



## ADVISOR INTERVIEWS

# Adam Drewe, Head of Platform Services at Adam Matthew, about Quartex

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*Please briefly describe the Quartex platform for those that are unfamiliar with it.*

Quartex is a web-based platform that allows libraries, archives, and other institutions to publish archival content online, making it available to and discoverable by a wide audience. Our aim is to provide a good value means of organizing and exhibiting digital content, in a quick and intuitive way, and in a high quality environment, without recourse to specialist staff or consultants.

*Why did Adam Matthew develop the platform and not use something else on the market? Are all Adam Matthew primary source databases on Quartex?*

In 2012 Adam Matthew developed the first iteration of its own bespoke publishing platform, through which we published all our primary source collections. We found we had to create a platform from scratch to give us the functionality and features we required. Recently we sought to develop and build an entirely new iteration of this platform, and thought we could also tailor it to meet the needs of libraries, universities, and other cultural institutions, in order that they could use it to publish their own content. Dedicated work on the Quartex platform commenced in January 2017, since when we've been working with our beta partners and other institutions, designing Quartex to meet as many requirements as possible, and to be as flexible as possible in the workflows it offers. Adam Matthew's collections will be published using Quartex from 2020, and all the functionality available in Adam Matthew's commercially published collections will be available to Quartex users.

*When did Quartex become available for hosting local content? What types of organizations are your primary target market?*

We launched Quartex at ALA in June 2018. Development is ongoing and we're issuing new releases of the software every couple of months. Quartex can be used by any organisation seeking to manage and publish digitized archival content.

*What unique features does Quartex provide that may not be commonly found in other platforms? Why would I select it?*

Some of the best feedback we've had to date is about how simple it is to create and style exhibitions; it's very easy to generate, edit and publish professional looking pages within minutes. This is really encouraging, as one of the basic premises of Quartex was always that it is designed to be intuitive to use. We've also had good feedback about the display options—the image viewer and video players themselves, the ability to show and search transcriptions, and the flexibility over front-end branding and styling.

Librarians and faculty working with manuscript collections have also been very quick to realise the potential of HTR (handwritten text recognition), which is obviously a feature unique to the Quartex plat-

form. But the ease of generating OCR output in platform, and display of highlighted search results on the front-end, has also been very well received. When we roll out facility to generate in-platform timecoded transcriptions for AV materials, it means we'll offer the capacity to offer full text search across all published content.

*Please describe your pricing for the service? Is it driven by organizational size/type, the number of objects, the amount or storage used or other metrics?*

Quartex customers pay an annual subscription, which includes service support, hosting, and all software upgrades and releases. Pricing is based on digital footprint and tiered by organization size and type, broadly adhering to Carnegie banding in the United States.

*What types of digital objects are best hosted in Quartex? Clearly images and textual documents are supported but do you also handle streaming audio or video? Are there limitations to file sizes?*

Quartex is designed to showcase all kinds of archival content, be it manuscript correspondence, printed books and newspapers, oral histories or videos. As such, it supports all common image, audio and video formats. It's also very easy to add or enhance metadata, so collections with scant associated metadata can be ingested and worked on in the platform. Audio and video files are streamed and one of the features we're currently working on is the capacity for in-platform generation and edit of timecoded transcriptions for AV files, a feature we'll release early next year. Compound objects are supported and there's no limit to the file size of assets.

*Quartex's HTR seems to be a strong selling point for the service. Describe what languages are best supported and the key full-text search features.*

HTR is a fantastic tool, using AI technologies to make manuscript searchable. It currently works across all Western European character sets, but the neural network can be trained to work in other languages too; we just need sample images and accurate transcriptions in order to complete this training. We've recently worked with partners to make HTR effective on manuscripts written in Secretary Hand, and we're currently exploring search across medieval manuscripts. HTR is a search, rather than transcription, tool, but could of course be used to help generate transcriptions. Search accuracy is dependent to an extent on the quality of originals and scans, but accuracy levels are comparable to good OCR, and HTR will return results on marginalia, across different axes and even on slightly obscured or struck through text.

*Does Adam Matthew host this in the cloud on your own servers or through commercial services such as AWS? What types of analytics and or use data are provided to subscribers? What cloud-based preservation do you use to ensure no loss of content?*

## About Martin Drewe, Head of Platform Services, Adam Matthew

**Martin Drewe** joined Adam Matthew in 2014 as Senior Publisher on the Development team, with responsibility for generating new product ideas, and commissioning and shaping Adam Matthew collections. Key to this work was an understanding of the academic value of institutions' primary source collections, the benefits of publishing this material, and development of mutually beneficial relationships with archives. Martin is now working with some of these same archives, and many others, to explore open access publishing of their content through the Quartex platform, which has been developed by Adam Matthew specifically to showcase digital collections. ■

*Local branding is important to many sites. How much flexibility is provided in this realm?*

Quartex customers can create site structure, styling and branding according to their individual requirements. Links to some sample sites can be seen on the Quartex website: <[www.quartexcollections.com](http://www.quartexcollections.com)>. There is already a great deal of flexibility around branding and styling and

Quartex offers cloud-based hosting through AWS. All assets and data are hosted on multiple servers in multiple US regions and backed up to Glacier. Integrity checks are conducted daily to ensure no loss of content. Caching and load balancing ensure fast performance. At present Google Analytics is available to Quartex users but a bespoke Adam Matthew developed in-platform analytics service will be released in Q1 2019.

we're currently working on further front-end options, which will be available to users very shortly.

*Does the service support batch ingest or must they be added one-by-one? Can digital objects and metadata be exported or extracted from the system?*

Yes, batch ingest of assets is possible. This is currently by FTP, but we're also building a bespoke Quartex Uploader, which will be live by the end of this year. All objects and metadata can be extracted from the platform.

*What other key points would you like to make that have been missed?*

Quartex is the platform that Adam Matthew will use to publish the next generation of its collections. This means that we're committed to building into Quartex the capacity to generate sites that are easy to navigate and search, functional and stylish, with great display options and features. Quartex offers a means of publishing a site that looks as though it's been bespoke developed and is discoverable and searchable at any time, on any device. ■

*What types of metadata formats are supported?*

Quartex has been built to be agnostic with regard to metadata formats. Metadata upload is currently by CSV or TSV but we're working to support all common data standards.