Indiana University Offers Open Source Digital Music Library Software
February 18, 2009

Indiana University today announces the release of open source software to create a digital music library system. The software, called Variations, provides online access to streaming audio and scanned score images in support of teaching, learning, and research.

Variations enables institutions such as college and university libraries and music schools to digitize audio and score materials from their own collections, provide those materials to their students and faculty in an interactive online environment, and respect intellectual property rights.

A key feature of the system for faculty and students is the ability to create bookmarks and playlists for use in studying or in preparing classroom presentations, allowing easy access later on to specific audio time points or segments. A key feature for libraries is a flexible access control and authentication system, which allows libraries to set up access rules based on their own local institutional policies.

This software is the culmination of nearly fifteen years of development and use of digital music library systems at Indiana University. Creation of the current Variations software platform was originally funded by the National Science Foundation. In 2005, the Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded Indiana University a National Leadership Grant to extend this highly successful system to the nationwide library community. Beyond IU, the software is currently being used at the Ohio State University, University of Maryland, New England Conservatory of Music, and the Philadelphia area Tri-College Consortium (Haverford, Swarthmore, and Bryn Mawr).

This open source release of Variations complements IU's earlier release of the open source Variations Audio Timeliner, which lets users identify relationships in passages of music, annotate their findings, and play back the results with simple point-and-click navigation. This tool is also included as a feature of the complete Variations system.

Indiana University plans to offer a free one-hour Variations webinar at 4:00 PM EST on March 4, 2009 for institutions and individuals interested in learning more about the system. To register, e-mail mnotess@indiana.edu.

The Indiana University Digital Library Program and Cook Music Library created Variations in collaboration with faculty and students in IU's Jacobs School of Music. The IU Digital Library Program is a collaborative effort of the Indiana University Libraries and the Indiana University Office of the Vice President for Information Technology.

For more information on the Variations open source release, see:
http://variations.sourceforge.net/