

21M.269 Spring 2012
Assignment 4: Ossia Paper

Researching Current Musicological Database Projects

There are many efforts underway to collect and encode large databases of musical works for preservation, study, distribution, etc. Many of these databases are accessible online, and have bodies of research associated with them. Prepare a 3–5 page paper that explores the aims and methods of a current project (a short list of ideas is provided below to help you get started) that involves in acquiring, maintaining, and carrying out research upon a digital database of musical scores or other musical objects.

Questions to think about (not all of these questions may be relevant to your particular project, but can be thought-provoking nonetheless):

- What are the goals of the project?
- Who are the participants (in terms of both people and institutions), and who is the audience? (aside: Who provides financial support for the project?)
- How are scores or other musical data encoded and distributed? Advantages and disadvantages of this method?
- What is the overall extent of the “problem” and how much of this problem can the project reasonably solved in a limited (5 year or so) timetable?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the project? Is it feasible?
- How do the methods and means by which the project accomplishes its goals affect the accessibility of either the database or the outcome of the research on those databases?

It may be helpful to read through scholarly papers associated with not only the project, but also the researchers involved in the project (so you can gain a better understanding of their background). Also, familiarize yourself with the subject matter being addressed by the particular project (for instance, if you are researching ECOLM, it may be helpful to gain a rudimentary understanding of how to read lute tablature).

Lastly, if you have questions you can't find answers to online or otherwise, don't be afraid to email the researchers themselves! Most academics love to talk about their work and would be more than happy to provide you with more information!

List of potential projects:

International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP): <http://imslp.org/>
Computerized Mensural Music Editing (CMME): <http://www.cmme.org/>
Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music: <http://www.diamm.ac.uk/>
Kern Scores: <http://kern.humdrum.org>
Medieval Music Database (MMDB): <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/MMDB/>
Single Interface for Musical Score Search and Analysis (SIMSSA): <http://simssa.ca/>
Répertoire International des Sources Musicales (RISM): <http://www.rism.info/>

Electric Corpus of Lute Music (ECOLM): <http://www.ecolm.org/>
Pandora/Music Genome Project: <http://www.pandora.com/mgp.shtml>
International Music Information Retrieval Systems Evaluation Laboratory (IMIRSEL):
<http://www.music-ir.org/>

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