Cataloguing Software Ecosystems with swid-reg

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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whoami

Ph.D., Computer Science, 2016
Emphases: File Systems, Digital Forensics, and Information Retrieval

Computer Scientist

UCO Ontology Committee Chair

Ontology Engineer

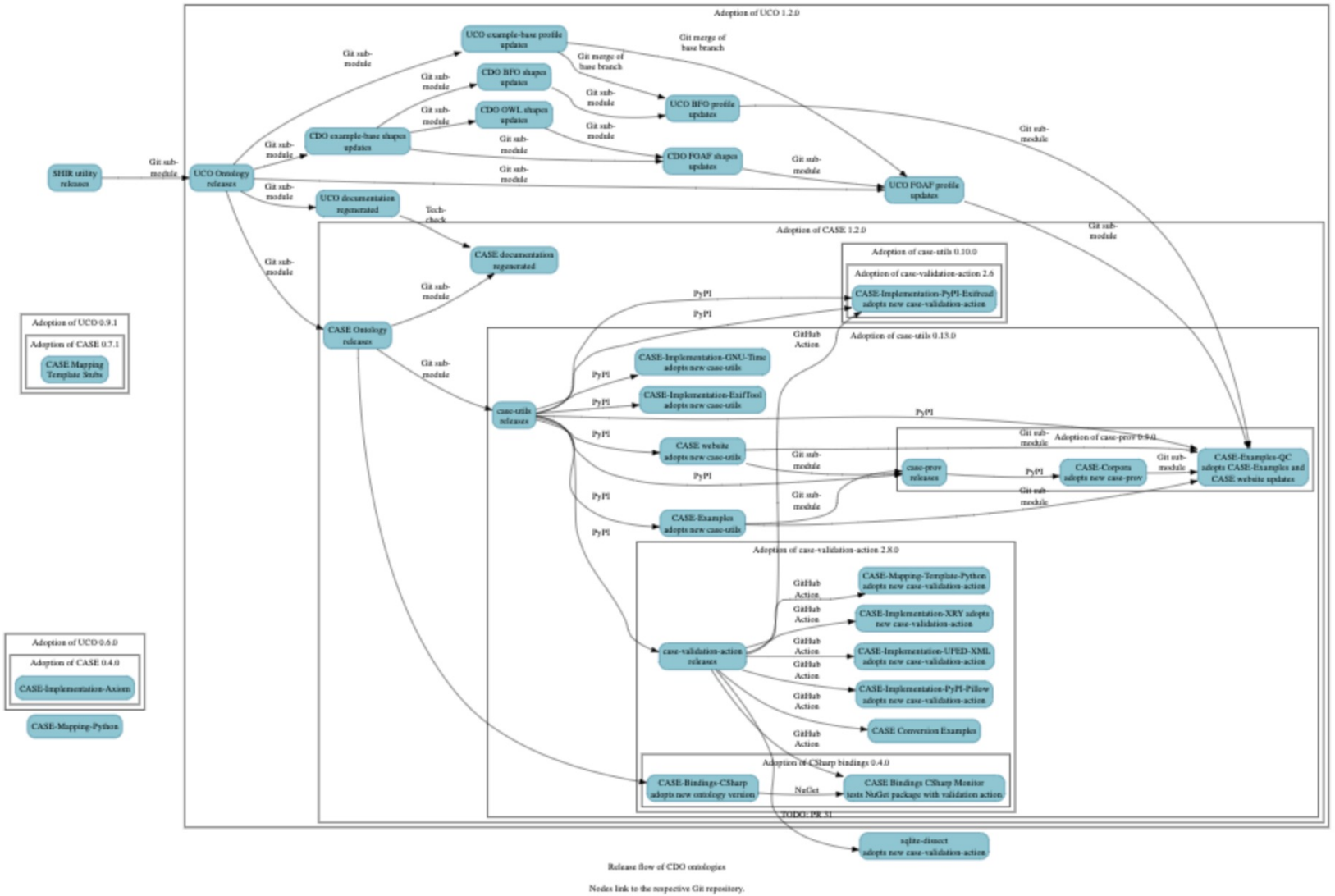
An ontology engineer's perspective on supply chain

The chart on the right is the Cyber Domain Ontology's (CDO) "Release Flow" diagram.

Each teal node is a public GitHub repository, providing an ontology, software, or example data.

Each arrow shows how updates propagate between repositories.

Experience has encouraged keeping update procedures small in human effort, including from external dependencies (e.g. Python code formatters pinned to latest versions).



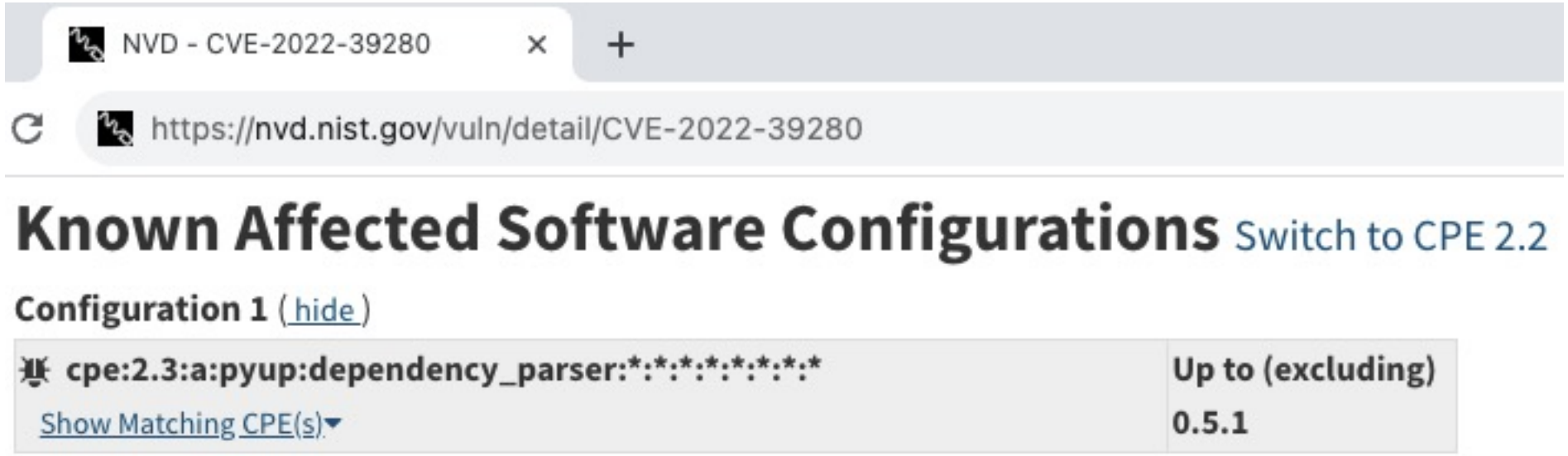
https://cyberdomainontology.org/resources/project_release_flow.html

Outline

- Background: NVD and CPE
- Package managers and swid-reg
- A light touch of ontology, tailored to software supply chain

NVD and CPE

Problem:
CPEs are a significant labor point in NVD.



From “dependency_parser, all versions <0.5.1”, NVD enumerates affected versions.

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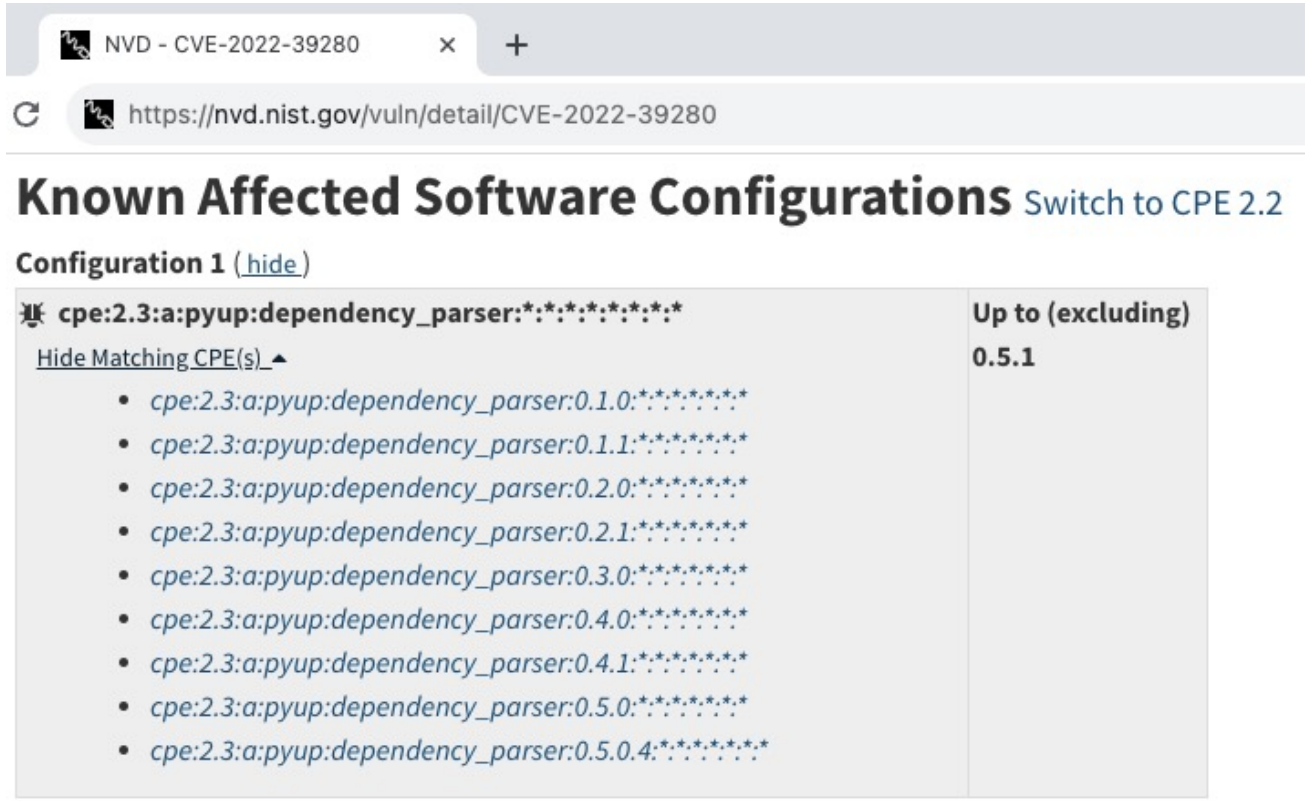


