VisWithUs

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Visualizing the data of the Comédie Française Registers Project

What is the Comédie Française Registers Project ?

- La Comédie Française is France's most prolific theatre company and still exists today
- Digital humanities project
  - Digitization of theatre records from 1680 - the French Revolution
- International partners:
  - Bibliothèque - Musée de la Comédie Française
  - Université Paris Nanterre
  - Université Paris-Sorbonne
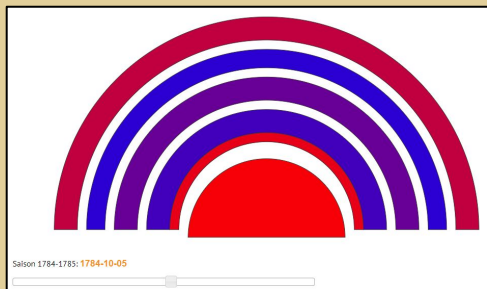 - MIT
  - Harvard
  - UVic

Our Data

- Data was downloaded from the Comédie Française Registers Project API
- Three lists of data used:
  - Plays: Information about a particular play
  - Play Sales: Information about performances (sales in a section)
  - Play Totals: Plays and their total revenues
- Preprocessed the dataset to extract various information to reduce overhead
  - For example: collecting the unique lists of authors and genres
- Visualization focused primarily on Plays, Authors, and Genres

```
{
    "_packed_id": 514,
    "acts": 1,
    "alternative_title": "",
    "author": "Voiron",
    "created_at": "2013-05-02T10:25:01.63892",
    "date_de_creation": "1786-10-16",
    "expert_validated": true,
    "genre": "drame héroïque",
    "id": 4863,
    "musique_danse_machine": true,
    "prologue": false,
    "prose_vers": "vers",
    "title": "Apelle et Campaspe",
    "updated_at": "2014-12-28T11:46:15.87178",
    "url": "",
    "dates": [
      {
        "time": "1786-10-16",
        "total": 939
      }
    ],
    "total_sold": 939
},
```
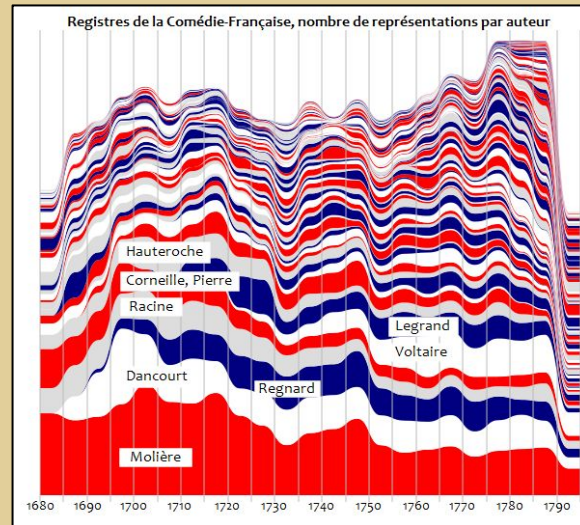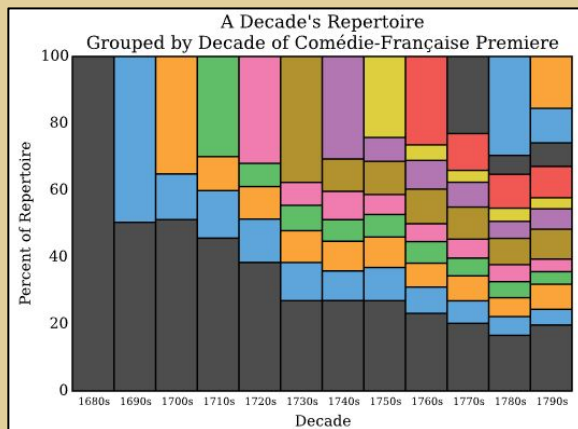
```
{
    "author": "Molière (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin dit)",
    "date": "1779-01-10",
    "genre": "comédie",
    "name": "Troisièmes Places",
    "play_performance_id": 202,
    "seating_capacity": 6,
    "title": "Amphitryon",
    "total_sold": 103
},
```

Related work

- Data has been used in hackathons and other projects before
- Most of these focus on a particular representation rather than an exploratory tool

Registres de la Comédie-Française, nombre de représentations par auteur

(Top) Each color layer represents and author's share of the number of plays played over the 1600's - 1700's period.

