

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Using text analysis to identify musicologists' attitudes towards technology

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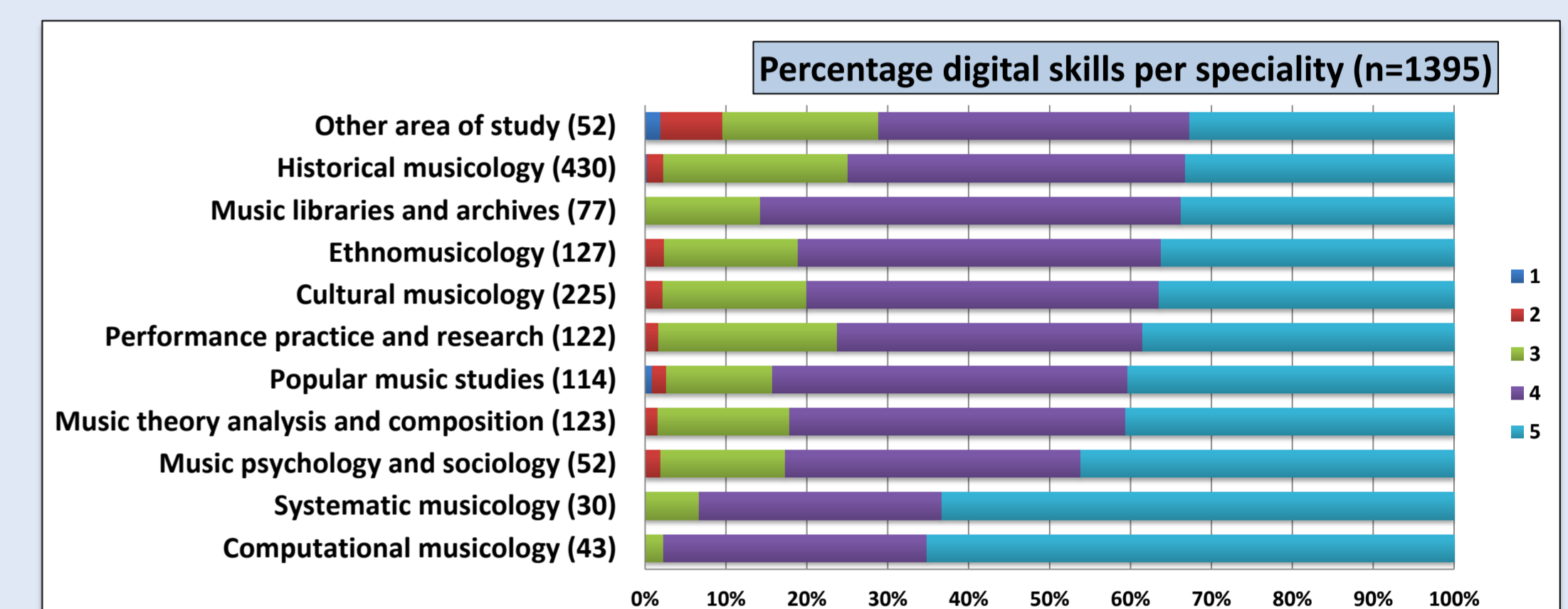