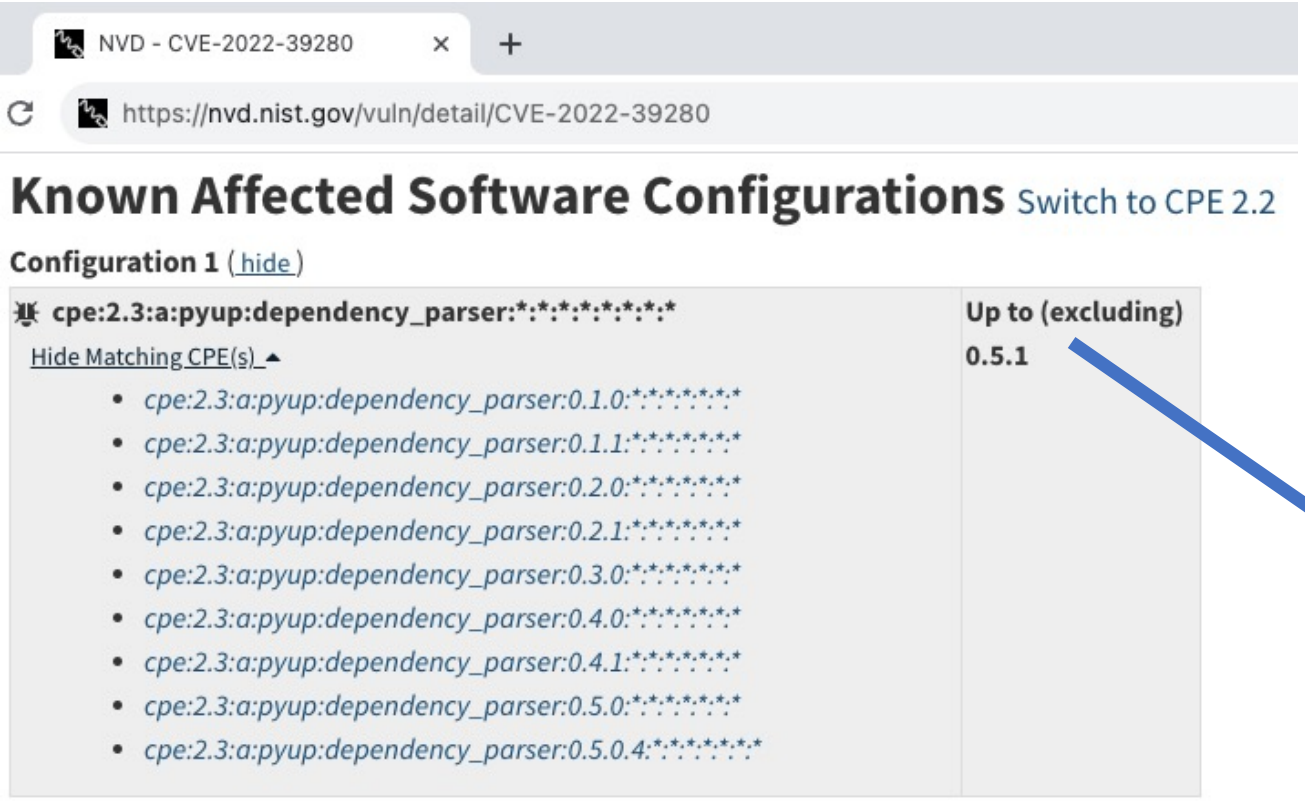
From “dependency_parser, all versions <0.5.1”, NVD enumerates affected versions.

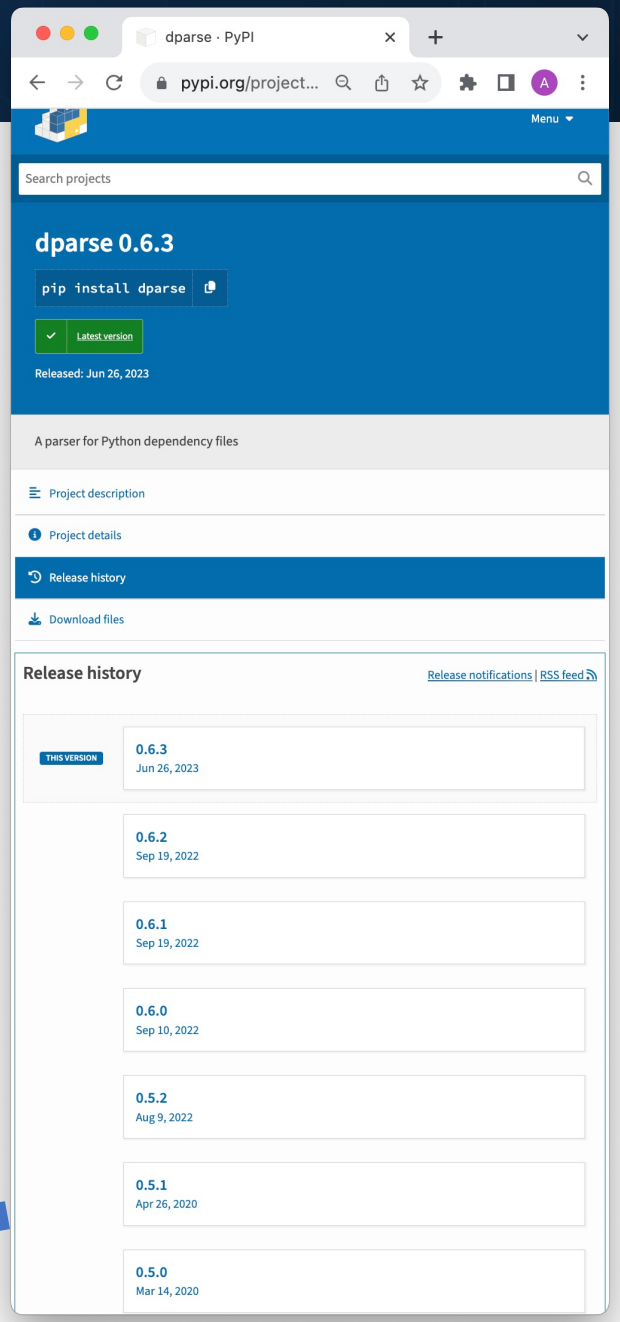
Step 1: Enumerate all versions, or most in range’s ballpark.

Step 2: Identify affected subset and define CPEs.

For open source software…

…why not crawl?





SWID, swid-reg, and CPE mapping

SWID is a metadata format for software.

A SWID Tag, XML, can map to CPE.

For example, this CPE …

`cpe:2.3:a:alex_nelson:case-prov:0.8.0:*:*:*:*:*:*:*`

… generates from that:

2023-09-13-SSCA — vi case_prov-0.8.0-py3-none-any.whl.1.corpus....

```
<SoftwareIdentity
  xmlns="http://standards.iso.org/iso/19770/-2/2015/schema.xsd"
  xmlns:n8060="http://csrc.nist.gov/ns/swid/2015-extensions/1.0"

  name="case-prov"
  version="0.8.0"
  versionScheme="multipartnumeric"

  tagId="dd4a5b57-59e3-5a3c-8524-be5170d5d57a"
  corpus="true"
  tagVersion="5"
  xml:lang="en-us">
  <Entity
    role="softwareCreator"
    name="Alex Nelson"
    regid="mailto:alexander.nelson@nist.gov"/>
  <Entity
    role="aggregator"
    name="Python Software Foundation"
    regid="python.org"/>
  <Entity
    role="tagCreator"
    name="National Institute of Standards and Technology"
    regid="nist.gov"/>
  <Payload>
    <Directory name=".">
      <File
        name="case_prov-0.8.0-py3-none-any.whl"
        size="53338"
        SHA1:hash="03d63a1..."
        SHA256:hash="7960501..."
        SHA512:hash="741242e..."
        swidreg:sha3_256="a7e03de..."
        swidreg:sha3_512="df7934c..."/>
    </Directory>
  </Payload>
</SoftwareIdentity>
```

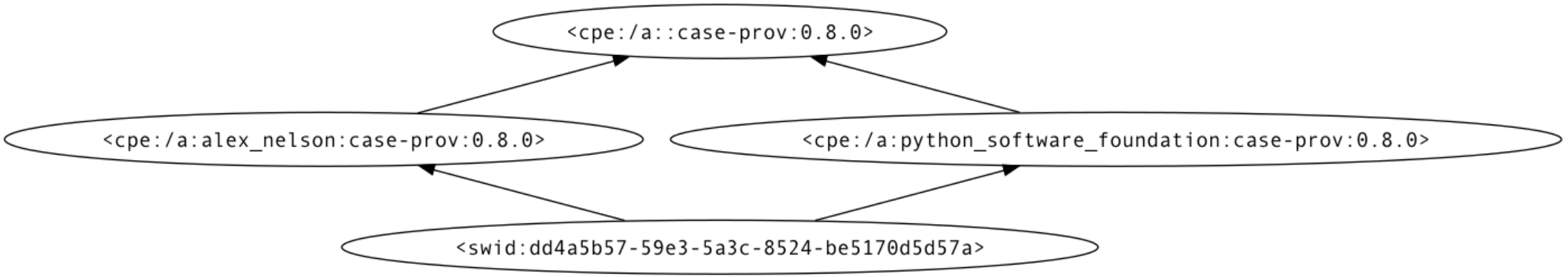
SWID and CPE differ in precision

One SWID tag can induce many CPEs.

E.g. 1 per involved entity (aside from `tagCreator`). Each “CPE Vendor” variant could assist with finding distributor-modified software.

```
cpe:2.3:a:alex_nelson:case-prov:0.8.0:*:*:*:*:*:*:*
cpe:2.3:a:python_software_foundation:case-prov:0.8.0:*:*:*:*:*:*:*
```

Could be more helpful to consider as classes. These CPEs describe all software named case-prov, versioned 0.8.0, vended by Alex Nelson (or separately, vended by the Python Software Foundation).



Classes…?

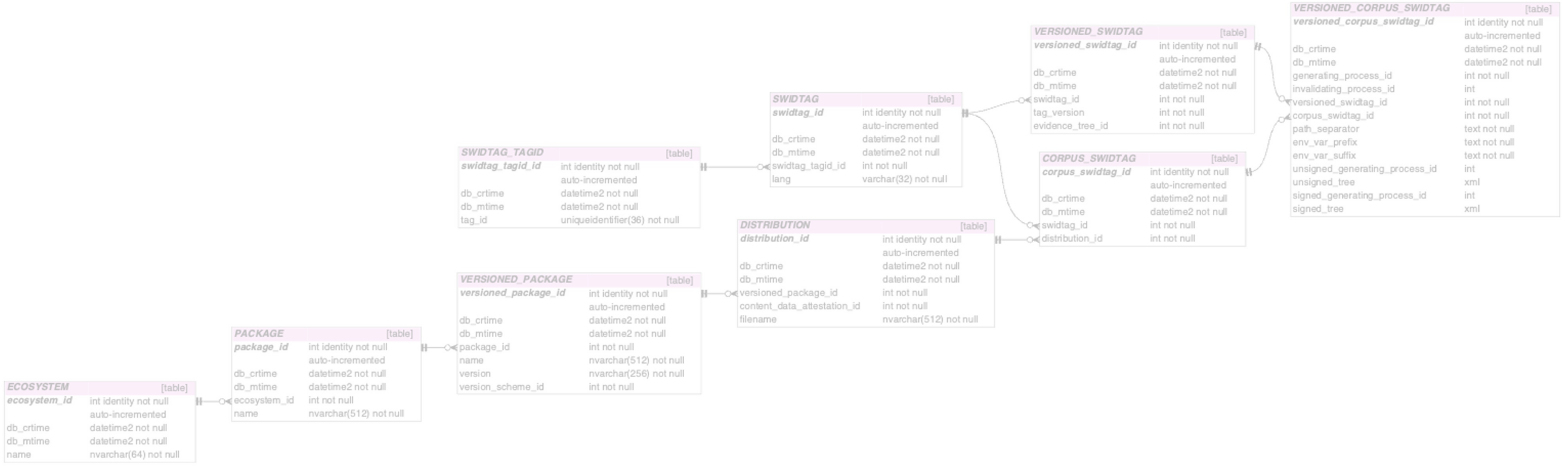
Treat classes synonymous with sets.

A key ITAM objective: Knowledge of assets.
“How big is the set of computers in my org?”
“How big is the set of software licenses in use right now?
“…Versus how many we’ve paid for?”

CPE describes sets of software.
CPE *name* serializes the set description.
CPE *URI* identifies the set. E.g. all software: `<cpe:/a>`
SWID describes smaller sets.

“Never underestimate the power of a theorem that counts something.”

