all characteristics of persons, families, groups, places, "ships" etc. (unless specifically agreed otherwise).
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?	Current GEDCOM allows the recording of place for attributes. Note this does not imply that the recording of a location against any particular characteristic makes sense - e.g. recording of a location against someone's sex would seem pointless. On the other hand, recording of a location against someone's name <i>might</i> well be useful - if someone emigrated under an assumed name, it might be useful to record USA (e.g.) against their new name, and England against their old.
Source:	Various discussion pages.
Way forward?:	Create this in the Data Model.
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer	AdrianB38
Changes:	2011 Mar 03 - split off requirement that location goes down to address to make it more obvious - raise new Requirement Data-Place06 for it.

Discussion:

Id: **Data-Char03**

Title **Multiple Events & Characteristics etc**

Description: BetterGEDCOM must allow multiple characteristics and events of the same type against each person, family, group, place, "ship" etc.. In particular, it must be possible to allow multiple birth and death dates against individuals.

Importance: Mandatory

Why? Most applications allow multiple characteristics, occupations for instance, against an individual. Some applications allow multiple birth and death dates against an individual. The normal meaning of this is that these are alternatives. It must be possible to convert such data to BetterGEDCOM format. As GEDCOM v5.5 allows multiple events and multiple attributes, including multiple birth-dates, this requirement is also mandated by the need to allow GEDCOM compatible data to be represented in BetterGEDCOM form..

Source: Various discussion pages.

Way forward?: Identify any events and attributes in GEDCOM that are currently only allowed to have one occurrence and decide what to do about these - with the exception of SEX, a first glance at GEDCOM 5.5 suggests the single occurrence items for the *Individual* are internal to the GEDCOM structure, rather than relating to their family history and genealogy and thus it *may* be appropriate for them to remain as single occurrence items. Depending on the conclusions above, create this in the Data Model.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer

Changes 2011 March 05 AdrianB38 - split off sex-change to Data-Ind04
2011 March 05 AdrianB38 - add clarification that this is also a compatibility requirement.

Discussion

Id: Data-Char04

Title Date all Characteristics

Description: BetterGEDCOM must allow the recording of dates against *all* characteristics of each person, family, group, place, "ship". In particular, it must be possible to allow dates against an individual's name characteristics.

Importance: Mandatory

Why? While GEDCOM currently allows multiple names against individuals, there is no ability to record a date against each name, implying that the names are used at the same time. This may or may not be true. Allowing dating of names allows more precise description of married names, for instances.

Source: Various discussion pages.

Way forward?: Create this in the Data Model.

Dependencies: Data-Char03

Approv. status:

Proposer

Changes 2011 March 05 AdrianB38 - add title

Discussion

Date

Id: Data-Date01 (was date part of Data03)

Title Approximately known dates

Description:	BetterGEDCOM must allow the recording of approximately known dates.
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	GEDCOM already allows dates to be "about yyyy". Note - this is <i>not</i> the same as assigning a probability to a value - e.g. "Probably 1812" is not the same as "About 1812", and this requirement is <i>not</i> intended to cover concepts like "Probably 1812". See also Data03
Source:	Tom Wetmore's Goal and Requirements plus various discussion pages. DeadEnds Date Formats Discussion of dates in the DeadEnds data model.
Way forward?:	
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Id:	Data-Date02
Title	Calendars
Description:	A BetterGEDCOM file must define the calendar to be used for each date stored in the file. This definition should be accompanied by a definition of the ordering of the date items within the date (e.g. year/month/day or day/month/year or month/day/year or ...)
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	Dates may occur in source documents in all sorts of calendar representations. It is desirable that the codified representation of that should differ as little as possible from the written characters in the source, to reduce the scope for error in input or output. Therefore, BetterGEDCOM needs to accommodate Jewish, Muslim, Chinese, etc, calendars, Julian or Gregorian calendars by country (e.g. with France and England on Gregorian and Julian calendars respectively(?) the two countries did not use the same day/month for "today"); French Revolutionary

calendars, etc. Sometimes a date is just a text string.

Source: [[message/view/DeadEnds
Model/34409442|Discussion of dates in the
DeadEnds data model]]

Way forward?: Create this in the Data Model.
To be decided: Whether Data Model includes a facility for defining a default calendar and date-item ordering, or whether every date must be marked up with these items. If the latter option is chosen, this relies on intelligent application design to reduce user workload.
Note also - there is an assumption here that dates will be stored in various calendars and not as (e.g.) number of days since an agreed event.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer

Changes 2011 Feb 22 15:22 CET - alter description to "must" to match "mandatory" importance.
2011 Feb 22 15:43 CET - add to "Way Forward" comments about possible default calendar and assumption that dates will be stored in calendar form
2011 Feb 22 21:05 CET - alter description to separate definition of calendar itself from the ordering of the date items as these are 2 concepts. Also attempt to clarify Way Forward re defaults.

Discussion [Data-Date02 modified](#)

Id: Data-Date03

Title: Date phrases

Description: BetterGEDCOM must allow a "date" to be entered as a phrase where the values are not recognizable to a date parser, but which gives a human reader information about when an event occurred. It must allow such a phrase to have an optional date in parseable format that can be used to interpret the

phrase.

Importance:

Mandatory

Why?:

1. GEDCOM Standard 5.5 includes these two as DATE_PHRASE and INT ()
2. A phrase may give time-relative information even if a date is not known or not known well - e.g. "at the Battle of Brunanburh" is more informative than "between 934 and 939"; or "on a Tuesday in the spring of 1873" can be interpreted as 1873 but the words are informative.

Source:

GEDCOM Standard 5.5 [[message/view/DeadEnds Model/34409442|Discussion of dates in the DeadEnds data model.]]

