This talk explores the possibilities and problems of transforming early modern letters into metadata. During the past decade digital correspondence and manuscript archives of well-known early modern scholars (ca. 1500-1800) have proliferated. Other projects such as the Electronic Enlightenment have republished modern critical editions of transcribed correspondence in a form that makes it possible to search within and between them. It has also become possible to transform scholarly works of references into searchable text that can be enhanced by more recent scholarship, reconfigured to make its contents more usable, and visualized as a map of scholarship in motion. Reflecting on the past few years of developing the “Mapping the Republic of Letters” project at Stanford in collaboration with colleagues and students, this talk offers an overview of recent work in this area and a reflection on what we have learned from the big, medium, and not-so-big data of this corner of the early modern world.

Please RSVP to sts@usc.edu by Oct 8.