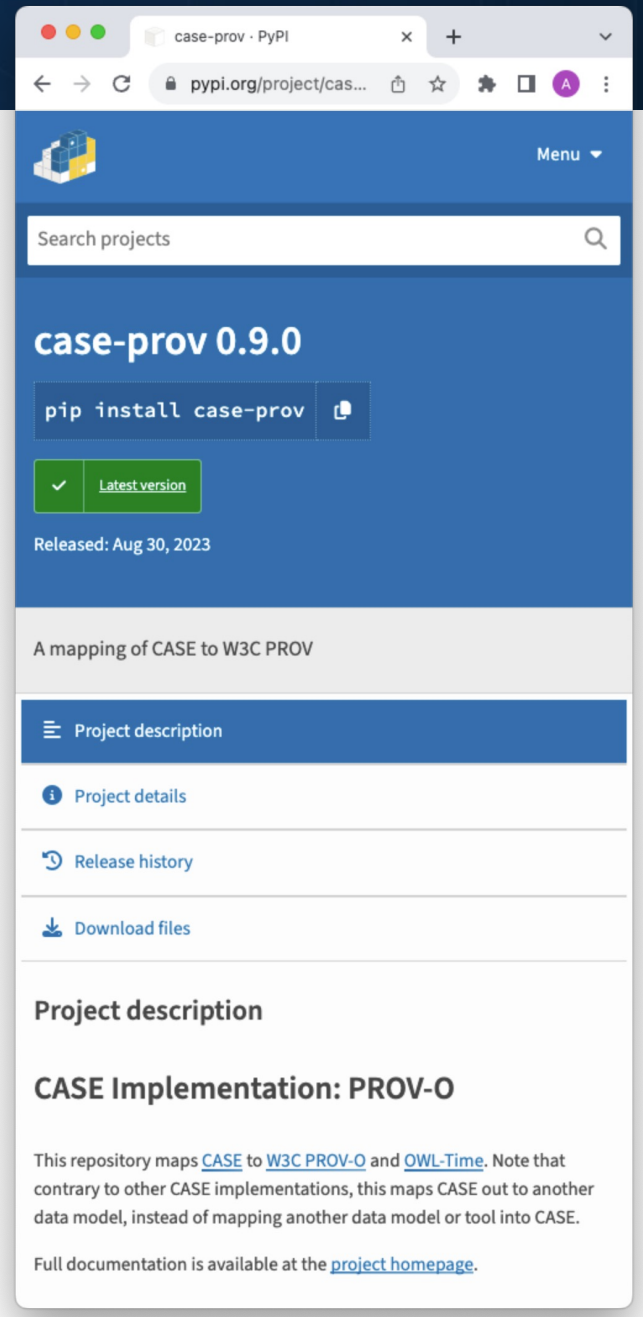
Crawling package managers with swid-reg



Package managers

Package managers provide:

- Authorship information
- Package update discovery
- Dependency graphs
- Payload files
- Project pages
  https://pypi.org/project/case-prov/



swid-reg calls package managers **ecosystems**,

and crawls them to produce SWID tags**.**

(And from SWID tags, CPEs will be generated.)

Package managers and swid-reg

Package managers provide:

- Authorship information
- Package update discovery
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- Payload files
- Metadata feeds
  https://pypi.org/pypi/case-prov/0.9.0/json

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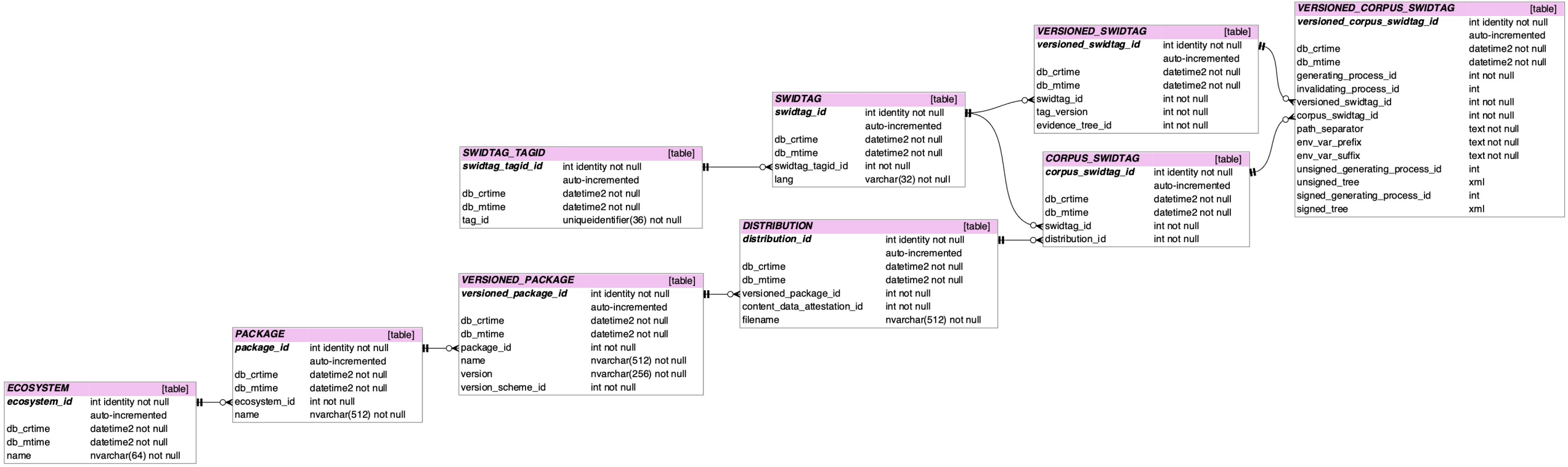
swid-reg data model:
From ecosystem to SWID tag



What does one download from a package manager?
– A **distribution**.

What bears the version?
– A **versioned package**.

What do swidtags describe in swid-reg?
– A **distribution**.

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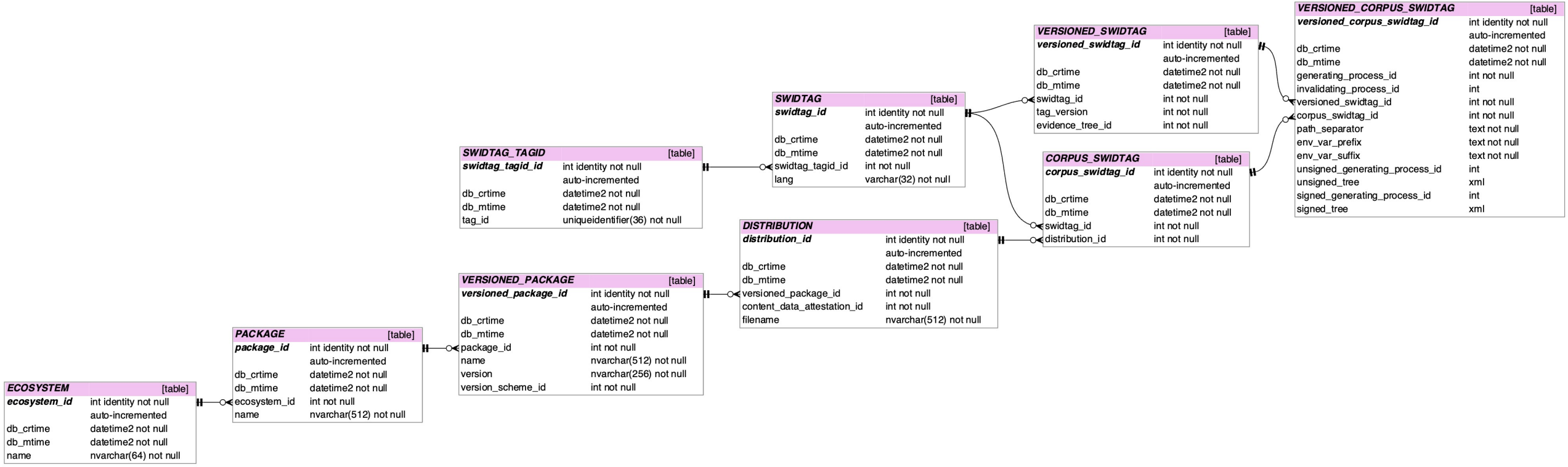

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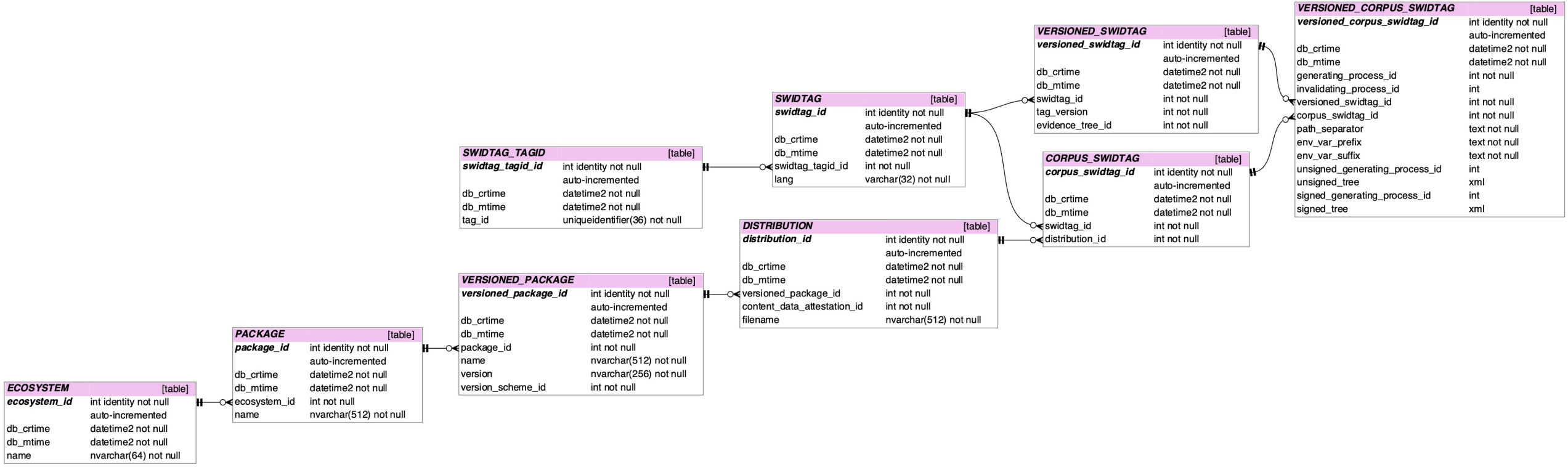
But…

Difference between Projects and Packages: Packages are in ecosystems.



What does one download from a package manager?
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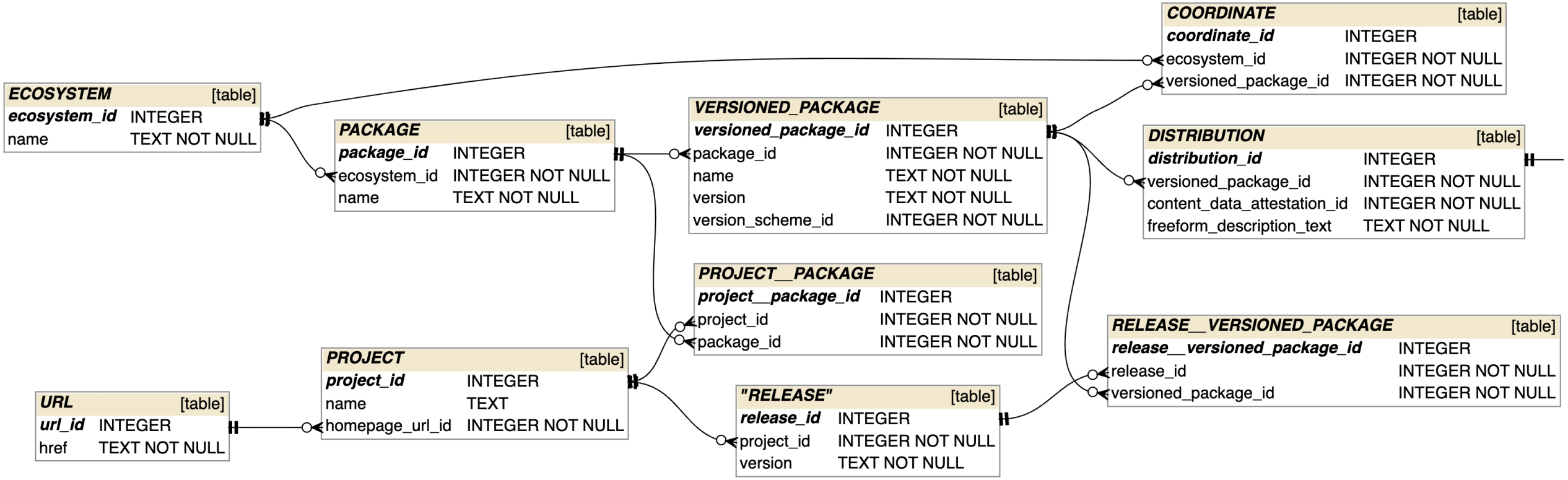
What do swidtags describe in swid-reg?
– A **distribution**.

