Searching for Old Music

Scaling mountains of data

Jennifer Thomas, School of Music
The motet, 1475-1600

- Innovative
- Prominent
- Expressive
- Historical witness
- Beautiful
How many?

• 10s of 1000s

• My current data
  • 50,256 records

• Future data—double
  • Single composer prints
  • Missing manuscripts and anthologies
Indexes

- Habits
- Possibilities
Marguerite and Katherine

• A motet manuscript conveys a personal message
• London Royal 8.G.vii
Absalon, fili mi
in
LonBLR 8.G.vii
Norms and aberrations

- *Dulces exuviae*
- Authorship
- Political messages
- Religious and social practices
- Patronage
- Popularity
The Internet and the Academy

• Usefulness
• Exposure
Perks

• Immediate
• Flexible
• Free to users
• Powerful
Pitfalls

• Open-ended
• Limited payback
• Tedium
Possibilities

• Crowd-sourcing
• Heir apparent
• Aggregate projects
• Satellite