Way forward?:

Include this in the Data Model

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer:

AdrianB38

Changes:

Discussion:

[Data-Date03 Date Phrases](#)

Event

Id:

Data-Event01 (was Data10)

Title:

Events with multiple people, with roles

Description:

BetterGEDCOM must support the recording of events that affect multiple people. In particular, it must be possible to record the role of each person in the event.

Importance:

Mandatory

Why?

Events do affect multiple people. Current GEDCOM has almost no ability to record multi-person events, excepting perhaps births and adoptions. However, the parents of a birth in GEDCOM are usually

implied by the parents of the appropriate family, creating potential issues when that family is an adoptive one. It would be better to have a birth event involving three people (e.g. child and two biological parents typically), with this data separate from the family.

Source: Various discussion pages. A typical item in many other post-GEDCOM 5.5 proposals.

Way forward?: Create this in the Data Model.

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer:

Changes: AdrianB38 - 2011 Apr 17 - Add link to new discussion to record things we're liable to forget.

Discussion [Discussion](#)

Id: **Data-Event02** (was Data09)

Title: **Multiple places per event**

Description: BetterGEDCOM should support the recording of multiple places for a single event.

Importance: Very desirable

Why? Current GEDCOM allows the recording of one place for events. There are application extensions to record more than one - e.g. FamilyHistorian records two places for emigration - a "from" and a "to" place. Users may also define "Journey" events, where a "from" and a "to" location would seem natural.

Source: Various discussion pages. [Qualifying Locations for Events](#)

Way forward?:

- Analyse whether there is a need for more than two places per event - e.g. "from", "to", "via";

- Analyse whether location-roles are mandatory, optional or forbidden.
(Location-roles refers to the role that a location plays in an event. Examples of roles are "from" and "to". Locations without roles would be just listed, e.g. "The 1906 earthquake happened at X and Y")
- If roles are needed - what are the roles?
- Create this in the Data Model.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

AdrianB38 - 2011 Mar 22 - make explicit this is multiple places for one event
AdrianB38 - 2011 Mar 24 - Clarify options for roles or not in 2nd bullet of "Way Forward"; Remove "Way Forward" bullet "Should multiple place events be listed?" as this is ambiguous and covered by 2nd bullet

Discussion:

Discussion on [Multiple Places per event](#)

Id:

Data-Event03

Title:

Central registry of event types (and possibly other types)

Description:

BetterGEDCOM should create a central registry of event types that are not defined in the main standard. The registry shall be updated more frequently than the main standard. It could potentially contain types used in structures containing non-standard type and value pairs. A procedure (rules) must be defined for maintenance of the registry. The information registered for event types (and other types) must be specified (eg. type name, definition, roles, event value types).

Importance:

Why?:

Source:

[Custom GEDCOM Tags](#)

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id: Data-Event04

Title: Events over a time-period

Description: BetterGEDCOM must define what an Event is and must allow an Event to take place over a time-period of more than one day.

Importance: Mandatory

Why?: Current GEDCOM allows an Event to last for more than 1 day. Hence there will be many GEDCOM files containing such Events.

Page 35 of the (draft) GEDCOM v5.5.1 standard says:

"As a general rule, events are things that happen on a specific date. Use the date form 'BET date AND date' to indicate that an event took place at some time between two dates. Resist the temptation to use a 'FROM date TO date' form in an event structure. If the subject of your recording occurred over a period of time, then it is probably not an event, but rather an attribute or fact."

This can give the impression that events are *only* things that happen on a specific date. However, even this wording specifically allows events occurring over a period of time.

For clarity, the BetterGEDCOM standard must make it clear that events can occur over a period of time.

Source: See discussion [Syntax09 Define Event vs. Attribute](#).

This discussion was primarily about distinguishing the difference between Events and Attributes if necessary. In there were various postings about the definition of an Event and whether it could last over several days or not. Those discussions stand independent of the differences between events and attributes.

Way forward?:

Define the event entity thus in the Data Model. Note the proposed definition in [Syntax09 Define Event vs. Attribute](#) that an event is something leading to a change - this might be a useful definition.

Dependencies:

Data-Event01 "Events with multiple people, with roles" and Data-Event02 "Multiple places per event" will influence the way forward on this.

Approval status:

Proposer:

AdrianB38 2011 Mar 25

Changes:

Discussion:

Id:

Data-Event05

Title:

Event Classes

Description:

BetterGEDCOM should define Event Classes grouping similar events into one class describing common rules for how the data recorded about events should be handled by programs. One example is a "Marriage event class" (this name may be changed) that would contain events such as Marriage, Civil Marriage, Cohabitation start, Partnership and other events that describes a union between two persons - all these events should be treated by programs as they currently handle marriage, although with different terms.

Importance:

Why?:

The purpose is to allow new events to be defined in the standard, a registry (see Data-Event03) or by users that will be handled by applications according

to rules defined by the class that the event belongs to. The rules may be simple, just saying that the events shall be handled in the same way, when a new type of event is defined to be in the same class as a well established event type. Classes will be used when the event requires a more specialised handling than can be handled by a sentence template, e.g. when marriage events are placed in special paragraphs in reports - or depending on how data about families will be recorded in BetterGEDCOM, the event could be the basis for establishment of a data structure in the program representing a family.

Source:	This has been discussed in Data-Fam02 and in ?? (earlier discussions?) "I Want My Genealogy Software And BetterGEDCOM To Do This" on Shortcomings of GEDCOM
Way forward?:	The possible types of classes should be identified and populated with an initial set of events. The initial reason to do this is to verify that there is a need for classes. Rules should be defined for each class.
Dependencies:	
Approv status:	
Proposer:	
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Id:	Data-Event06
Title:	Events as separate records
Description:	BetterGEDCOM must allow other records to reference events. Thus events should be recorded as separate records.
Importance:	
Why?:	There is a need for other records to reference an event, for example from structures recording

administrative information. Also, since we will have multiple persons participating in an event, the event should not be stored in the record of just one of those persons.