But…
What are vulnerabilities reported against?
– A **release**, bearing a version of a **project**.
(Not depicted.)

Difference between Projects and Packages: Packages are easier to crawl.



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What do swidtags describe in swid-reg?
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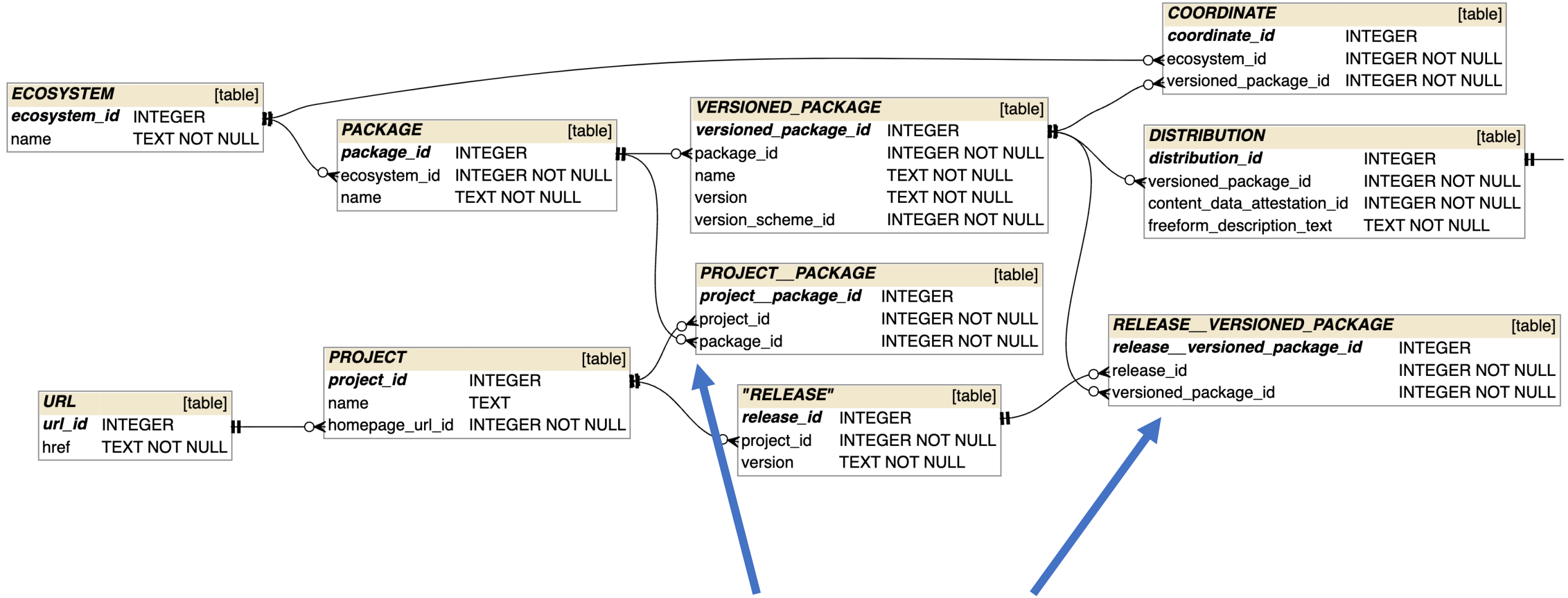
But…
What are vulnerabilities reported against?
– A **release**, bearing a version of a **project**.

Bridging Projects and Packages: A challenge.



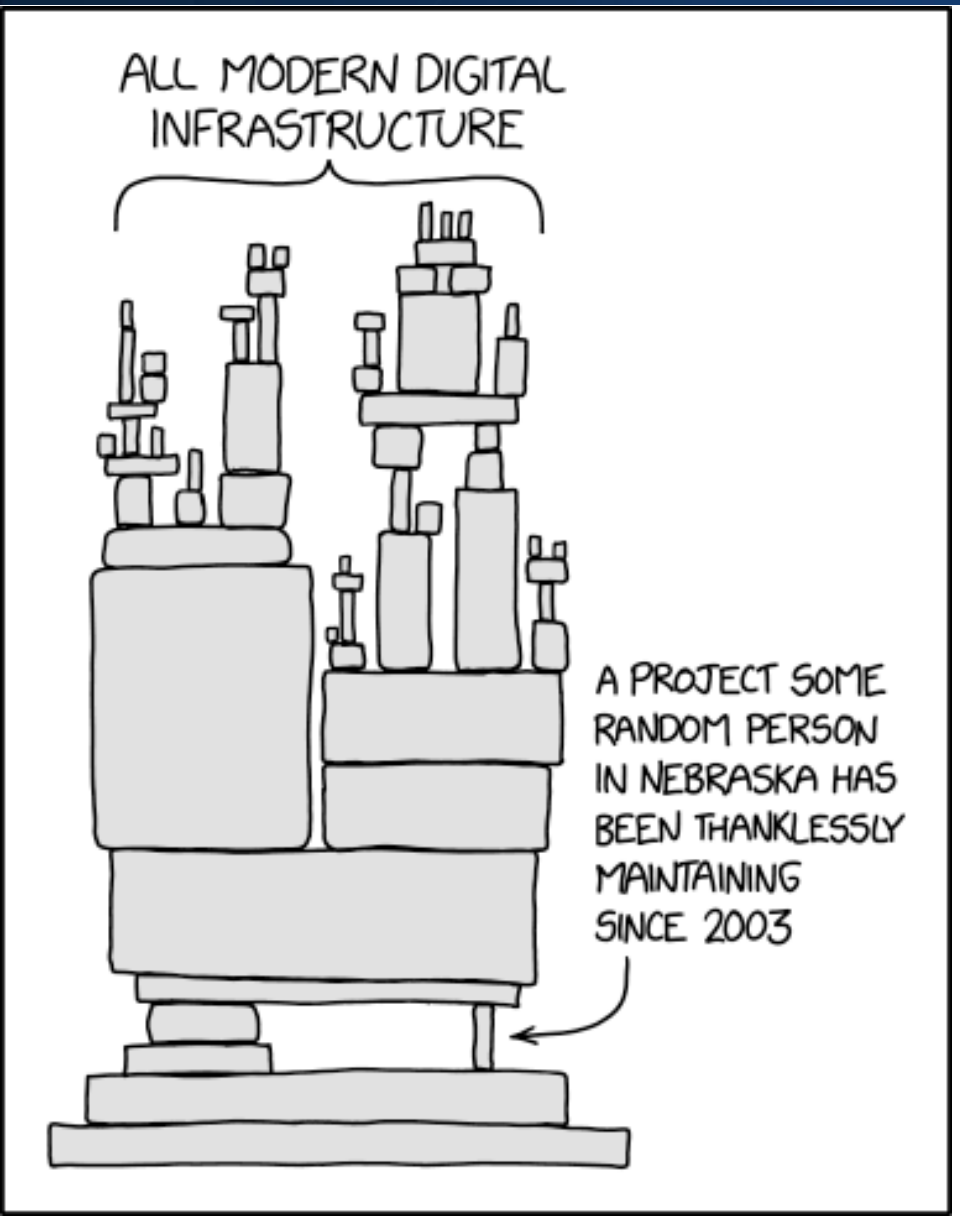
These links require much customization to populate.

Planned open-source ecosystems

Crawlers have been designed for:

- PyPI (activating)
- Maven
- Debian
- CPAN
- RubyGems
- NPM

…did he say CPAN?



https://xkcd.com/2347/

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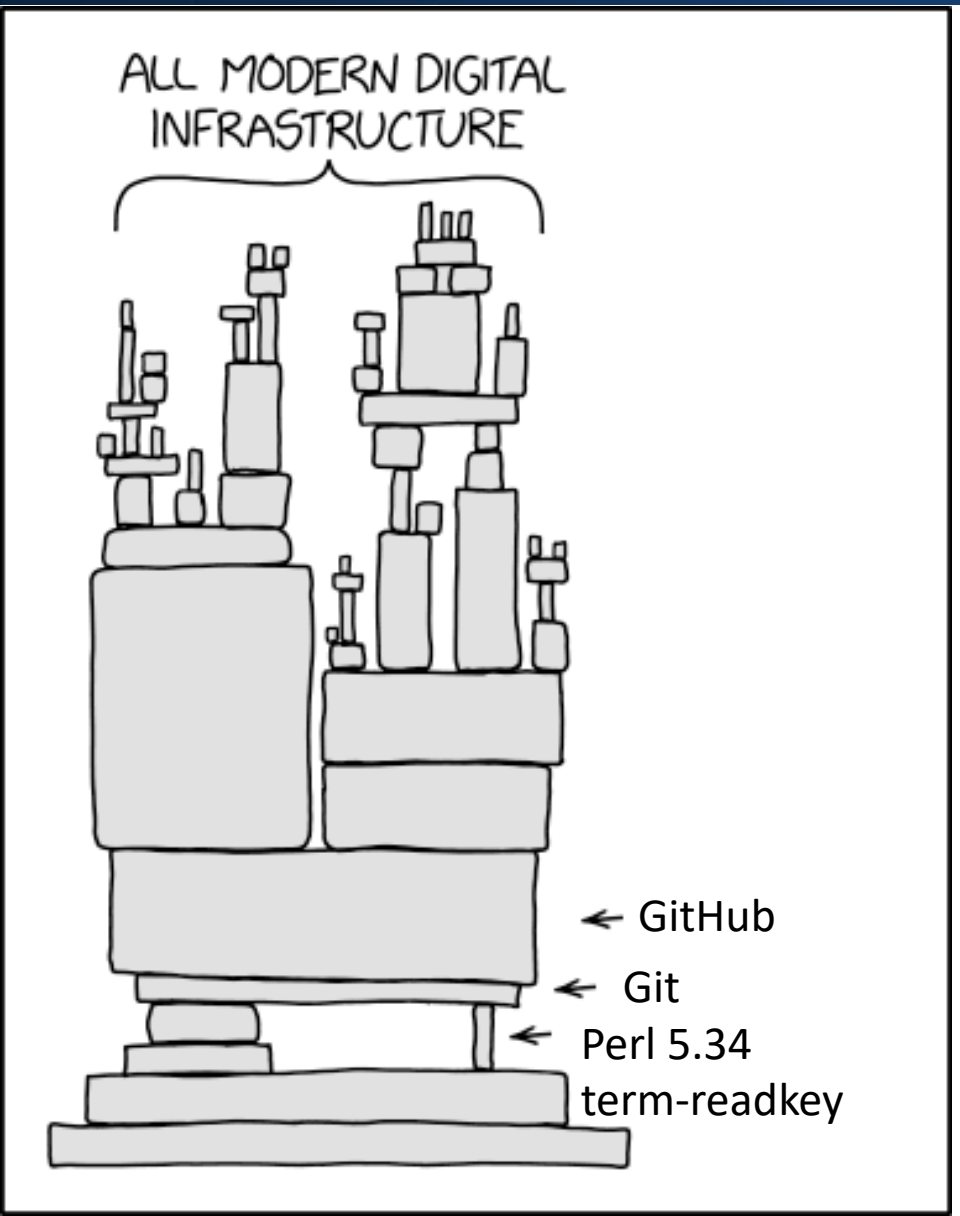

