Variations on Video: Proposal for a Collaborative Planning Grant
Indiana University

Project Abstract

The Indiana University Digital Library Program, in partnership with Northwestern University Libraries, proposes to lead a six-month planning process from August 2010 through January 2011 to define the scope, requirements, and technical architecture for extending Indiana University's nationally recognized open source Variations digital music library system to support management and delivery of digital video collections. This project builds on the past success of Variations, currently in use at over eight college and university libraries, and on Indiana University's and Northwestern University's extensive history in providing access to digitized audio and video collections.

In addition to Indiana and Northwestern, representatives of New York University, the University of Miami, and Ohio State University, along with at least three additional institutions to be identified, will participate in providing input and feedback on the requirements for such a system. The process will also involve representatives from DuraSpace, the non-profit organization that is responsible for the guiding the development of the principal open source digital repository systems in use by libraries for management of digital content (Fedora and DSpace) and from the Opencast community, which is working on the development of various open source services in support of educational audio and video creation and delivery.

The *Variations* digital music library and learning system was developed by Indiana University (IU) with support from a Digital Libraries Initiative – Phase 2 grant from the National Science Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities in 2000-2005 and a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services in 2005-2009. Building on IU's past experience in creating the original *VARIATIONS,* one of the world's first music and streaming media digital library systems, the current Variations system offers a complete environment in which students and faculty can discover, listen to, view, annotate, and interact with music in both streaming audio and scanned score formats. Variations supports a flexible access control system that is adaptable to local policies, as well as end-user tools useful in teaching, learning, and research, including tools for saving and annotating bookmarks within audio recordings, creating playlists of audio segments from multiple recordings, and creating annotated audio timelines.

The outcome of this planning process is expected to be the formation of a multi-institutional partnership to develop and submit a proposal to appropriate funding agencies in early 2011 to support the development of a video-capable version of Variations. This system, once developed, will have national and international impact by enabling libraries, colleges, and universities to better manage their growing digital media collections; control access to items in these collections according to license agreements, copyright, and local institutional policies; and provide appropriate end-user tools and integration with other systems to support the effective use of digital media collections in teaching, learning, and research activities.