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer: 17 March 2011 gthorud

Changes:

Discussion:

Again, acknowledgements are made to the Volere Requirements Shell template in "Mastering the Requirements Process" by Robertson & Robertson

Family

Id: **Data-Fam01** (was Data06)

Title **Families independent of biological relations**

Description: BetterGEDCOM must support the recording of genealogy / family history data about the family as a (possibly informal) social grouping, independent of any biological relationship or legal adoptions.

Importance: Mandatory

Why? Family units exist where there is no underlying biological relationship and no legal adoptions. Biological relationships exist where there is no family in any meaningful sense. Existing GEDCOM files may contain data (possibly user-defined tags) recorded about the social grouping of the family, which must be carried forward on conversion to BetterGEDCOM format. Note this requirement does not say anything about

how that data will be represented on the file, specifically it does not say anything about how evidence and conclusions are represented.

Source: GEDCOM does this. Various discussion pages.

Way forward?: Create this in the Data Model.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer

Changes

Discussion [Data-Fam01 Family as a Social Grouping](#)

Id: **Data-Fam02**

Title: **Cohabitants**

Description: BetterGEDCOM must support the recording of information about cohabitants, with or without, common children. Cohabitants should be treated in the same way as married couples, and there should be events for the establishment and dissolution of "cohabitants". Some couples may start out as cohabitants and then marry.

Importance:

Why?: The percentage of couples that are cohabitants is increasing in the western world, in some countries it is as high as 25-30%. BetterGEDCOM should not discriminate people in such relations.

Source:

Way forward?: Depends on how BG implements relations/families in general. It may be sufficient with event types similar to marriage and divorce.

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer: 26 March 2011 gthorud

Changes:

Discussion:

Group

Id: **Data-Group01** (was Data05)

Title: **Data about groups of persons (eg. organisations)**

Description: BetterGEDCOM must support the recording of historic data about groups of persons, such as organisations, companies, regiments.

Importance: Mandatory

Why?: Organisations, companies, regiments, etc, have a major impact on individuals, yet no mechanism currently exists in GEDCOM to record any of their details in a structured manner, nor to link organisation data to people.
Note this requirement does not say anything about how that data will be represented on the file, specifically it does not say anything about how evidence and conclusions are represented.

Source: [Shortcomings of GEDCOM](#)

Way forward?: Create this in the Data Model.

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Person (was Individual)

Id: **Data-Ind01** (was Data04)

Title: **Data about persons**

Description: BetterGEDCOM must support the recording of genealogy / family history data about persons.

Importance: Mandatory

Why?:	Statement of the obvious. Note this requirement does not say anything about how that data will be represented on the file, specifically it does not say anything about how evidence and conclusions are represented.
Source:	GEDCOM does this.
Way forward?:	Create this in the Data Model.
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Id:	Data-Ind02 (was Data07)
Title:	Biological relations independent of family
Description:	BetterGEDCOM must support the recording of biological relationships independent of any family grouping. Biological relationships must include surrogacy, etc.
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?	Biological relationships can exist where there is no family in any meaningful sense. Existing GEDCOM files create a family for biological relationships. This is not always appropriate. Note this requirement does not say anything about how that data will be represented on the file, specifically it does not say anything about how evidence and conclusions are represented.
Source:	Various discussion pages.
Way forward?:	Create this in the Data Model.
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer	
Changes	

Discussion	Data-Ind02 Biological rel'ns indep of family
Id:	Data-Ind03
Title:	Non-biological, non-family relationships
Description:	BetterGEDCOM must provide a means to document relationships between individuals that are not based on biology or family, e.g. "X is the friend of Y".
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	GEDCOM has the ASSO tag in the ASSOCIATION_STRUCTURE (see GEDCOM 5.5) that may be used to document such relationship as god-parent, friendship, etc. Also the ALIA tag can be used to link individuals' records, when the individual are suspected to be the same person.
Source:	GEDCOM Standard version 5.5 ASSOCIATION_STRUCTURE and ALIA tag Tom Wetmore 2011 Feb 27 Syntax09 Define Event vs. Attribute discussion
Way forward?:	Comments on possible ways forward
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	AdrianB38 2011 Feb 27
Changes:	
Discussion:	Discussion
Id:	Data-Ind04
Title	Sex-change individuals
Description:	BetterGEDCOM should support the recording of sex-changes for individuals.
Importance:	Very desirable

Why?	There are individuals who have gone through a sex-change. BetterGEDCOM should be able to describe their history accurately, as it does anyone else.
Source:	Various discussion pages.
Way forward?:	Need to agree on what values are required - is male / female enough? Is there a need to consider not just sex (the biological and physiological characteristics) but also gender (the social construct)?
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer	AdrianB38 2011 March 05
Changes	
Discussion	

Person Names

Id:	Data-PersonNames01
Title:	Sorting on multiple given names and surnames
Description:	BetterGEDCOM shall provide a way to identify parts of names (whole words or parts of words) that shall be used for sorting, identifying if the part should sort as a given name or surname. It shall allow several such surname parts and could allow several given name parts. A priority could be assigned the name parts sorting as surnames. All this information related to sorting is a suggestion to the recipient for how name parts should be sorted.
Importance:	Very desirable
Why?:	Many cultures operate with several surnames. It should be possible to sort on those names in indexes etc. The same applies to given names (forenames) because a person may be known by any one of those given names. Some words in a name (eg. prefixes)

are not used for sorting, and often the beginning of a name is not used for sorting (d' in d'Hondt) (Honda should sort before d'Hondt), or one "word" may sort as two names eg. both Berg and Olsen in Berg-Olsen. When there are several surnames, some countries consider the last surname to be most "significant" while others considers the first to be the most significant. Identification of these parts have no influence on how a name is printed in reports or charts. The need to sort on several given names could be discussed, also the priority of surnames. Important: For example, a middle name could indicated to be sorted as a given name or surname, but that does not imply that it is classified as a given name or surname in other contexts, and this proposal does not imply anything about any need to classify name parts as middle name, patronymic etc (which there may perhaps not be a need for).