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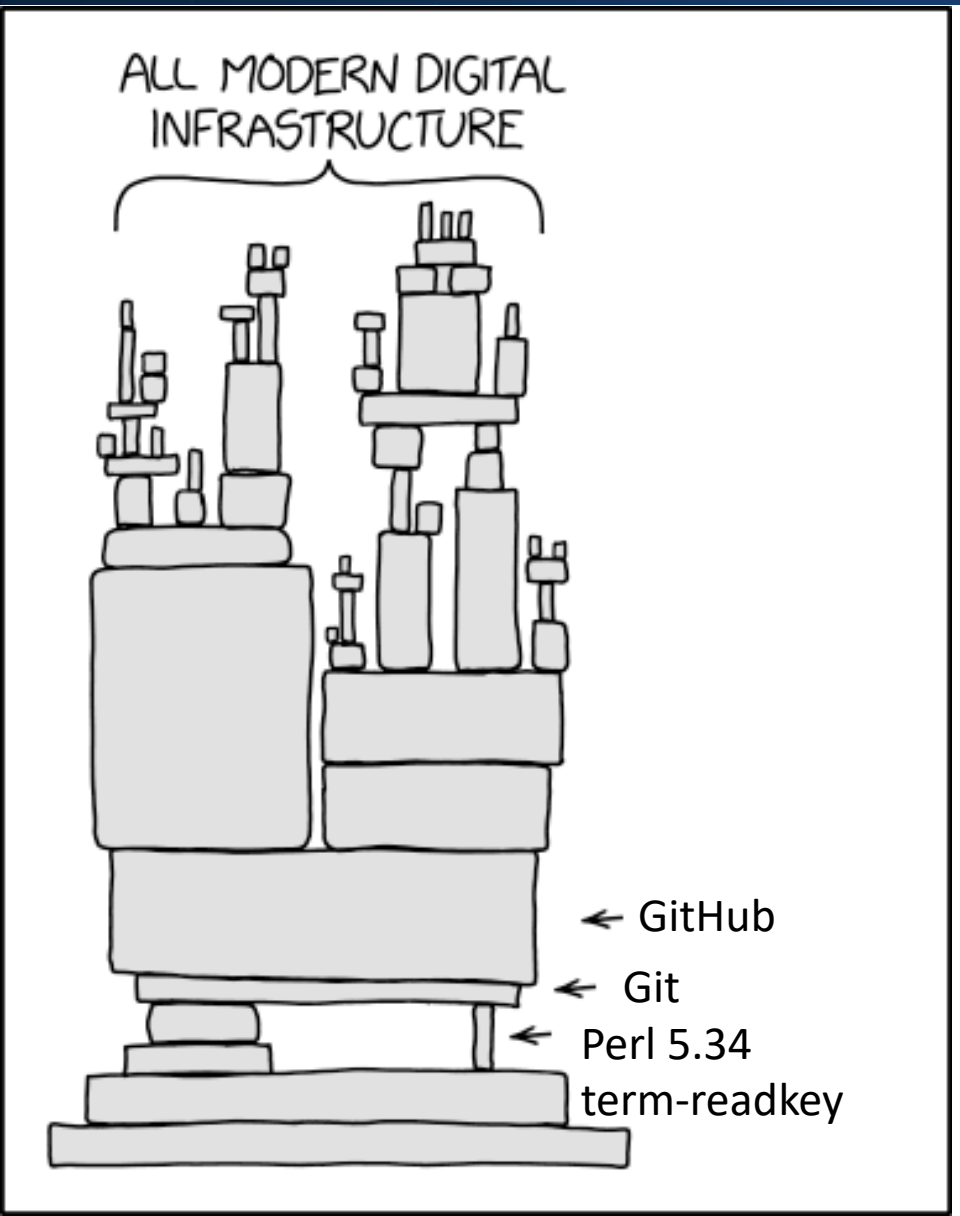
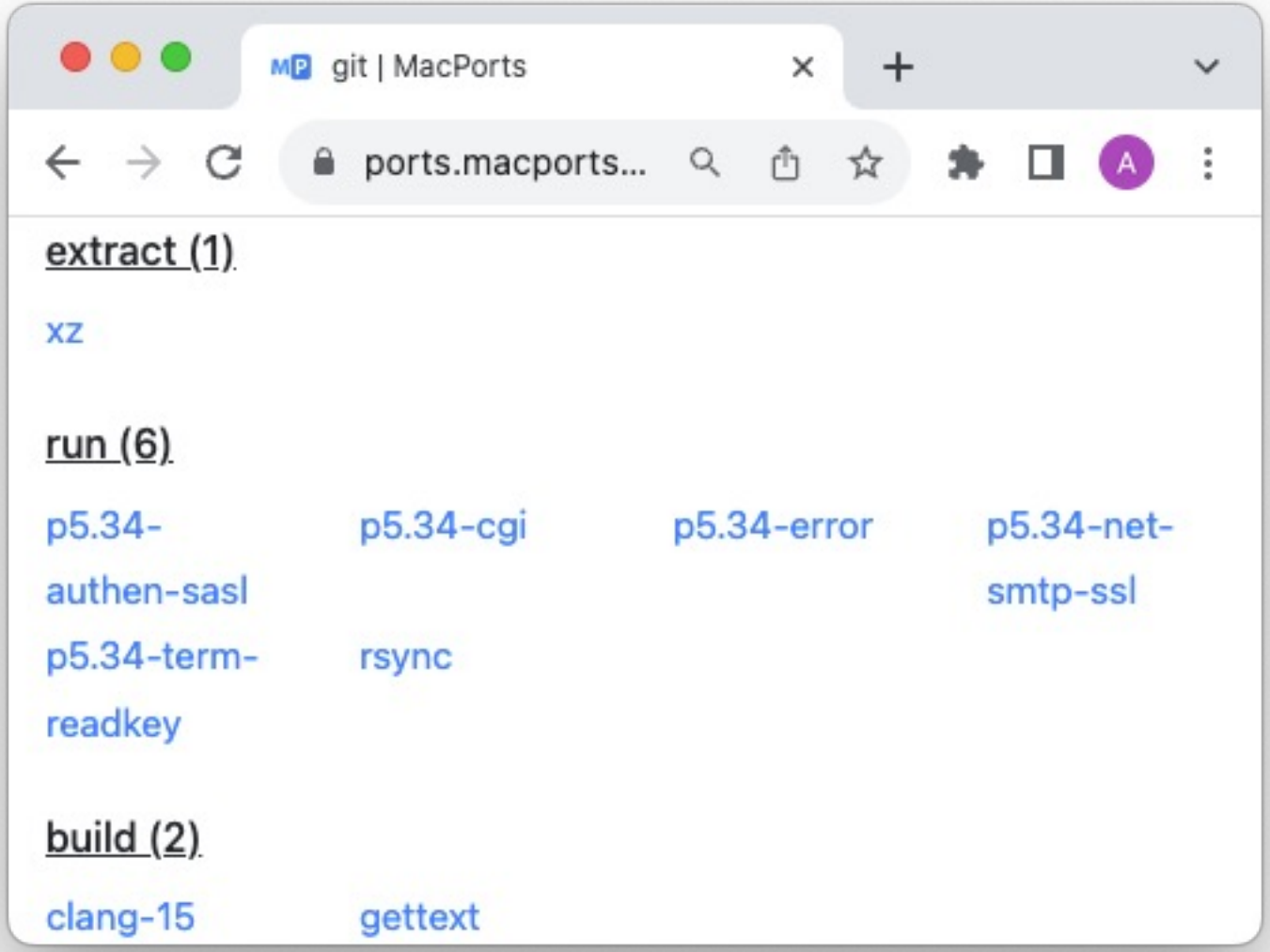


Per: https://ports.macports.org/port/git/details/



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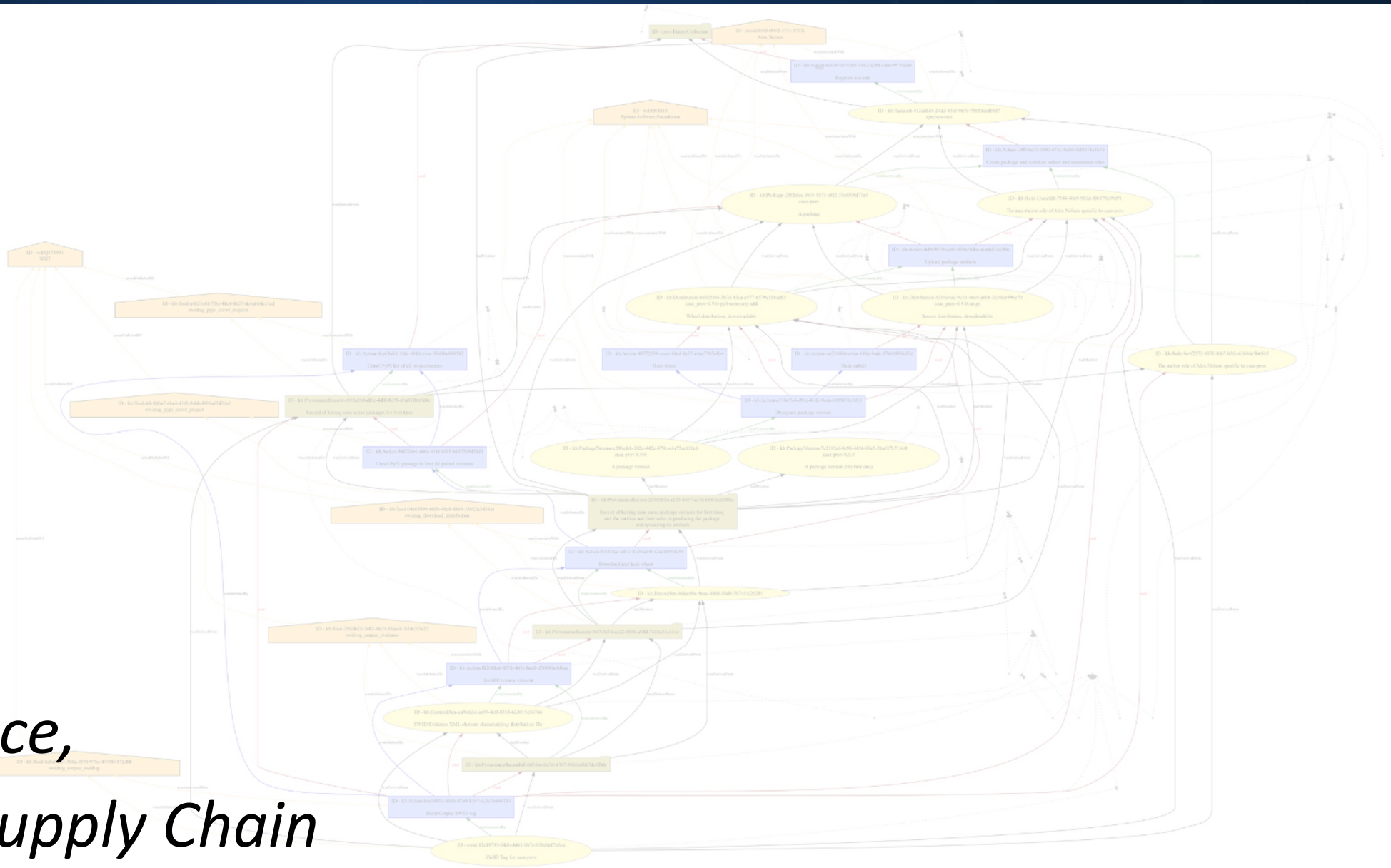
A light touch of ontology



Linking,

Time,

Provenance,

and the Supply Chain

Supply chain review is relationship analysis.