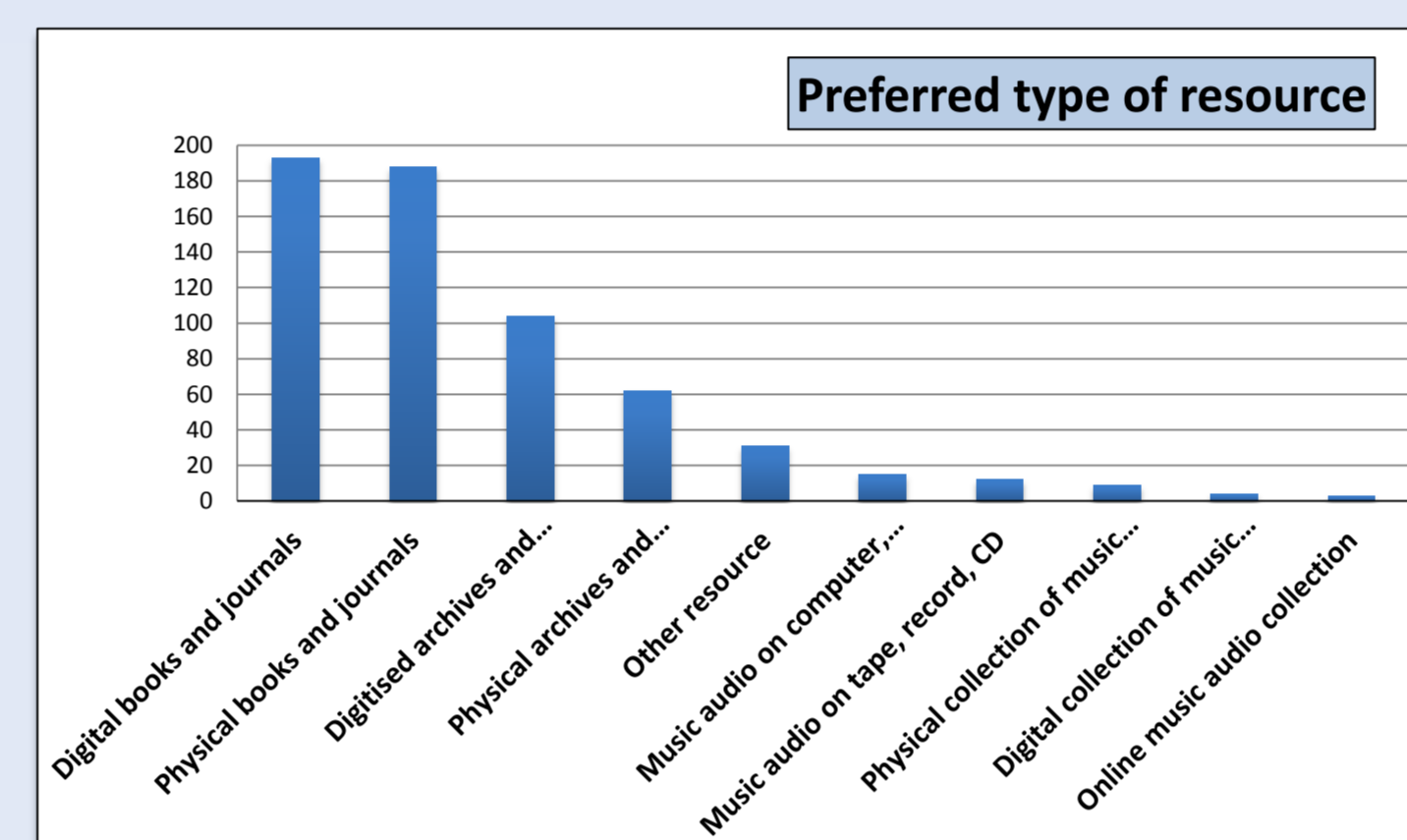
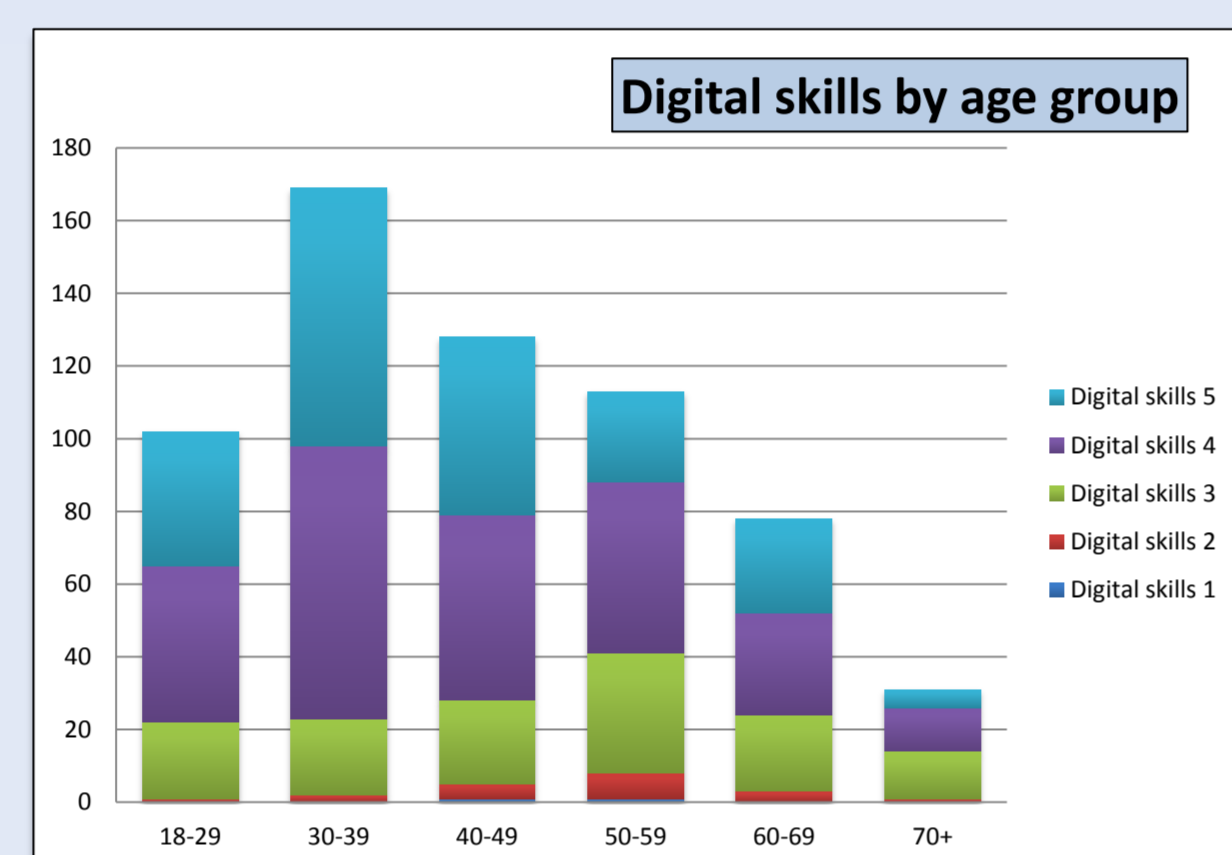
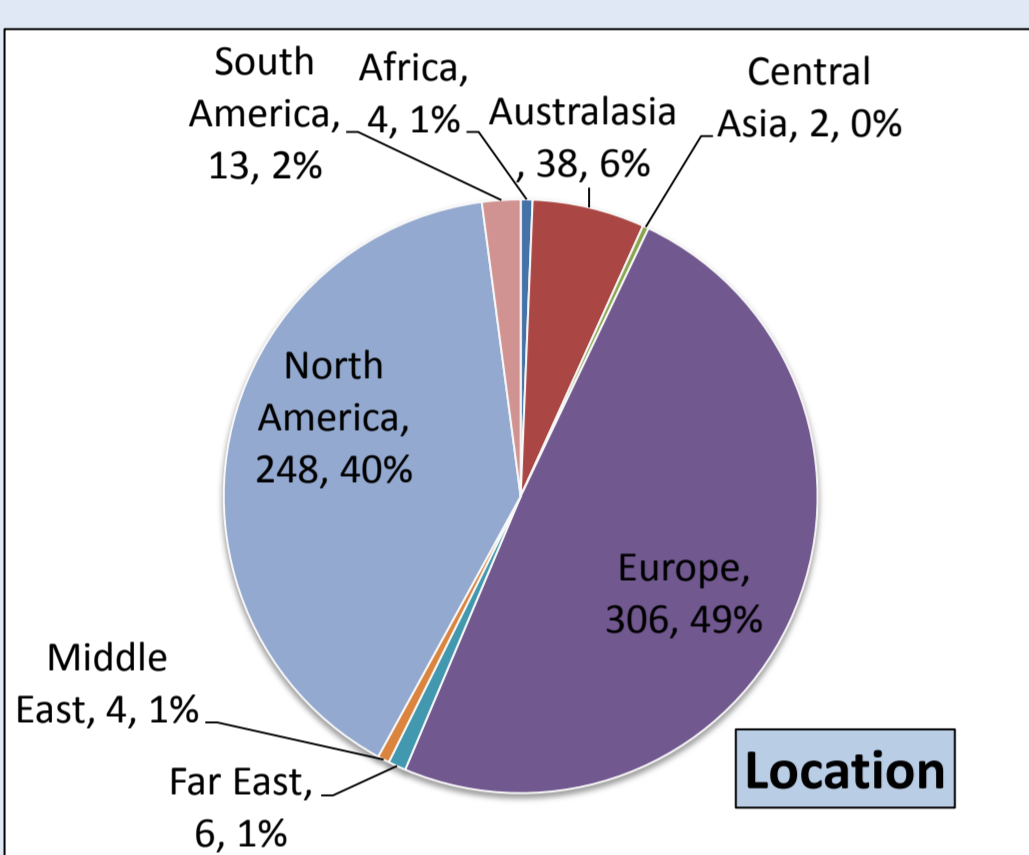
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"until analytical tools and services are more sophisticated, robust, transparent, and easy to use for the motivated humanities researcher, it will be difficult to attract a broad base of interest within the humanities community."

