A Web-based Musical Document Viewer for Digital Music Libraries

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This late-breaking session will present research on a digital image viewer for musical documents (print and manuscript sources). In a digital music library, viewing the musical document is the last step in a user's information seeking process, and while user's searching and retrieval behaviour for these documents has been well researched, the impact of employing music-specific tools and processes for viewing these documents has not been studied.

Some properties of musical documents present unique challenges to presenting these documents to users. Some musical documents are separated across multiple physical volumes, as in the case of choral part-books or orchestral parts. This necessitates a viewer that can display multiple physical volumes on a single screen, providing a complete presentation of a single musical work.

We conducted a survey of 24 different digital collection implementations, each with different methods for displaying the document images in their collections. We then used this survey, along with our the unique characteristics of musical documents to inform the design of a web application designed specifically for viewing musical documents. In this session we will present our work to date on this prototype.