Package managers provide:

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- Package update discovery
- Dependency graphs
- Payload files
- Metadata feeds
  https://pypi.org/pypi/case-prov/0.9.0/json

2023-09-13-SSCA — vi case-prov-0.9.0-trimmed.json — 80×28


```
{
  "info": {
    "name": "case-prov",
    "summary": "A mapping of CASE to W3C PROV",
    "version": "0.9.0",
    "author": "Alex Nelson",
    "author_email": "alexander.nelson@nist.gov",
    "home_page": "https://github.com/casework/CASE-Implementation-PROV-O",
    "requires_dist": [
      "case-utils <0.14.0,>=0.13.0",
      "prov",
      "pydot"
    ]
  },
  "urls": [{
    "digests": {
      "sha256": "3407a7b38622af23e725a78941bd813bd747a43c4c02072da8d504ae33b2410
8"
    },
    "filename": "case_prov-0.9.0-py3-none-any.whl",
    "size": 53337,
    "upload_time_iso_8601": "2023-08-30T12:59:29.076437Z",
    "url": "https://files.pythonhosted.org/packages/e1/d4/c0b909a34f3fef2bd4fe48
1a39c81016f8840200b4707ea557c754fb00ac/case_prov-0.9.0-py3-none-any.whl"
  }]
}
```

Are these the same project?

Two versions of the project parked at “mypy” on PyPI: The first (0.1), and today’s (1.5.1), 14 years apart.

- Summary is different.
- Home page now recorded.
- Author-role now held by someone else.
- Was never yanked (retracted).

Absent deep review of home page’s blog, we instead consider:

What are **properties**?

What are **qualities**?

What are **independent and related objects**?

Graphs link objects in several ways.

Three ways to relate two objects, O1 and O2, are **properties**, **qualities**, and **relationships**.

(In some cases, O2 is a literal-data value, like a string or integer.)

- **Property** – The linked thing is fundamental to the identity of O1.
  E.g. A package in an ecosystem has a name as an identifier. Changing the name creates a new package.
- **Quality** – The linked thing is mutable.
  E.g. A package's download count does not change the identity of the package when it ticks up.
- **Relationship** – Neither O1 nor O2 need each other to exist. A relationship ties them together.
  E.g. a package's maintainer can change from release to release.
  - The relationship can end without inducing O1 or O2 to also end.

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What are **properties**?

- Name

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What are **properties**?

- Name

What are **qualities**?

- Version
- Summary

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What are **properties**?

- Name

What are **qualities**?

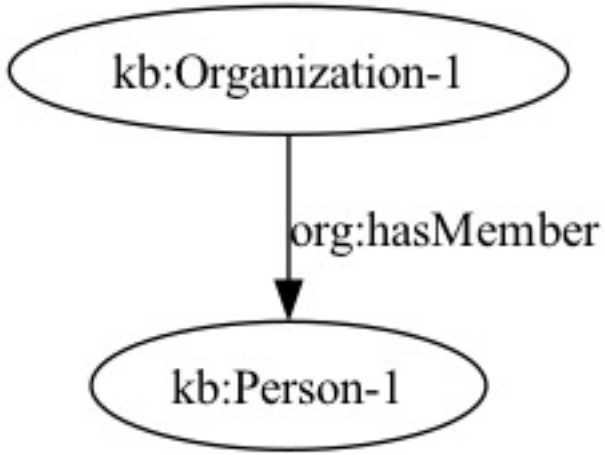
- Version
- Summary

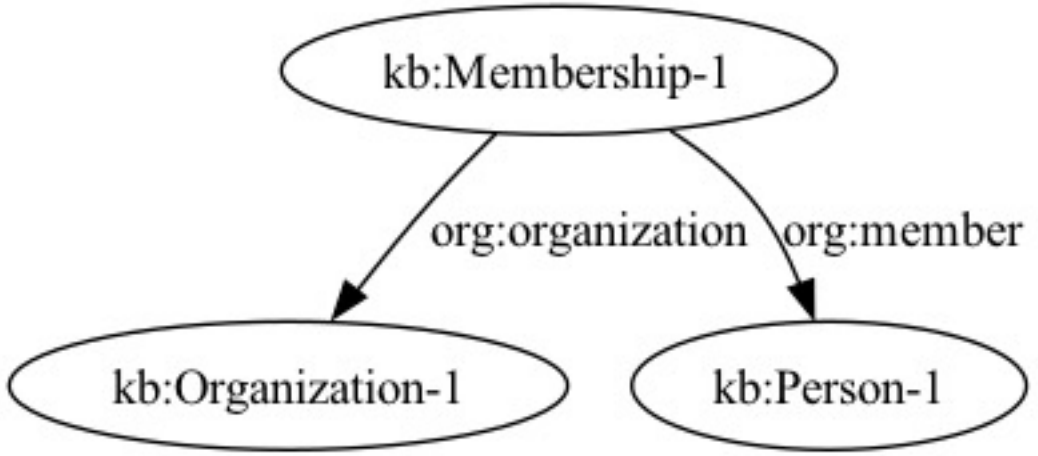
What are **independent and related**?

- Person in author role
- Home page

Example:
W3C ORG demonstrates two linking styles

Compare:





Flat (implemented with Property)	Reified (implemented with Relationship)
How are these maintained when faced with new facts? (E.g. Person-1 no longer in org.)	
Remove the outdated statement.	*Declare there exists an end* of the Membership.
What is the influence of time on the questions you can ask?	
Is Person-1 in the org? (Implicit: *Right now*.)	Was Person-1 ever in the org? Was Person-1 in the org last year?

When reviewing deployed software configurations, time information is essential.

A detour on time, for consistency review

The W3C's *OWL-Time* is an OWL-based ontology.

Defines Intervals, Instants, interval-relating algebra (right), plus more.

Timeline *consistency review* can use interval predicates, such as `time:intervalDuring`.

Example: All actions requiring a PKI signature SHOULD take place during the certificate's interval of validity.

Else, the knowledge base is *inconsistent*.

Some predicates make strong implications: "*i* before *j*" means *i* has a definite end, even if the specific timestamp is not known.

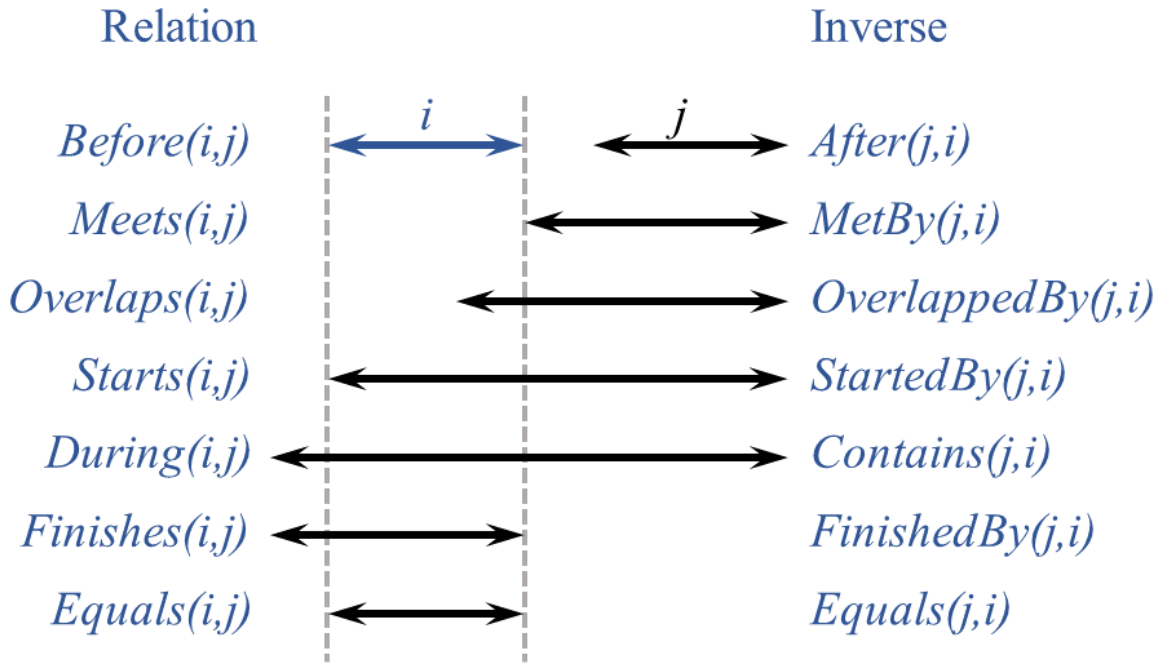


Figure source: http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-0-585-28322-7_7 , via Figure 2 of https://www.w3.org/TR/owl-time/

A detour on provenance, for history description

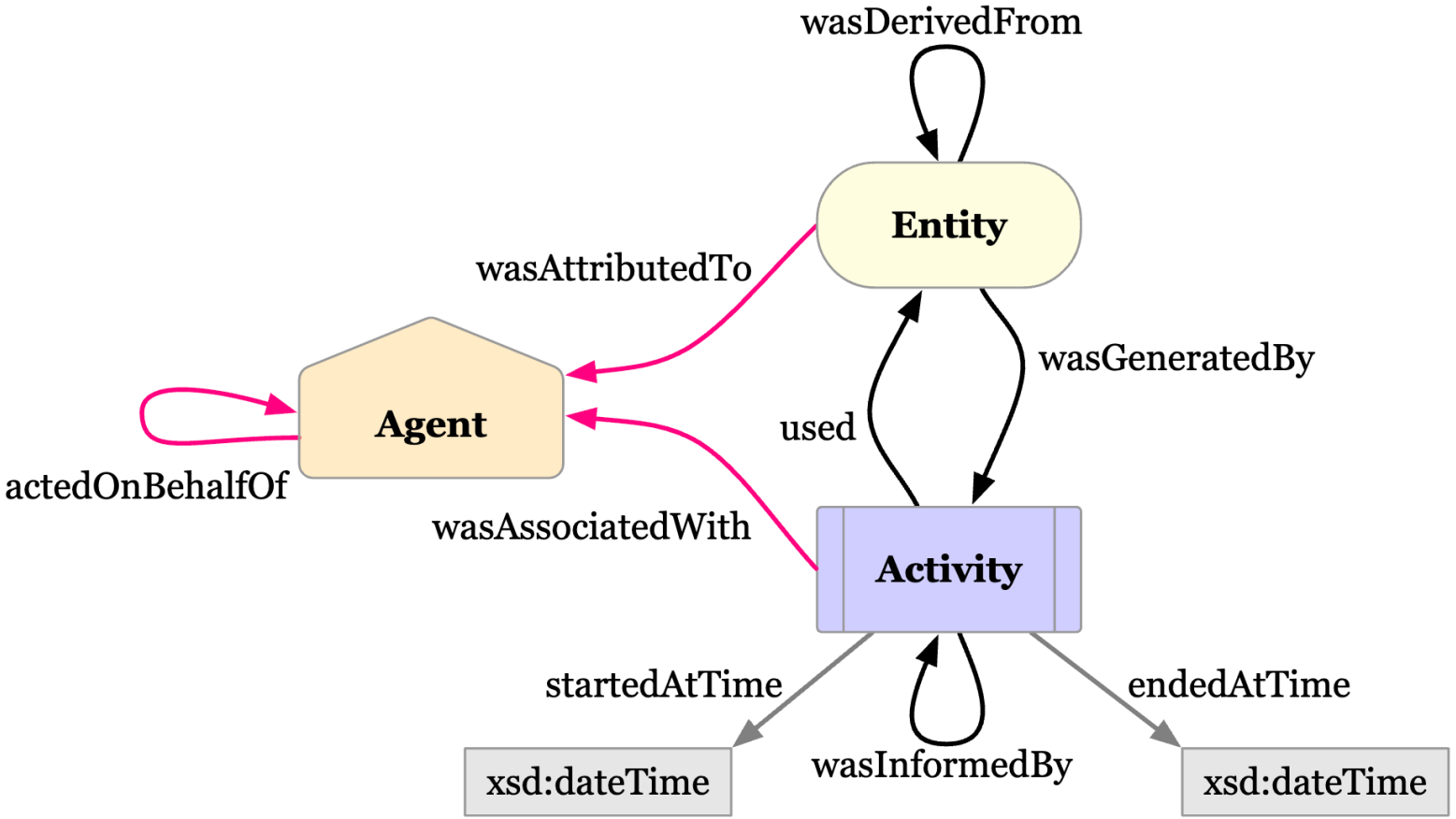


Figure 1. The three Starting Point classes and the properties that relate them.
The diagrams in this document depict Entities as yellow ovals,
Activities as blue rectangles, and Agents as orange pentagons.
The responsibility properties are shown in pink.

https://www.w3.org/TR/prov-o/

PROV concepts can align with OWL-Time

OWL-Time defines instants and intervals. PROV-O specializes these.