Christine Borgman, 2009

Motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • much development of computer technology for musicology • alleged transformative potential of this technology • mismatch between development and use: uptake is low • technophobia or other reasons? • towards sounder approach to system development 	Aims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study the use and non-use of technology by musicologists • discover their attitudes towards technology • develop musicology-centred design practice 	Method <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online questionnaire (n=621) • quantitative data • open questions about experiences and values • text analysis based on Hirsch index (h-index) • h-point: term rank = term frequency in responses • lower threshold for important thematic words
Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participants</i>: solo or employed; range of disciplines; varying levels of digital skills; tend to overestimate themselves; signs of insecurity • <i>Practices</i>: need context-dependent access; physical and digital artefacts; use software when it contributes to workflow; digital methodologies not yet well integrated in mainstream practice; access information about music, rather than music • <i>Values and attitudes</i>: positive and negative views often held simultaneously; excited about increased access; superficiality of digital research may undermine discipline; importance of completeness, accuracy, reliability, serendipity, materiality 	Conclusions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • findings very similar to other Digital Humanities fields • improve digital skills • software for high-quality online access to digital resources 	



Frustrations

“Life was so much easier in the old days when I just typed up my paper and Xeroxed handouts and made cassettes of musical examples” (326)

“It is clunky, idiosyncratic, and miserable to use. Inserting images (such as musical examples) is a nightmare” (045)

“...the more advanced transcription software ... presumes fluency in programming, e.g., C++” (223)

“Every time I come back to it, it feels like I have to learn it all over again. I wish they were more intuitive to use” (363)

“I can't stand the quirks and glitches of the mainstream software” (152)

“Any interaction with Finale/Sybellius [sic] is a frustrating experience” (298)

“do not always capture the creative process, or iterations, of materials” (420)

“Browsing' in the digital realm is a far less productive activity than browsing in library stacks” (68)

“...the sheer amount of 'hits' one gets for a topic can be daunting....” (233)

“those who do benefit because they have a university job, and those who have much less benefit, because they are independent” (337)

“Digital materials can be posted by anyone” (492)

“digitized archival material cannot substitute the original” (383)

“when they have a problem that can really only be solved the old-fashioned libraries-and-grunt-work way, they're stuck... Carl Ludwig's 'Repertorium Organorum' may be hellish to use, but it's still indispensable” (058)

“the vast majority of resources have not been digitized” (65)

“Technology can help us to answer research questions more easily and efficiently, and (importantly) it can inspire us to devise new research questions. But it cannot replace using the grey stuff between the ears” (003)

“musicology will be too superficial and lose authority as a serious contribution to society” (604)

“material questions about the physical nature, such as the writing material, are not answered on digitized materials” (393)

“[physical items may be overlooked” (319)

“encourages a rapidity of response and decision, often at the expense of maturing thought over extended time” (15)

Risks

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Rewards

“It is helpful to have access to my research almost wherever I am” (091)

“I cannot think what I would be able to do without this software!” (592)

“the ability to consult manuscripts and prints located around the world is remarkably helpful” (040)

“Shareware saved my edition project: I happily use Lilypond for the transcriptions of Ottoman music with whose special requirements (specific accidentals, rhythmical periods of up to 88 beats) most commercial typesetting programs don't easily cope. Lilypond also allows for lots of tweaks, annotations etc” (610)

“It really makes me feel I could be in a library in Italy, but accessing the material more easily” (270)

