

ABSTRACT

For this study, we used Google Analytics to evaluate factors influencing user selection of specific works in a collection of digitized sheet music. These factors were: participation in a collaborative index (Sheet Music Consortium), browse list order, inclusion in mini-collections, style of cover illustration, and presence of audio links. Page view data for individual works were grouped by source (the links that directed users to the site) and correlated with the factors being studied. These results were obtained for a sheet music collection but have relevance for digital collections of all types, especially collections of visual materials such as maps, posters, photographs, etc.

Works that were listed in the Sheet Music Consortium had more views/work than non-listed works. Works at or near the top of the Consortium browse listing had more views/work than those further down. Works listed in five mini-collections featured on the collection home page had more views/work from users who had access to these mini-collections (not Consortium users). Works with extensive cover graphics had more views/work than works whose cover designs consisted primarily of words, with or without graphic borders. Works with links to audio versions did not have more views/work than works without such links.

METHODOLOGY

Google Analytics Data Gathering Process:

Step 1—Create a Google Analytics account for your digital collection.

Step 2—Add GA tagging code to your Web page template.

Step 3—Wait (GA can't collect data from before account was opened) ...

Step 4—Sign in to your collection's GA account.

Step 4a--Choose date range.

Step 4b--Choose report type.

Step 4c--Choose any additional variables and filters.

Step 5--Export data as Comma-separated values or as spreadsheet.

Step 6--Open exported data file(s) in Excel and start crunching.

For This Project:

Date range: October 15, 2011 through May 14, 2012

Data collected: Views for individual Piano Bench Collection pages, alone

and filtered by ..

User location

User source (directing link)

Additional information collected (not from GA):

Listed in Sheet Music Consortium? List number?

Listed in Sheet Music Consolitum: List number:

Included in mini-collection(s)? Which one(s)?

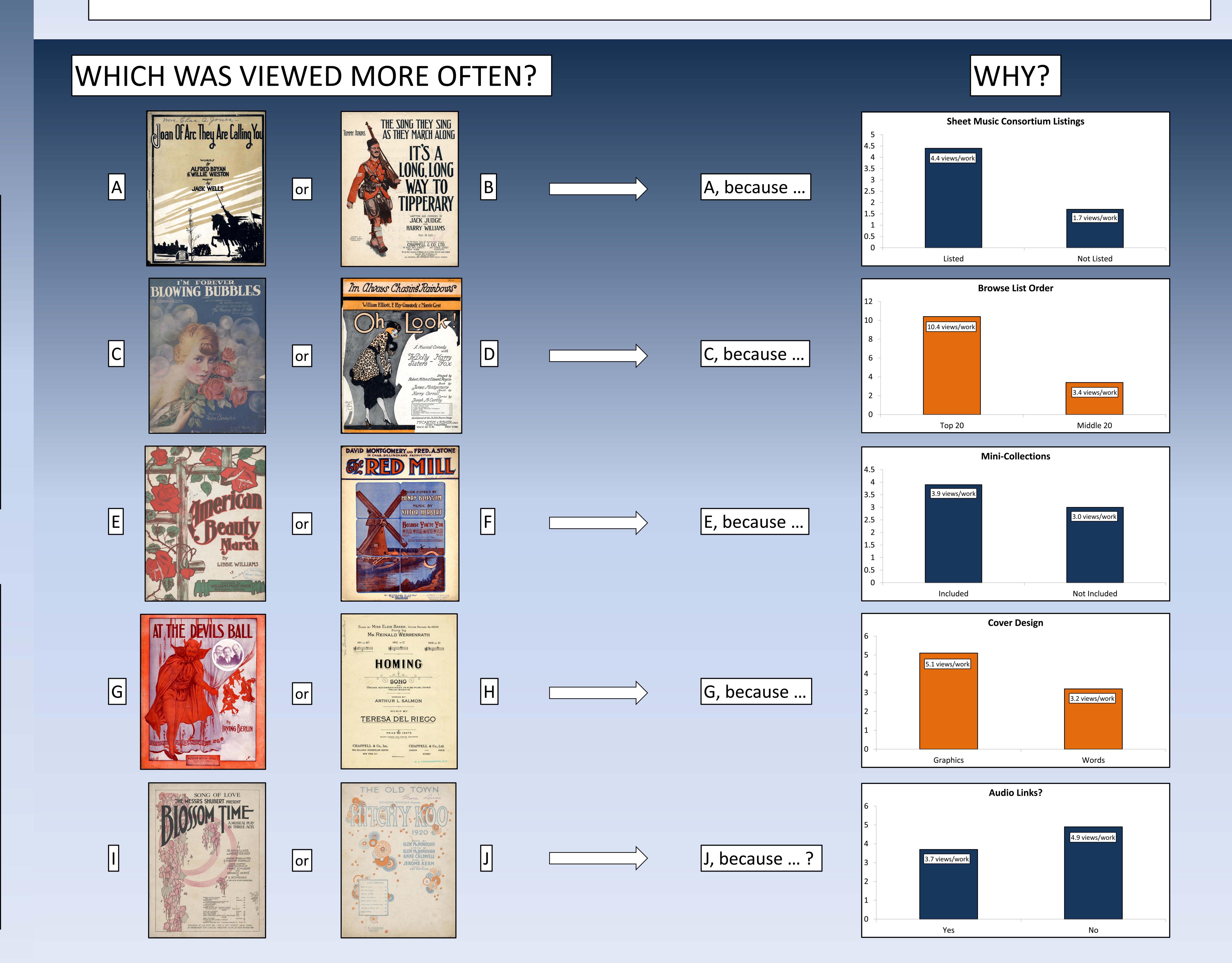
What kind of cover illustration--graphic or words?

Audio link present?

Because You're You:

Factors Influencing Selection in a Digital Sheet Music Collection

Midge Coates, Auburn University Libraries





http://diglib.auburn.edu/collections/pianobench/

DISCUSSION

This study examined the effect of five factors on user selection of individual works.

- 1) Inclusion in the Sheet Music Consortium: Works listed in the Sheet Music Consortium collaborative index had significantly more views/work than those that were not listed.
- 2) Browse list order: Works listed at or near the top of the Sheet Music Consortium's Browse list for Auburn's collection had significantly more views/work than those listed further down the list. (This effect was not observed for the native CONTENTdm collection.)
- 3) Inclusion in mini-collections: Works included in the mini-collections featured on the Piano Bench home page had more views/work from those visitors who entered the collection via the home page. (Sheet Music Consortium users went directly to the work and by-passed the home page.)
- 4) Cover design: Works with cover designs that featured graphic illustrations had more views/work than those whose cover designs were mostly words.
- 5) Audio links: Works which had links to audio versions DID NOT have more views/work than those without audio links. In fact, it seemed that the opposite was true. It is probable that this factor had no influence at all and was overpowered by some other influence.

CONCLUSIONS

- Participating in a large and well-known collaborative index may be the best way to increase the use of items in small digital collections.
- Digital collections may also benefit from the creation of minicollections to highlight materials that might be overlooked by casual browsers.
- Some factors affecting item use may be out of a collection manager's control (browse list order, cover design).
- Some factors expected to increase use may have no effect or a negative effect (audio links). Testing is important.