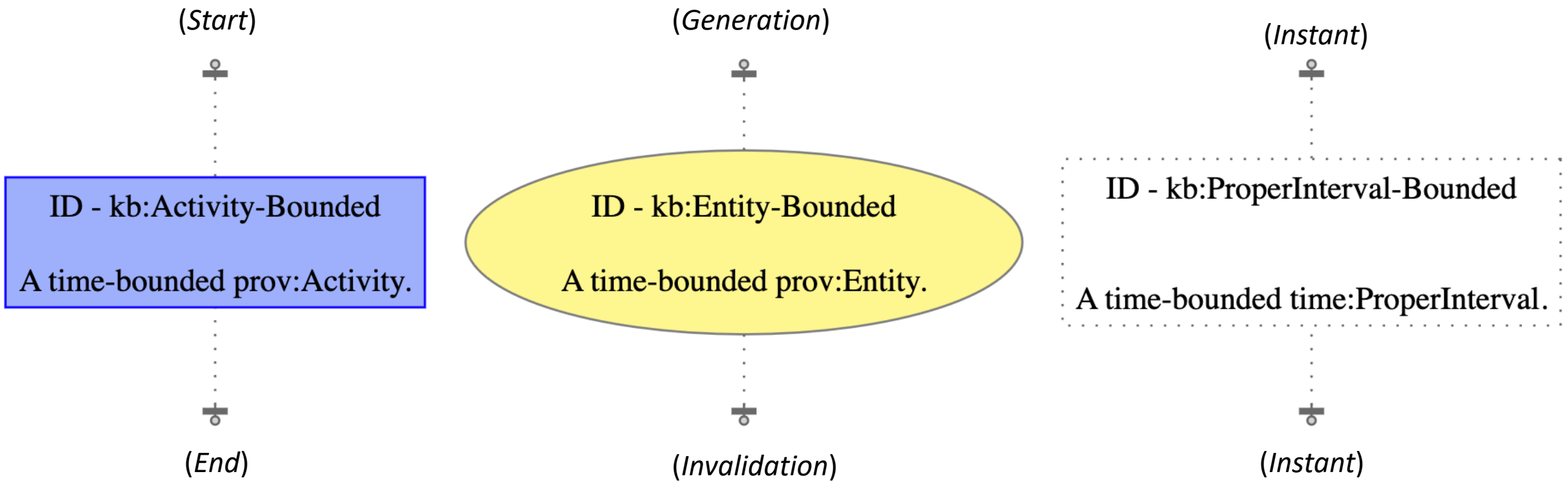


Figure source: `case-prov`'s README

Provenance analysis uses links and/or time

(Left and right displays only toggle time object visibility.)

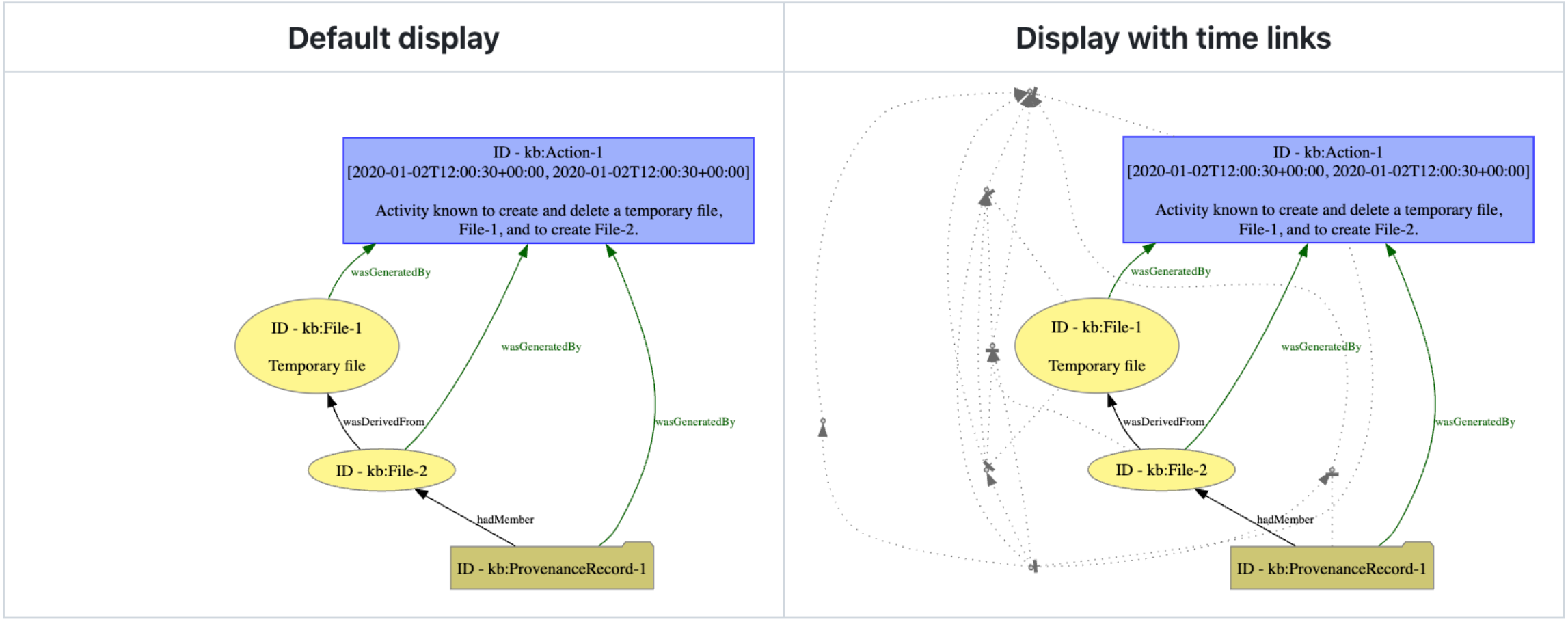


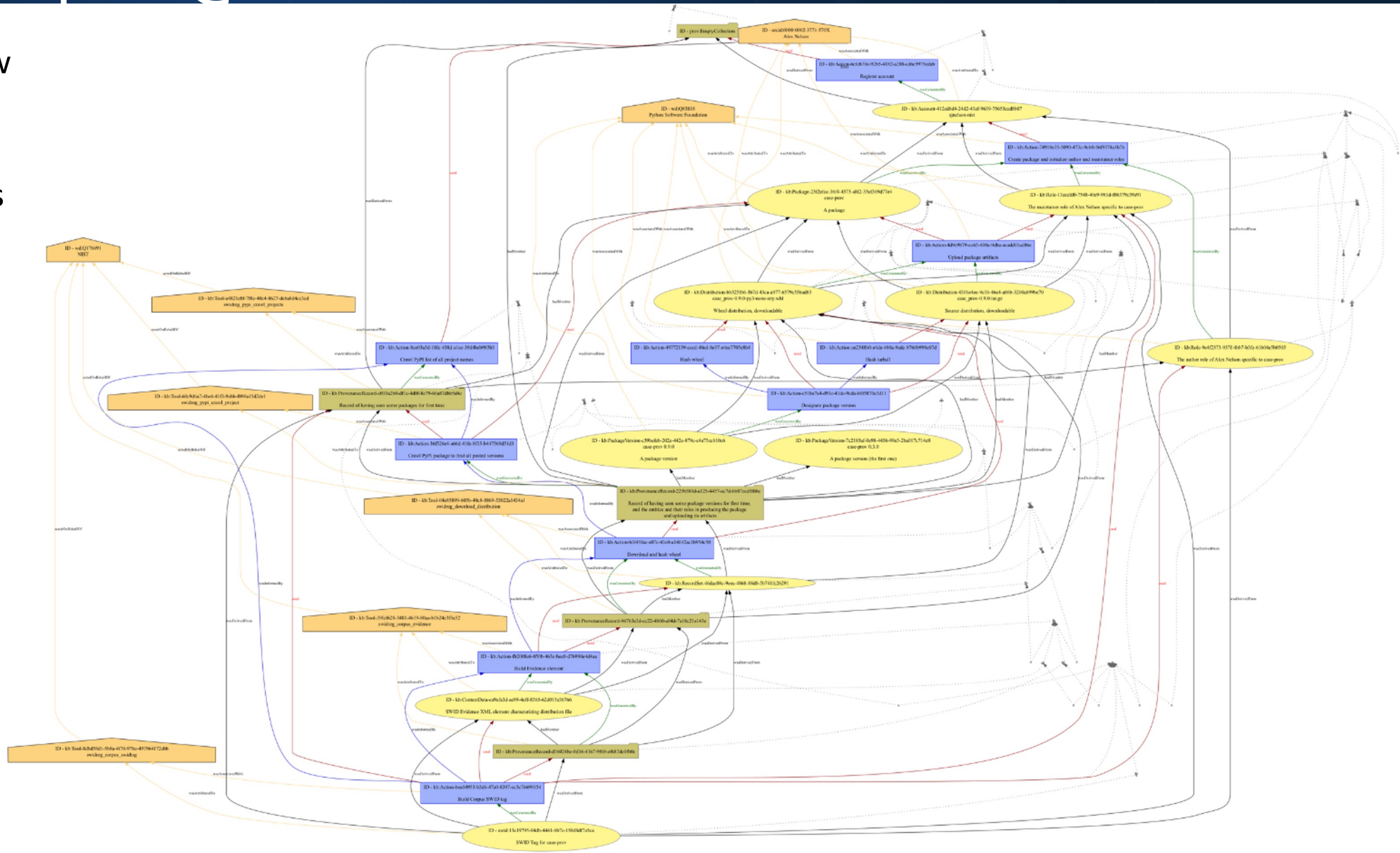
Figure source: `case-prov`'s README

Provenance example: History of swid-reg generated tag for case-prov@0.9.0

Provenance graphs show interwoven chains of:

- *Derivation*: entities from entities (yellow)
- *Communication*: Activities sharing entities (blue)
- *Delegation*: Agents acting on behalf of agents (orange)

Time flows **downward**.