(Left) A decade's performances by decade of premiere

Interactive heat map of ticket sale patterns over time

A Decade's Repertoire
Grouped by Decade of Comédie-Française Premiere
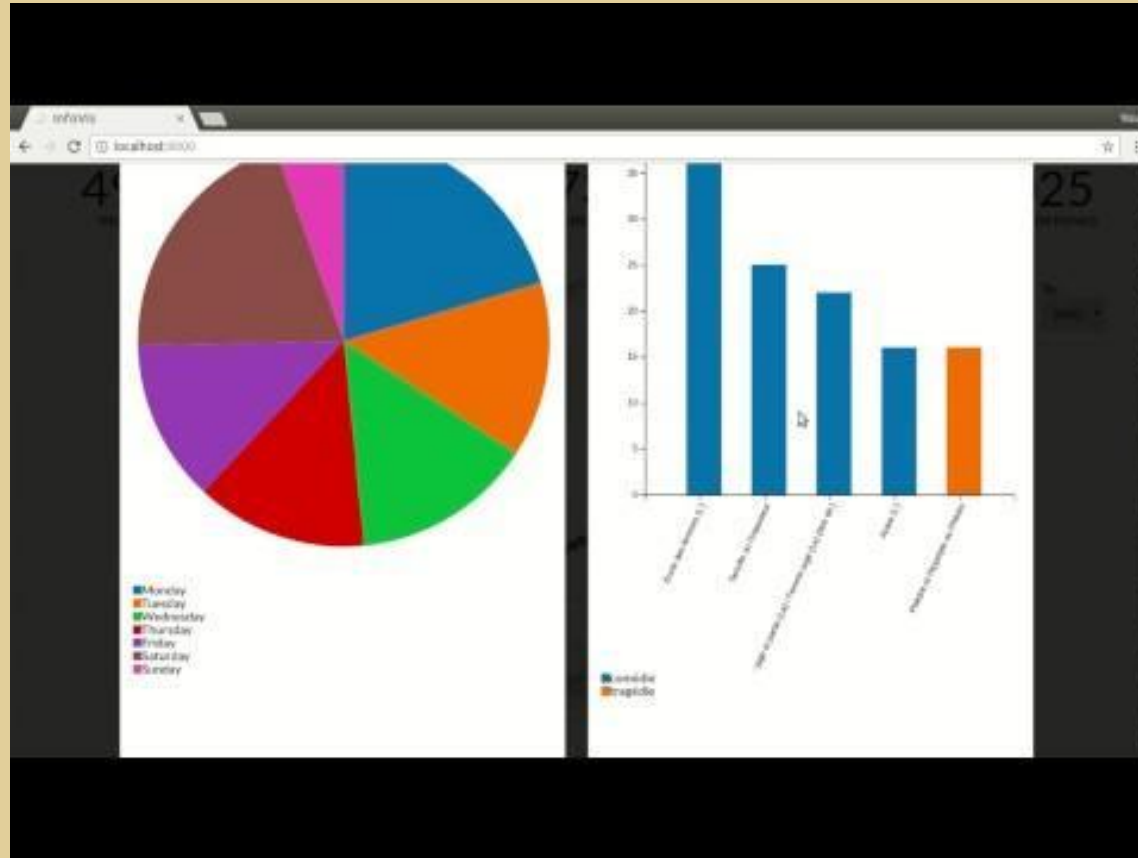
Purpose and Target Users

- **Purpose**
  - Browsing and exploration of data
  - Emphasise relations between authors, plays, genres
  - Provide further insights into each item

- **Target Users**
  - Academics in the field (teachers, students)
  - Enthusiasts
  - Members of the Comédie-Française Registers Project

Demo

Evaluation

- We worked with one of the CFRP principal investigators, Dr. Sara Harvey
- We got feedback on things that worked well:
  - The amount of information presented is not overwhelming
  - Our idiom was clearly understood at first glance
  - The visualization allows you to see that there are a lot of genres, but only a few main ones
- We got some suggestions:
  - Have the ranking out of a total, that way it gives some more context (i.e 423/425)
  - Indicate that popularity increases as you move along each axis of the hive plot
- We got some insight into the data:
  - One example is: tickets sold ≠ number of people
    - A single "loges" ticket could be for up to 10 people

Future Work

- Magnifying lens embedding as a solution to the occlusion problem
- Add visual cues to aid users in understanding data placement choices
  - Significance of node arrangement along axis
  - When are the time constraints being applied to the data
- Make it fully bilingual
- Expansions to include more facets of the data
- Usability evaluation by users with little to no domain knowledge
- Educational workshop