Source:

Page:

<http://bettergedcom.wikispaces.com/Person-Name+Elements> Discussion:

<http://bettergedcom.wikispaces.com/message/view/Person-Name+Elements/30777083> External Gramps

page:

[http://gramps-project.org/wiki/index.php?title=GEP_S_021: Additional Name Fields](http://gramps-project.org/wiki/index.php?title=GEP_S_021:_Additional_Name_Fields)

Way forward?:

A program could offer separate fields for the entry of these parts or use special notation.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

gthorud 25 Feb

Changes:

Discussion:

<http://bettergedcom.wikispaces.com/message/view/Better+GEDCOM+Requirements+Catalog/34815484>

Place

Id:	Data-Place01 (was location part of Data03)
Title	Approximately known locations
Description:	BetterGEDCOM must allow the recording of approximately known locations.
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	GEDCOM already allows dates to be "about yyyy". Locations may also be equally inexact, e.g. "at sea between England and Australia". Note - this is <i>not</i> the same as assigning a probability to a value - e.g. "Probably London" is not the same as "Near London" and this requirement is <i>not</i> intended to cover concepts like "Probably London". See also Data03
Source:	Tom Wetmore's Goal and Requirements plus various discussion pages.
Way forward?:	
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	AdrianB38
Changes:	2011 Mar 22 AdrianB38 - rename from "Approximate known approximate locations" to "Approximately known locations"
Discussion:	
Id:	Data-Place02 (was Data08)
Title	Recording of structured data about locations
Description:	BetterGEDCOM should support the recording of structured, historic data about locations, for example multiple names, default prepositions for names, photos, maps, sources and links for access to geographic information services.

Importance:	Very desirable
Why?	Current GEDCOM does not even recognise "Place" as an entity - there is a rich amount of information about places over time, much of which will affect people.
Source:	"GEDCOM Won't Transfer This" on Shortcomings of GEDCOM
Way forward?:	Create this in the Data Model.
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Id:	Data-Place03
Title:	A place can be member of several place hierarchies
Description:	BetterGEDCOM should support the recording of places of various types as members of several hierarchies of places (locations), possibly changing hierarchies over time, and possibly with surety assigned to the relation to a higher place – in a way where the path through the hierarchy to the top is unambiguously identified for each place name.
Importance:	Very desirable
Why?	Gedcom supports hierarchies of names in events, but does not link these names and hierarchies unambiguously to place entities. This is not sufficient to describe the facts of history related to a place.
Source:	“ tracking land changes idea ” discussion and the Location entity page
Way forward?:	Create this in the Data Model.
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	

Id:	Data-Place04
Title:	Merging and/or splitting of places/locations
Description:	BetterGEDCOM shall be able to record identifiers of the place(s) that was split and/or merged when a place (location/property/region) was created.
Importance:	
Why?:	The origin of a place is an important information about a place, and may in many cases provide evidence about relations between persons.
Source:	http://bettergedcom.wikispaces.com/message/view/Location+entity/30888227 http://bettergedcom.wikispaces.com/message/view/Location+entity/30668879?o=40
Way forward?:	The info should preferably be recorder by an event referencing the involved placeS, also giving date and source but possibly no persons.
Dependencies:	
Appr. status:	
Proposer:	22 Feb gthorud
Changes:	
Discussion:	

Id:	Data-Place05
Title:	Place identifiers
Description:	BetterGEDCOM shall be able to record identifiers, possibly multipart/hierarchical, for a place used for example in land records, map databases, property owner databases, statistics. The identifier type should accompany each identifier part, i.e. a sequence of type/value pairs.
Importance:	

Why?:	The identifier can be used to locate and lookup in various paper sources and , and is also in itself a historic fact. An identifier is often unique where a name is not. Several identifiers may have been used over time.
Source:	http://bettergedcom.wikispaces.com/message/view/Location+entity/30668879?o=40
Way forward?:	
Dependencies:	
Appr. status:	
Proposer:	22 Feb gthorud
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Id:	Data-Place06
Title	Location to include address
Description:	The location in BetterGEDCOM should be able to specify an individual address.
Importance:	Very desirable
Why?	<p>Current GEDCOM5.5 defines a PLACE as a "jurisdictional name to identify the place or location of an event". The address of an individual building is generally not regarded as being a PLACE under this definition. Since many events are known to occur at precise addresses, the address details are kept separately in the ADDRESS_STRUCTURE. This structure, however, repeats items like city, state, country.</p> <p>To avoid duplication and the consequent danger of values <i>not</i> being correctly duplicated, the successor to PLACE should include the ability to specify an individual address.</p>
Source:	Various discussion pages.