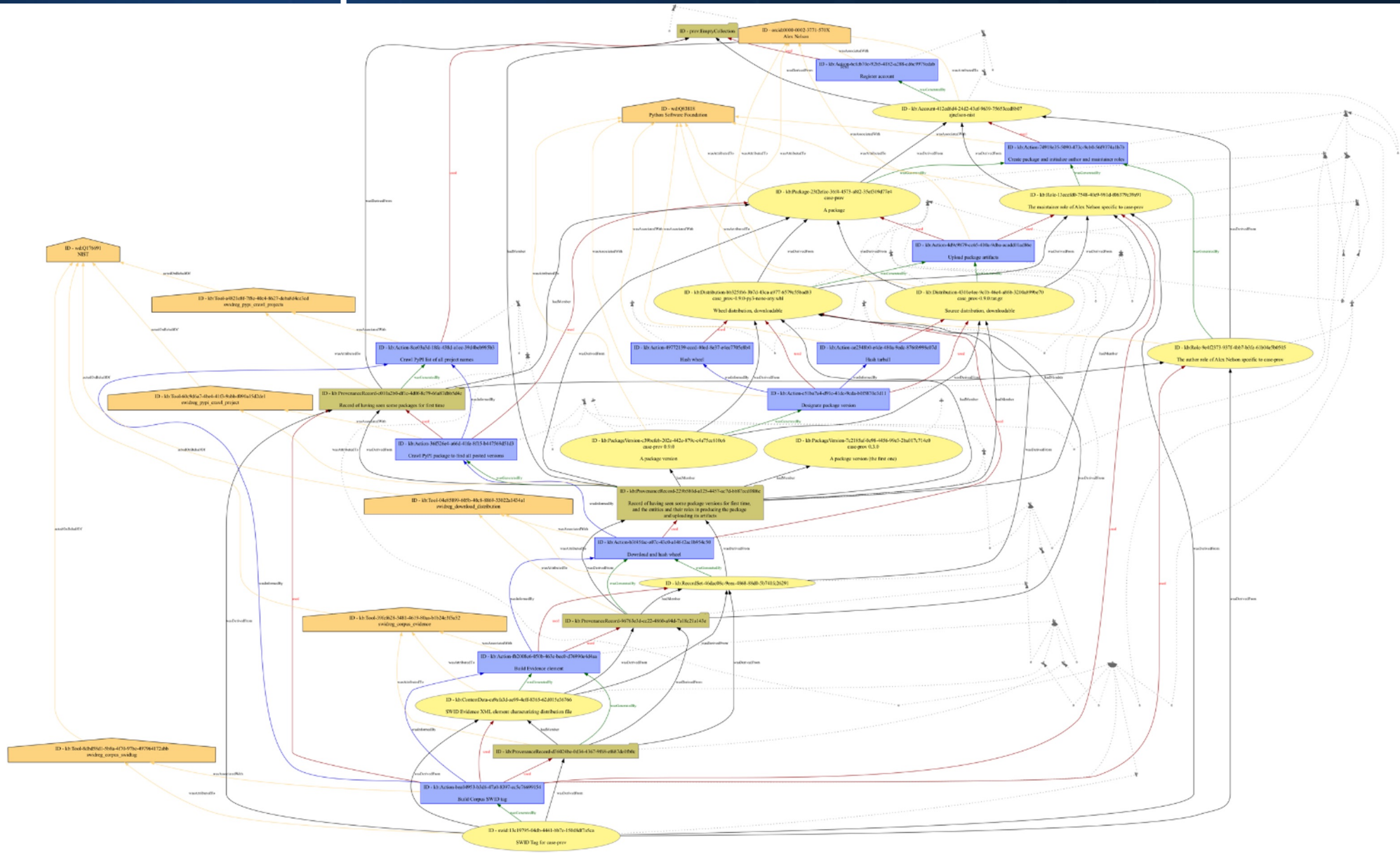


Swid-reg separates ecosystem's posting history from crawler's observation provenance.

Upper-right:
History of case-prov, scoped to PyPI and the project's author.

Lower-left:
swid-reg actions observing, downloading, hashing artifacts.

Bottom:
The SWID tag for `case-prov@0.9.0`.



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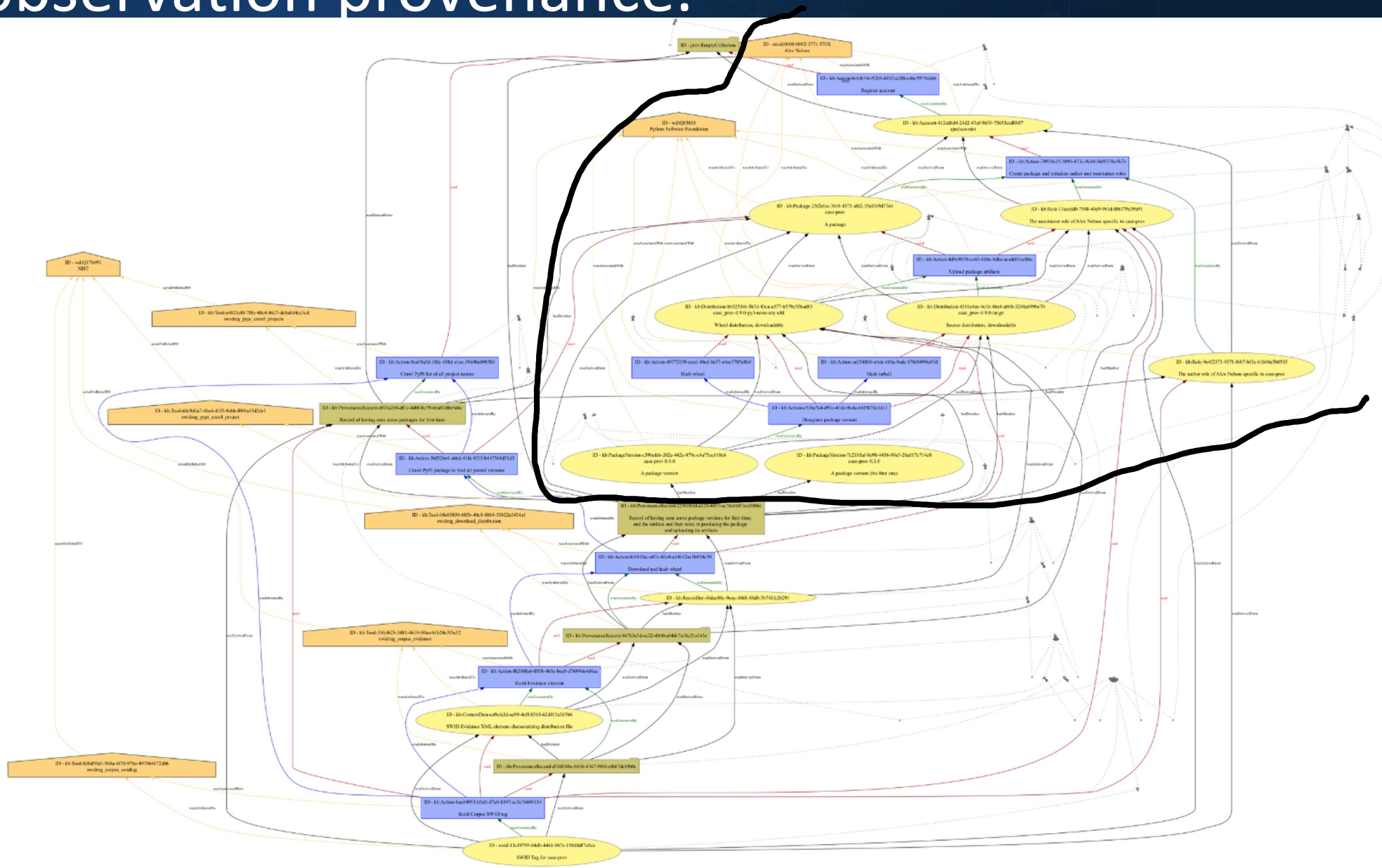


Provenance-oriented model enables flexible swid-reg augmentation of hashes.

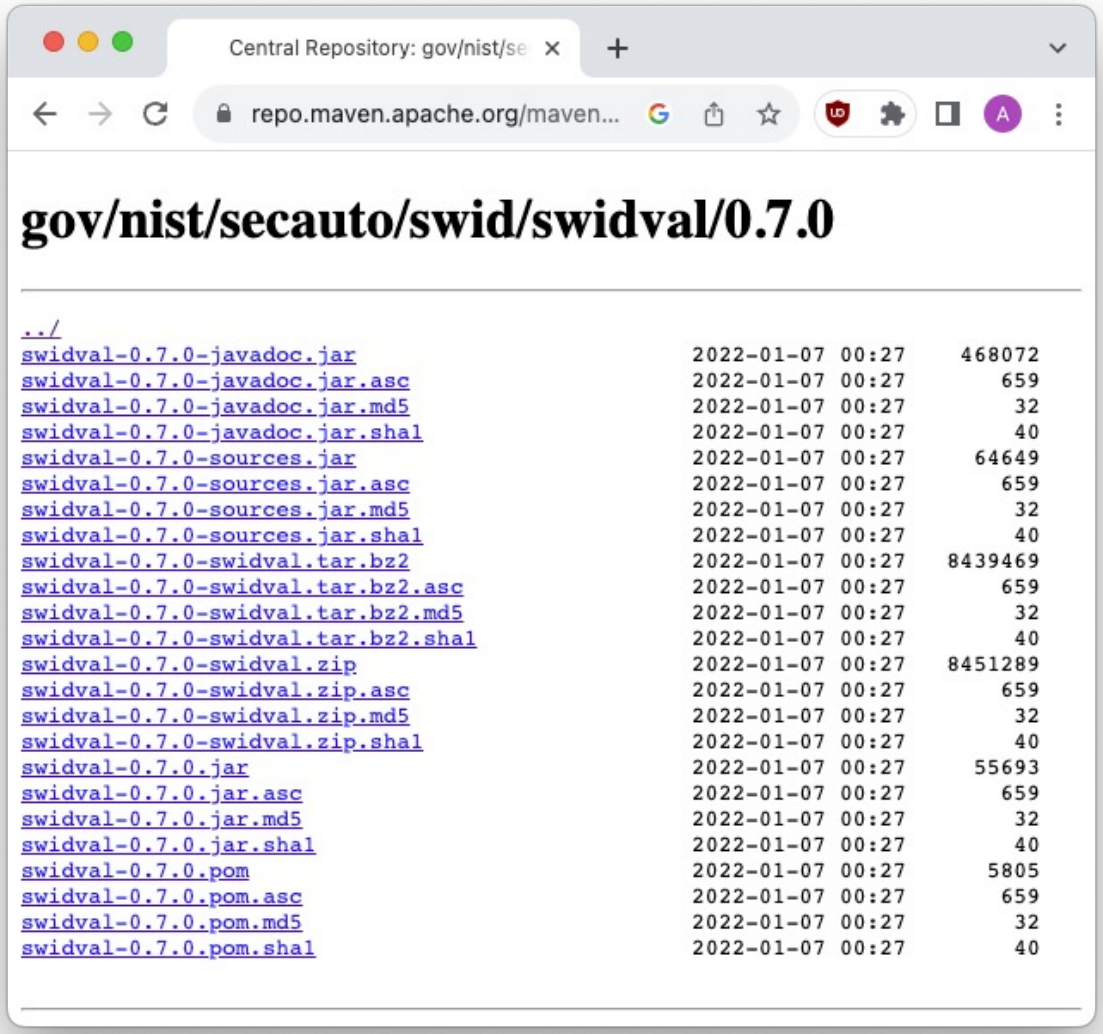
Compare PyPI's JSON feed to Maven's detached signature files.

swid-reg confirms provided file measurements (size, hashes), records as "attestation" from ecosystem.

Time of signatures' observation is recorded, in case of later change.

Then, augments hashes to include:

- MD5*, SHA-1*
- SHA2-256 and -512
- SHA3-256 and -512
- File size
- Modification time of distribution file (if appears stable)



Future work

- Augmentation of NVD vulnerability feeds with more than CPE
- Setting up feed for NIST-produced SWID tags
- Accepting submissions of SBOMs from partnering organizations to expand software knowledge base beyond open source ecosystems
- Researching “at-scale” association of Packages with Projects
- Better versioning:
  Using Git-based Projects’ histories to establish stronger partial-order package version graphs, improving “Affected versions” vulnerability associations

Questions?

https://github.com/usnistgov/swid-reg/

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