The website Last.fm tracks individual music-listening over time. It has recorded every song I’ve listened to since 2004, but there are few good visualizations of this vast amount of data. Last.fm’s visualizations in particular are very rudimentary: Other visualizations don’t do much better: The best visualization is static:

A vast, dynamic data-set affords a rich interactive visualization. Prefuse Flare and Flash make this visualization possible on the web. Without knowledge of XML and sophisticated data-processing, most users have no way of exploring their data. Existing applications make exploring hierarchical data difficult and cumbersome; Last.fm Explorer, tailored to this data set, makes exploration possible.

Last.fm Explorer follows best practices in visualization and user-interface design:

**Future Work:**

Integrate the MusicBrainz database of track-lengths to visualize actual listening time (this proved too slow to download in real time)

Improved animations of hierarchical drill-down (current animation, above, is unsatisfactory)

Better labelling of the line graph

Record visualization state in the URL for back button support and to allow emailing specific state

ref: Jeffrey Heer’s sense.us