Way forward?:

- Create this in the Data Model.
- To be decided - whether a location's details in BetterGEDCOM should include Postal Code or Phone Number, which are also part of ADDRESS_STRUCTURE of GEDCOM 5.5, but appear to have dubious relevance to historical events or characteristics.
- Note this does not mean that the ADDRESS_STRUCTURE of GEDCOM 5.5 has no future in BetterGEDCOM, since the address of a repository, for instance, does not need to have the same structure as a location for historic events or characteristics.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer

AdrianB38

Changes:

Discussion:

2011 Mar 03 - Created. Split off from Data-Char02 the requirement that location goes down to address to make it more obvious

"Ship"

Id: **Data-Ship01** (was Data11)

Title **Data about miscellaneous entities**

Description: BetterGEDCOM could support the recording of historic data about miscellaneous entities or artefacts such as ships, locomotive types, etc.

Importance: Desirable

Why?: Individuals, organisations, etc., are usually involved with many physical artefacts, yet no mechanism currently exists in GEDCOM to record any of the artefact's details in a structured manner, nor to link these things to people, etc. Examples could include a summary of the history of a ship used for several cross-Atlantic journeys by different people. These details could be entered in one place, not against each person.

Note this requirement does not say anything about how that data will be represented on the file, specifically it does not say anything about how evidence and conclusions are represented.

Source:

[Shortcomings of GEDCOM](#)

Way forward?:

Create this in the Data Model.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

DNA

Id:

DNA01

Title:

Results from DNA tests

Description:

BetterGEDCOM should be able to record results of DNA tests.

Importance:

Why?:

Many genealogy programs allow recording of such data.

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer:

19 March 2011 GeneJ

Changes:

Discussion:

To do - add sources, repositories, etc.

Evidence

Id:	Evidence01
Title	Evidence & Conclusion Model
Description:	BetterGEDCOM could handle evidence and not just conclusions
Importance:	Desirable
Why?:	<p>Current GEDCOM is structured so that data about an individual or family is always the "latest working hypothesis". It is therefore difficult to identify the actual evidence, particularly when the "latest working hypothesis" is a composite of various bits of evidence.</p> <p>Also, in the event of discovery of an error, it can be difficult to (a) identify subsequent issues and (b) revert to an acceptable set of "working hypothesis". This is because adding new or revised conclusions to current GEDCOM is generally a destructive process resulting in the replacement or deleting of superseded conclusions.</p> <p>To overcome this, it appears as a minimum to be necessary to record evidence and conclusions separately. This allows adding new or revised conclusions to be a non-destructive process.</p> <p>See Evidence and Conclusion Process</p> <p>Note this requirement is effectively the same as (possibly part) adopting the "Evidence and Conclusion <i>Model</i>", which is linked to, but not the same as, the "Evidence and Conclusion <i>Process</i>".</p> <p>See Glossary</p>
Source:	"I Want My Genealogy Software And BetterGEDCOM To Do This" on Shortcomings of GEDCOM
Way forward?:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a first cut at a comprehensive set of genealogical processes that cover both Research Administration and recording of both Evidence & Conclusions.• Define which parts of the processes are in the scope of Research Administration and which in that of Evidence & Conclusions• Consider how the model and processes support "roll-back" to an acceptable state

after discovery of an error.

- Consider feasibility and therefore the priorities of documenting (a) requirements and (b) the data model relating to Research Administration and Evidence & Conclusions and establish what is do-able in relation to timescales

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer

Changes:

2011 Feb 22 17:45 CET - attempt to clarify this is about the "Evidence and Conclusion *Model*", which is linked to, but not the same as, the "Evidence and Conclusion *Process*".

2011 April 11 17:00 CET - adjust "Way Forward" in light of discussions. Add distinction btw destructive process for adding new stuff in current GEDCOM, conclusion-only, and non-destructive process in Evidence & Conclusion

Discussion

[Evidence01](#) and [Evidence 01](#) Please use the latter one. See also [Defining E&C for BetterGEDCOM](#)

Id:

Evidence02

Title:

Proof Argument and/or Process

Description:

BetterGEDCOM should support users need to record and share proof arguments supporting and/or supported by the evidence and conclusions therein recorded or shared.

Importance:

Very Desirable

Why?:

Supports faithful recording of research status and results.

Source:

<http://www.bcgcertification.org/skillbuilders/skblld091.html>

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer: GeneJ

Changes 2011 Feb 21 - created
2011 Feb 22 - Fixed URL for link to discussion (GJ)
2011 Feb 22 - Fixed keyboard witch's duplication in the description field above.

Discussion: <http://bettergedcom.wikispaces.com/message/view/Better+GEDCOM+Requirements+Catalog/34594682>

International

Id: International01

Title Support for international character sets

Description: BetterGEDCOM must be able to handle text expressed in most of the world's writing systems

Importance: Mandatory

Why?: Genealogy is not confined to countries with the American-English 26 letter alphabet

Source:

Way forward?: Unicode UTF-8

Dependencies:

Approval status: See International02

Id: International02

Title Unicode

Description: BetterGEDCOM must use Unicode and only Unicode to represent text

Importance: Mandatory

Why?: Unicode is the universally accepted solution for handling the multitude of modern, historical and

ancient character sets used by all human cultures. UTF-8 is the most common byte encoding of Unicode and supported by all modern software development environments

Source:

Way forward?:

Unicode UTF-8

Dependencies:

International01

Approval status:

Developers Meeting 17 Jan 2011 approved "Use Unicode (only) for the consistent encoding, representation and handling of text expressed in most of the world's writing systems"
This is International01 plus International02 expressed in one sentence.
Developers Meeting 31 Jan 2011 approved "Unicode character set in UTF-8 encoding, and optionally support other encoding schemes of Unicode "

Id:

International03

Title

Support for the requirements of many cultures, countries, time periods and belief systems

Description:

BetterGEDCOM must support recording of information about real life in an open-ended set of cultures, countries, time periods and belief systems. It must not be biased towards any one of these.

Importance:

Mandatory

Why?:

BG must support (directly or indirectly) different calendars, events from different religions and cultures, etc.