“I spent my PhD visiting them all over about 3 years; now I can see them all in one afternoon” (022)

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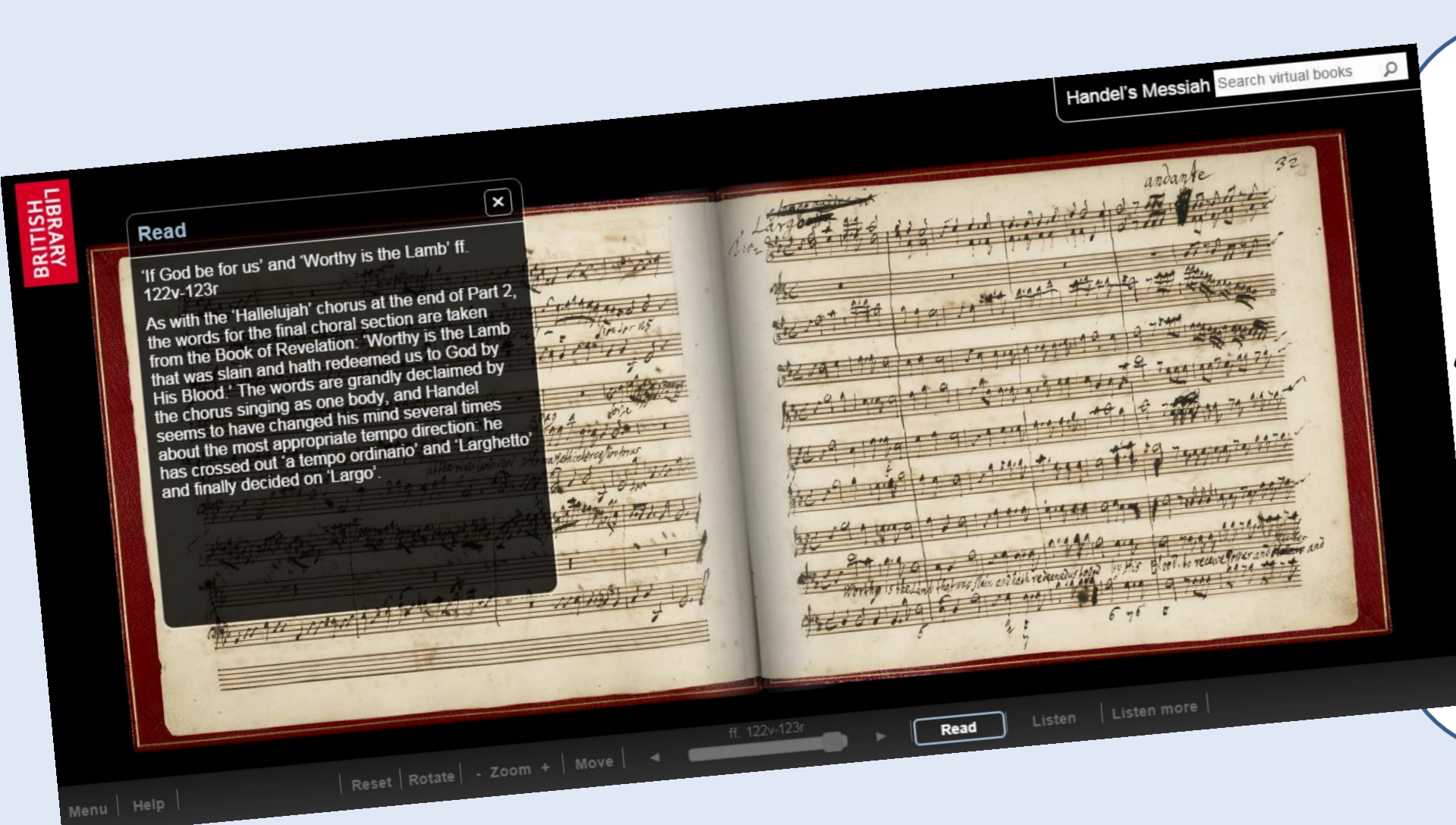
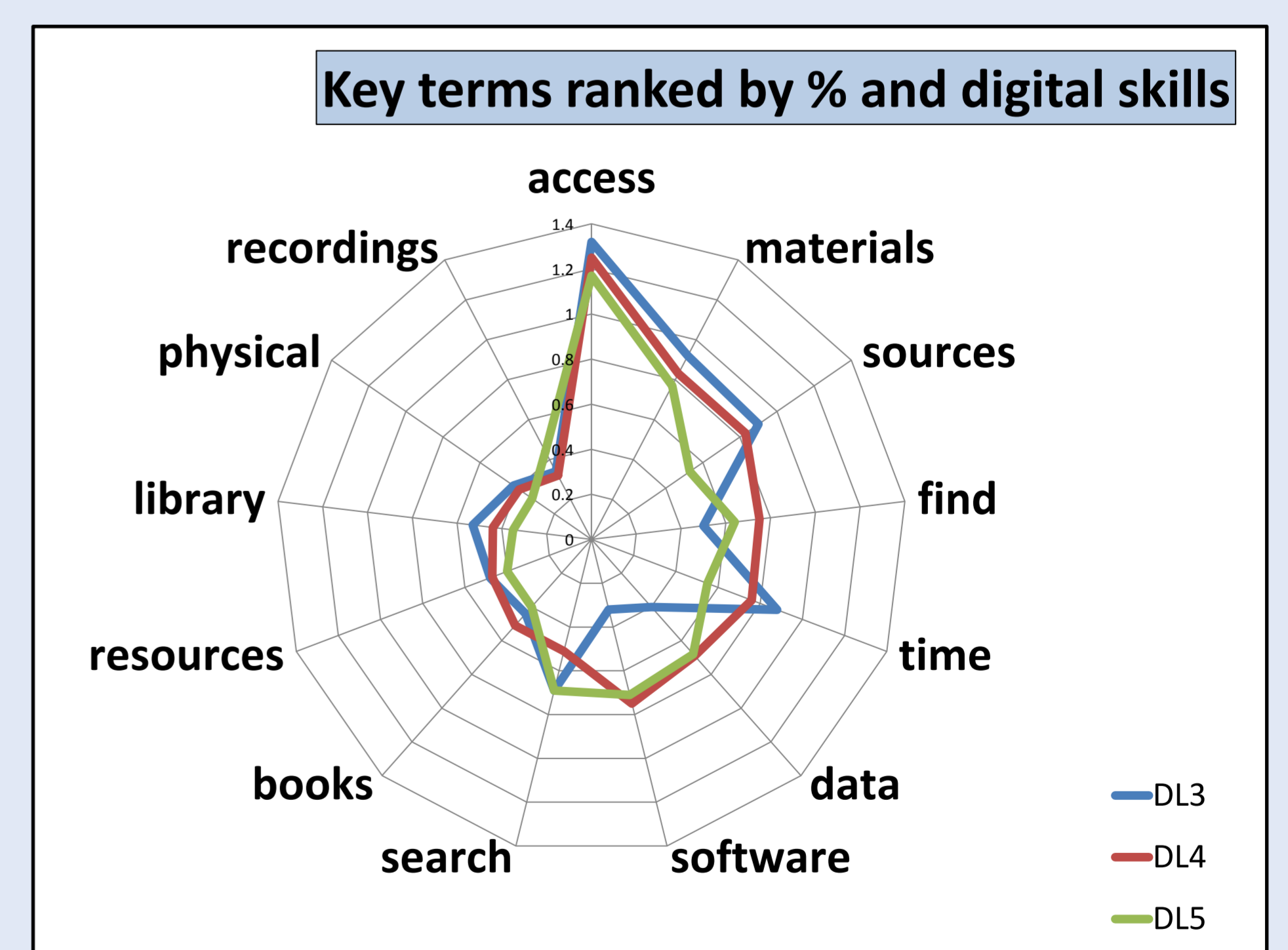
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“I think they [the benefits] are astronomical. I can read about Handel and his Messiah creation until I am blue in the face and tell students how magnificent the work is...but I truly feel that until I show them the digitized copy from the British Library and page through it with them virtually, the facts and the marvel of it all simply don't sink into their minds... Technology makes it possible to open up a world of knowledge at their fingertips. Suddenly they aren't in backwater Oklahoma any longer, they're sitting on a magic carpet of technology whisking themselves away to London or Cairo or St. Petersburg to see history happen with an immediacy that is life changing if they have the sense to see it.”

