

Creating custom entry forms

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A custom form allows your users to edit complex data structures on a single page, instead of editing one triple at a time.

Overview

Custom entry forms allow VIVO to transcend the general-purpose, utilitarian editing scheme of Vitro. Without custom entry forms, VIVO users must edit each RDF triple individually. With a custom entry form, users can edit a complex data structure on a single page.

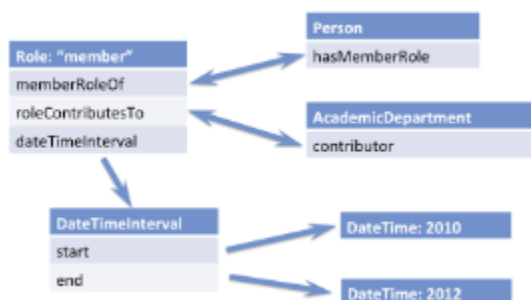
VIVO is distributed with a dozens of custom entry form generators. You may want to modify these form generators, or add more of your own.

An example

Say you wish to establish that a particular person is a member of a particular academic department. This relationship can be expressed in a single RDF statement.

But what if the academic department doesn't exist in VIVO yet? You will want to create that department, and assign a name to it. You may also want to record the role that your person plays in that department, when their membership began, and when it ended (if it is not ongoing).

The data structure for this information looks something like this:



Note that this reflects the VIVO 1.5 Ontology. The data structures have changed significantly in VIVO 1.6 and beyond.

Without a custom entry form, you would need to record each piece of data individually.

The screenshot shows a web interface with a navigation bar at the top containing links for Home, People, Organizations, Research, and Events. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is "Select an existing Member Role for Dog, Charlie". Underneath this heading, the text reads: "There are no entries in the system from which to select." followed by "Please create a new entry." At the bottom of the form, there is a dropdown menu labeled "Member Role (vivo)", a green button labeled "Add a new item of this type", and a red link labeled "or Cancel".

VIVO includes a custom form generator for this relationship. The custom entry form looks like this:

[Home](#)
[People](#)
[Organizations](#)
[Research](#)
[Events](#)

Create membership entry for Dog, Charlie

Membership In *

Academic Department Name *

Select an existing Academic Department or create a new one.

Role in Academic Department *

Years of Participation in Academic Department

Start Year (YYYY)

End Year (YYYY)

or

* required fields

How is it created?

The creation of custom entry forms is an arcane and eldritch art, for which little documentation is available.

Each form requires a Java class known as a `EditConfigurationGenerator`. The generator describes the data structure being created, lists the SPARQL queries used, and includes a reference to the Freemaker template that will render the form.

You can start by examining the existing generators in this directory

[VIVO]/src/edu/cornell/mannlib/vitro/webapp/edit/n3editing/configuration/generators

and the Freemaker templates found here

[VIVO]/productMods/templates/freemaker/edit/forms

There is also a short page of technical description called [Implementing custom forms using N3 editing](#).