Source:

Discussion topic ["Goal 5 \(Internationalization\)"](#)

Way forward?:

The BetterGEDCOM project cannot possibly understand all possible calendars, religions, etc. Therefore while we may be able to directly support the best known of them, we will have to cater for the rest indirectly by allowing software companies or users to extend BG to cope with them.

Dependencies: This depends on Syntax04 and Syntax05 re extensibility

Approv. status: The 31st Jan 2011 Developers Meeting passed this: "Goal 5 BetterGEDCOM supports recording of information about real life in an open-ended set of cultures, countries, time periods and belief systems. It should not be biased towards any one of these."

Multimedia

Id: **Multimedia01** (was Syntax02)

Title **Multimedia container**

Description: BetterGEDCOM must use a container specification to hold separate supporting files such as multimedia accompanying the genealogical data. With Multimedia we mean digital resources that may represent photos, scanned images, video, sound, documents, web pages, diagrams, maps, (database?) etc.

Importance: Mandatory

Why?:
1. Embedded files within the genealogical data are generally viewed as a bad idea - they would have been rejected by GEDCOM in the next version after 5.5.
2. A weakness of current GEDCOM is that there is no standard method of transferring linked multimedia with the GEDCOM file, nor of maintaining the links to them after transfer.

Source: Original [Goal 2 bullet 3 Multimedia inclusion and referencing issues Importing Data](#)

Way forward?: Zip is probably in there somewhere

Dependencies:

Approv. status: Developers Meeting 17 Jan 2011 approved this

Id: **Multimedia02**

Title: **Information about multimedia objects**

Description:	BetterGEDCOM must support the recording of information describing each multimedia object. Possible types of information include object encoding type (MIME?), origin/creator/author/publisher, (file) size, title, description, caption, creation time, identification of e.g. persons shown, type of “objects” shown in media (e.g. persons, landscapes, houses), copyright, informal/short identifier/name, setting (type of circumstances/event when created), user defined attributes and attribute types/flags, quality classification, creating program name&version, tags (incl. geo tags), research notes, duration – and more – or less.
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	This information is needed to select, organise and manipulate multimedia objects in genealogy programs and to provide information about the object when included in e.g. reports.
Source:	Multimedia inclusion and referencing issues
Way forward?:	The various types of information could be split into new requirements. The information should be held in an entity and top level record, possibly by supporting structures.
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Proposer:	March 4 2011 gthorud
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Id:	Multimedia03
Title:	References to Multimedia
Description:	BetterCEDCOM should allow information recorded about persons, families, groups, places, sources, events etc. to reference multimedia objects. The

reference could contain information about the media's relevance in the referencing context. It would also be useful if classify the media in the referring context, eg. if the media is a preferred media or one or more classifications that could eg. be used to affect it's location in reports.

Importance:

Why?:

Information about the relevance in the referencing context could say for example "This is a photo of Peter together with his classmates in 1955". It could overrule similar information recorded about the photo for general use. The classification could allow some media to be printed above the text about a person and other media below, or in a scrapbook etc. but could also be used for other purposes - this is useful when transferred between one user's programs.

Source:

[Multimedia inclusion and referencing issues](#)

Way forward?:

The reference should most likely be to a multimedia entity/record containing information about the multimedia, see Multimedia02. It must be possible to reference multimedia in notes and excerpts.

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer:

March 6 2011 gthorud.

Changes:

Discussion:

Id:

Multimedia04

Title:

Grouping of multimedia in a container

Description:

A container (see Multimedia01) shall be able to group the media in a tree structure possibly reflecting the directory structure on the exporting program's computer.

Importance:

Why?: The structure is most likely useful to the receiver of the media.

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer: 6 March 2011 gthorud

Changes:

Discussion:

Source

Id: **Source01**

Title: **Information, Source and Evidence Type**

Description: BetterGEDCOM should record separately whether a Source is, for a given event or characteristic:

- Primary or Secondary Information (latter includes tertiary)
- Original or derivative source (e.g. paper or copy/digital image; document or compiled summary; document or transcribed version)
- Direct, indirect or negative evidence

Importance: Very Desirable

Why?: GEDCOM only has QUAY (quality) for this; QUAY is not a substitute for the specifics, as herein described.

Source: [Discussion page on Shortcomings of GEDCOM](#)

Way forward?: Include data items

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer: AdrianB38

Changes: 11 Mar 2011: Added Title (GJ)

Discussion: [Source01](#)

Id: **Source02**

Title **Certainty Assessment (QUAY)**

Description: BetterGEDCOM should record the qualitative degree of likelihood that a source is true for a given event or characteristic.

Importance: Very Desirable

Why?: GEDCOM has QUAY (quality) for this but the GEDCOM Standard is not clear what QUAY value should be assigned to a Primary source of Questionable accuracy

Source: [[message/view/Shortcomings of GEDCOM/32262084|Discussion page on Shortcomings of GEDCOM]]

Way forward?: Include data items

Dependencies:

Approv. Status:

Proposer:

Changes: 12 Mar 2011: Added Title (GJ)

Discussion: [Source 02-Certainty Assessment \(QUAY\)](#)

Id: **Source03**

Title **Sourcing of child / parent relationships**

Description: BetterGEDCOM must provide the ability to record the sources and citations to justify why a child is believed to be in a particular relationship with its

	(birth or whatever) parents
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	GEDCOM has no ability to do this. The current citations and sources are either for a family as a whole or for individual birth (or whatever) events that only mention the child.
Source:	GEDCOM Messes This Up on Shortcomings of GEDCOM
Way forward?:	Include data items Note the way forward may vary depending on the solutions chosen for Data-Fam01 and Data-Ind02 "Biological relations independent of family"
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	AdrianB38
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Id:	Source04
Title:	Length of citations
Description:	There must be no limit in BetterGEDCOM on the length of a citation, whether that citation applies to a source (often expressed as part of a bibliography entry) or an event, attribute, person, relationship, etc, etc (often expressed as a footnote or end-note).
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	The majority of citations will be short. However, some users <i>may</i> wish to record a Proof Argument inside the citation. Any limit on the length of such a citation would be arbitrary and could be exceeded, so should not be permitted. See also requirement Syntax10 "No restrictions on item length or value", which is a generalised version of this requirement.

Source:	See discussion of " The Missing Link - a new entity type or a new type of source? " and specifically the discussion of the options for citations in there.
Way forward?:	While many users would never wish to use lengthy citations, there seems no good reason to forbid their use.
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Proposer:	AdrianB38
Changes:	Created 2001 April 17 15:50 CET
Discussion:	Discussion
Id:	Source05
Title:	Citations in notes
Description:	BetterGEDCOM should allow citations to be entered anywhere in in the text of notes.
Importance:	
Why?:	For the same reason as footnotes are used in many texts to cite sources.
Source:	
Way forward?:	One way to do it is to have separate records for citations.
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Proposer:	
Changes:	
Discussion:	

Support for the standard

Id:	Support01
Title:	Support for multiple birth, death characteristics
Description:	Programs claiming support for BetterGEDCOM must support multiple birth, death characteristics for a person. Support means that the program must be able display the facts related to several occurrences of the characteristic, and allow recording of several such by the user.
Importance:	
Why?:	See Char03
Source:	
Way forward?:	The same requirement should be considered for other basic characteristics.
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Proposer:	6 March 2011 gthorud
Changes:	
Discussion:	

Syntax

Id:	Syntax01
Title	Underlying syntax
Description:	BetterGEDCOM's underlying syntax must be an existing, non-proprietary syntax
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	We do not want to reinvent the wheel
Source:	Original Goal 2 bullet 1

Way forward?:	Options include XML, JSON, GEDCOM
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Proposer:	
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Syntax02 has been moved to Multimedia01	
Id:	Syntax03
Title	Content scope
Description:	The BetterGEDCOM file format must define data relating to the study of genealogy / family history.
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	Raison d'etre of the format - statement of the obvious. The coverage of BetterGEDCOM must be wider than existing formats in order to provide a reason for its adoption.
Source:	Original Goal 3
Way forward?:	Define the data in a Data Model etc.
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Id:	Syntax04
Title	Extensibility by software companies

Description:	The BetterGEDCOM file format must be capable of extension by software companies. Extensions must be kept permanently separate from any later definitions in BetterGEDCOM format.
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. GEDCOM can be extended so to remove the facility would be a step backwards.2. Many GEDCOM files exist with extensions.
Source:	Original Goal 3
Way forward?:	Note that extensions in GEDCOM are identified by an underscore, which applies only to extensions. Any new GEDCOM tags will not have the underscore so will not be confused with extensions. An equivalent mechanism needs to be used for BetterGEDCOM.
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Id:	Syntax05
Title	User Extensibility of events and characteristics
Description:	The list of events, properties, characteristics, etc, of individuals, etc, in the BetterGEDCOM file format must be capable of extension by users. Extensions must be kept permanently separate from any later definitions in BetterGEDCOM format.
Importance:	Mandatory
Why?:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. GEDCOM can be extended so to remove the facility would be a step backwards.2. Many GEDCOM files exist with user-defined

	events.
Source:	Original Goal 3
Way forward?:	Note that user defined events and attributes in GEDCOM are identified by an underscore, which applies only to them. Any new GEDCOM tags will not have the underscore so will not be confused with user defined events, etc. An equivalent mechanism needs to be used for BetterGEDCOM.
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	
Changes:	
Discussion:	
Id:	Syntax06
Title:	Define one way of doing a thing
Description:	BetterGEDCOM should define just one way of doing one thing.
Importance:	Very Desirable
Why?:	More than one way may cause ambiguity and extra programming for programmers
Source:	Original Goal 7
Way forward?:	It may be sensible to agree specific exclusions to this requirement, e.g. for in-line notes and separate note records, where the extra programming work is trivial and does <i>not</i> create ambiguity.
Dependencies:	Issue 1: It is not always possible to agree that two things are, in reality, the same thing. For instance, whether or not in-line notes and separate note-records are, in practical terms, the same thing, has been the topic of debate.

Issue 2: If two separate methods in GEDCOM type formats are merged into one, then it will not be possible to round-trip data from a GEDCOM type format to BG and back again coming up with the same data.

Approv. status:

Proposer:

Changes:

2011 Feb 22 - Updated template format to add rows for title, proposer and discussion; added title, added link to discussion (also added discussion topic) (GJ)

Discussion:

[Define one way of doing a thing](#)

Id:

Syntax07

Title

URIs (URLs) for external information

Description:

BetterGEDCOM format files must be able to contain URI (URL) addresses for external information

Importance:

Mandatory

Why?:

It is necessary for users to record to sources, etc on the Internet. Part of that data will be the URL.

Source:

[Tom Wetmore's Goal and Requirements](#)

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposal:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id:

Syntax08

Title	Feature inheritance from previous event etc. types
Description:	It should be possible for user-defined events, properties, characteristics, etc, of individuals, etc, to inherit features from previously defined events, properties, characteristics, etc.
Importance:	Very desirable
Why?:	<p>Events, properties, characteristics, etc. known to the application software may have logic built into the application to recognise them and process the data from them in certain ways.</p> <p>For instance, the "Marriage" event might be used by the application to propose a family to the user. User-defined events, properties, characteristics, etc., will not normally be recognised by the application so cannot have logic built into the application to recognise them. However, if the user-defined event, property, characteristic, etc., could inherit features belonging to one known to the application, then it would inherit that built-in logic.</p> <p>For instance, "Marriage - civil" might be a user-defined event that inherits details from "Marriage" and so would also be used by the application to propose a family to the user.</p>
Source:	"I Want My Genealogy Software And BetterGEDCOM To Do This" on Shortcomings of GEDCOM
Way forward?:	If events etc are given a type and sub-type, then it would be possible for the user to create a user-defined subtype of an application defined type, and thus inherit the processing done for that type. For instance, an event "Marriage - civil" might have a type of "Marriage" and a subtype of "civil", thus automatically doing all processing created for the event-type of "Marriage"
Dependencies:	Syntax05 We depend on the application developers to create any processing that recognises events.
Approv. status:	

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id: **Syntax09**Title: **Define Event vs. Attribute**

Description: *Assuming* that the BetterGEDCOM project distinguishes *events* from *properties / facts / attributes / characteristics*, then BetterGEDCOM must define and publish a clear definition of the difference between the two concepts that does not rely on a list of each. In particular, the definition must be clear enough for competent software suppliers and users to understand whether a new item is an event or a property / fact / attribute / characteristic.

Importance: Mandatory

Why?: There is no clear definition in the GEDCOM 5.5 specification of the difference between the two, only a list of events and a list of attributes. This means that a software supplier or user does not always know whether to create an event or attribute. As a result, the same concept can appear as both, resulting in difficulty of exchange of information.

Source: [Discussion on Custom GEDCOM tags](#) [Discussion: Eliminate Facts](#) [Discussion: Events, Properties, Characteristics and Facts](#)

Way forward?: If and when it becomes necessary to distinguish the two concepts, then the Data Model should be updated to record the definition.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer: AdrianB38 2011 Feb 25 22:35

Changes:

Discussion:

[Syntax09 Define Event vs. Attribute](#)

Id:

Syntax10

Title

No restrictions on item length or value

Description:

Data items should have no length restriction in BetterGEDCOM, except as deemed necessary during design.

Data items should have no restrictions on value in BetterGEDCOM, except as deemed necessary during design.

Importance:

Very Desirable

Why?:

Source:

Original [Goal 2 bullet 5](#)

Also [Tom Wetmore's Goal and Requirements](#)

Way forward?:

Compare TextHandling02 "No restrictions on line length", which refers to the overall length of a line.

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Subject of Survey Monkey - relevance? result?

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id:

Syntax11

Title:

Unique Identifiers

Description:

BetterGEDCOM should assign unique identifiers (UIDs) to records, BG-files and "data sets". Data sets (the term could be changed) is a collection of data that may hold information about e.g. "The Olsen family", "Persons in parish X" or "Our genealogy

project" that will be updated over time, and be exported in a BG file at (i)regular intervals. The data set will have a unique identifier, and so will each BGfile containing a snapshot of the data set.

Importance:

Why?:

The various purposes that UUIDs could serve must be more precisely defined. Also the procedures for their assignment and their use.

Source:

This has been discussed in [Data08](#) and [UUIDs - No thanks](#) and [Please lets use UUIDS ...](#) and several other discussions (search for UUID).

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Task01 has been moved to Admin02.

Test

Id:

TestSuite01

Title:

Suite of test data

Description:

BetterGEDCOM should provide a test suite of data that will

- allow software suppliers to assess compliance of their software
- help them to diagnose issues
- assist them to resolve issues.

Importance:	Very Desirable
Why?:	If we can't do it, others will - and probably get it wrong. This will also meet developers halfway.
Source:	Original Goal 4 (<i>I need to check up subsequent discussions on this</i>)
Way forward?:	
Dependencies:	
Approval status:	
Proposer:	
Changes:	
Discussion:	

Text Handling

Id:	TextHandling01
Title	Formatting mark-up for text
Description:	BetterGEDCOM should define a method of marking up text with formatting information. It should be available in all appropriate fields
Importance:	Very Desirable
Why?:	This is a consistent request - the ability to format notes with italics, bold, etc.
Source:	Original Goal 2 bullet 4
Way forward?:	Allowing selected HTML or HTML-style tags?
Dependencies:	
Approv. status:	
Proposer:	
Changes:	

Discussion:

Id: **TextHandling02**

Title: **No restriction on line length**

Description: Lines should have no length restriction in BetterGEDCOM, except as deemed necessary during design.

Importance: Very Desirable

Why?:

Source: Original [Goal 2 bullet 5](#)
Also [Tom Wetmore's Goal and Requirements](#)

Way forward?: Compare Syntax10 (was TextHandling03) "No restrictions on item length", which refers to the length of an individual item.

Dependencies:

Approv. status: Subject of Survey Monkey - result?

Proposer:

Changes:

Discussion:

Id: **TextHandling03**

Title: **Footnotes/endnotes in notes**

Description: BetterGEDCOM should allow references to footnotes or endnotes that contains just text (not a source citation).

Importance: Very Desirable

Why?: Such footnotes/endnotes could contain comments or other text that may not be considered important enough to be entered in the note itself. See also Citations in Notes - Source05.

Source:

Way forward?:

The text could be surrounded by special codes in the note text, or be contained in a separate structure.

Dependencies:

Approv. status:

Proposer:

17 April 2011 gthorud

Changes:

Discussion:

Timelines

Id:

Timeline01

Title:

Timelines

Description:

This is just a placeholder so far.

Importance:

Why?:

Source:

Way forward?:

Dependencies:

Approval status:

Proposer:

20 March 2011 gthorud

Changes:

Discussion: