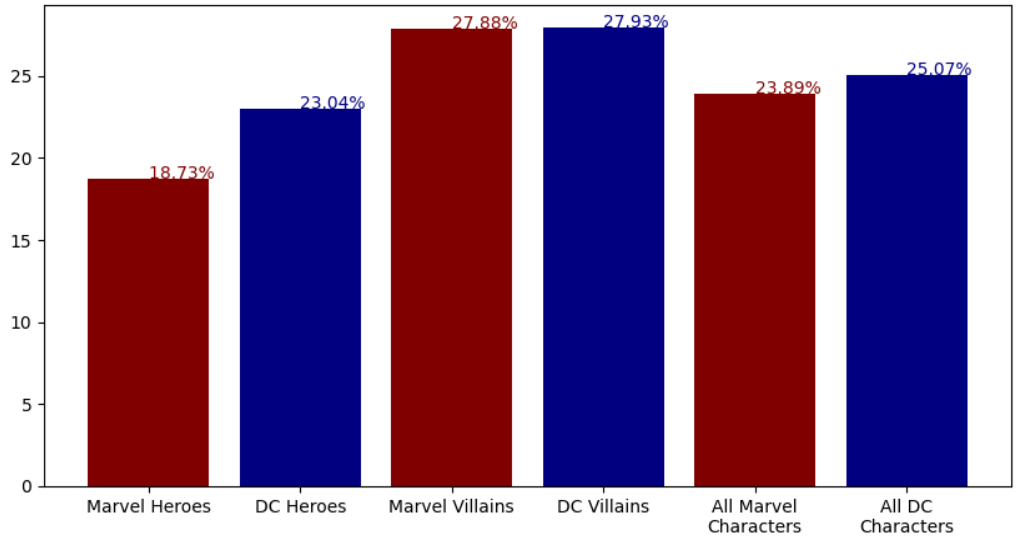
The Ultimate Marvel and DC Character Comparison

An analysis report by Jordan Gonzalez

Introduction

Using the frameworks of Pandas for scanning through the table, Matplotlib for creating graphs, NumPy for assistance in plotting, and using the dataset provided by Nikhil from Kaggle.com, we can swiftly scan through this file of thousands of rows of information and make education inferences based on what is found.

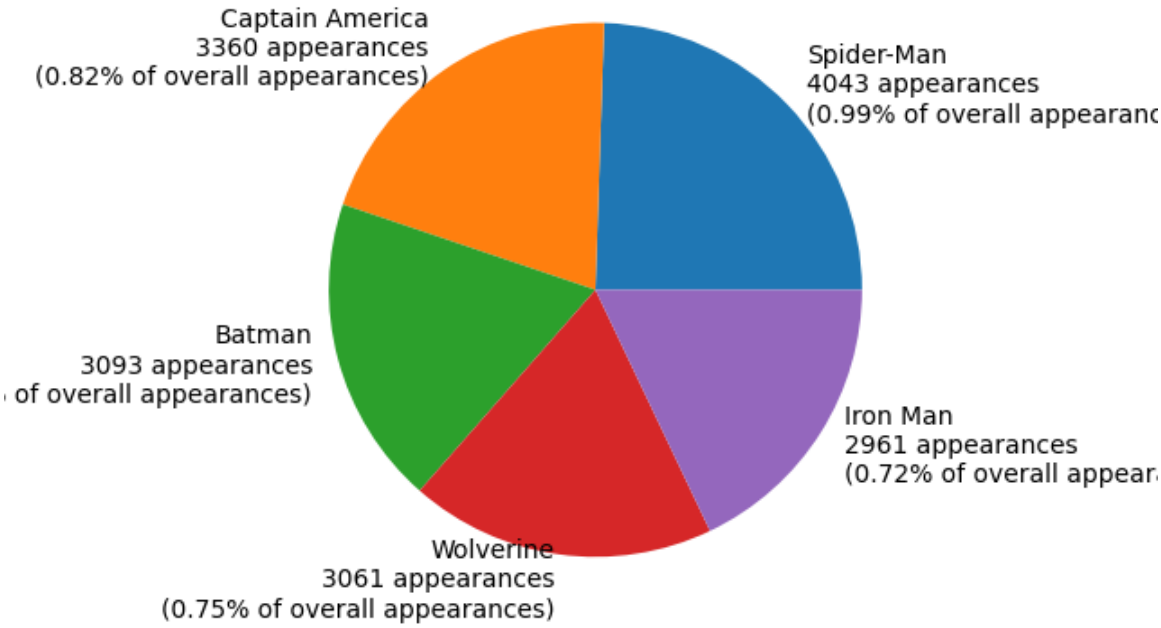
The Death Rate between Characters



When comparing the different types of characters, between those currently alive versus those that are dead, we can see that the type of characters with a higher chance of dying would be a DC villain at 27.93%, while the type of character with the smallest chance of dying would be a Marvel hero at 18.73%. DC universe characters have an overall higher chance of dying by a relatively small margin of 1.18%, however when comparing Marvel heroes directly to DC heroes, DC heroes have a higher chance of death

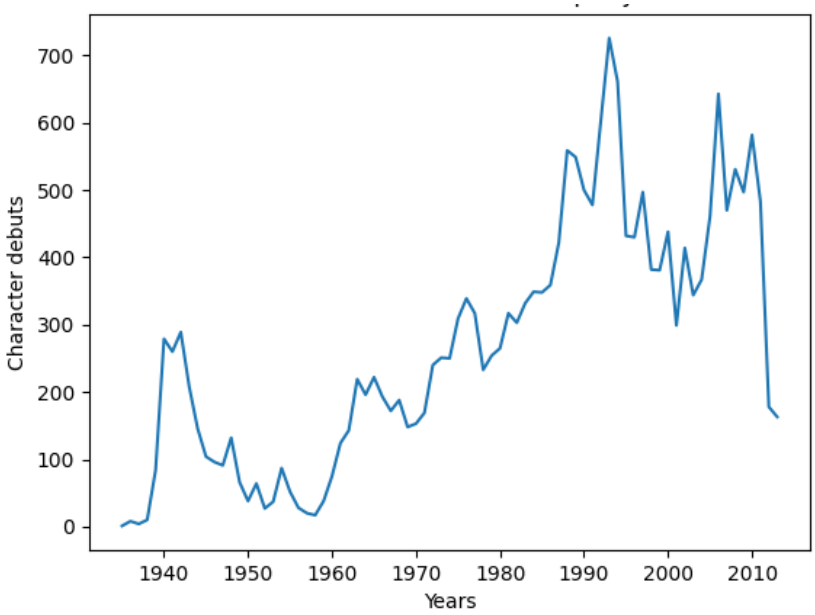
by a staggering 4.31%. The death rates are much lower when comparing the villains, having only a difference of 0.05%, evening out the overall death rates between companies. We can conclude that DC villains die at the rate of about 1.5% more than Marvel Heroes.

The Top 4% of all appearances



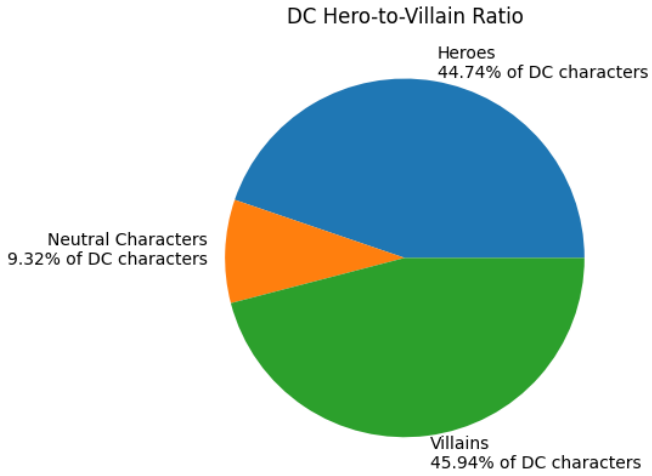
We can take a look at the top 4% of all comic book character appearances equate to 5 characters with the highest number of appearances. This top 5 is shared between 4 Marvel characters with only a single DC character. These characters are household names that often top the list when one thinks of the word "Superhero" as almost all of these characters star in some of the Highest Grossing Cinema of all time. It is more than safe to equate the number of appearances per character, to that character's own popularity status.

Character Debuts per Year

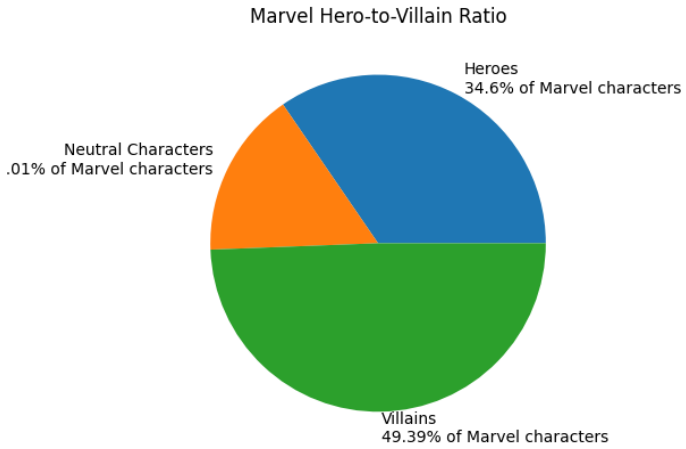


Taking a look at this graph shows a compilation of the number of character debuts per year across comic universes. We can see the initial book of in-universe characters starts somewhere around 1940, with the overall biggest character boom in the early 1990'ss. The next boom wouldn't happen until around 2007 to 2010, but it would not nearly be as big as the early 1990's. Following 2010, is a steady decline of new comic book characters is shown, with the popularity of superhero cinema growing, this could lead one to think that comic books are going out of trend. In actuality, the opposite is happening, as the universe studios have chosen to reiterate on characters they have already created, leading to an all time high of comic book sales within the past 5 years.

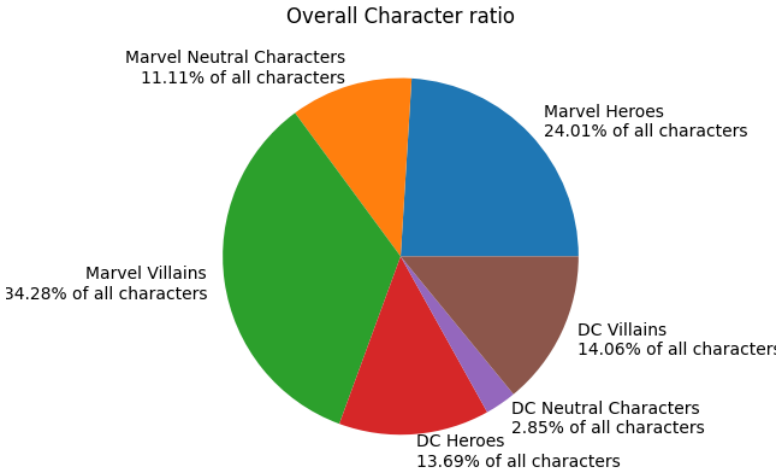
The Hero-to-Villain Ratio



The ratios of heroes-to-villains within the DC universe is the most consistent, with only 1.2% more Villains than there are heroes. Taking this information into account alongside the death rate of DC villains being the highest, we can see how the DC universe would need to create more Villains to maintain clear antagonists throughout different DC series.

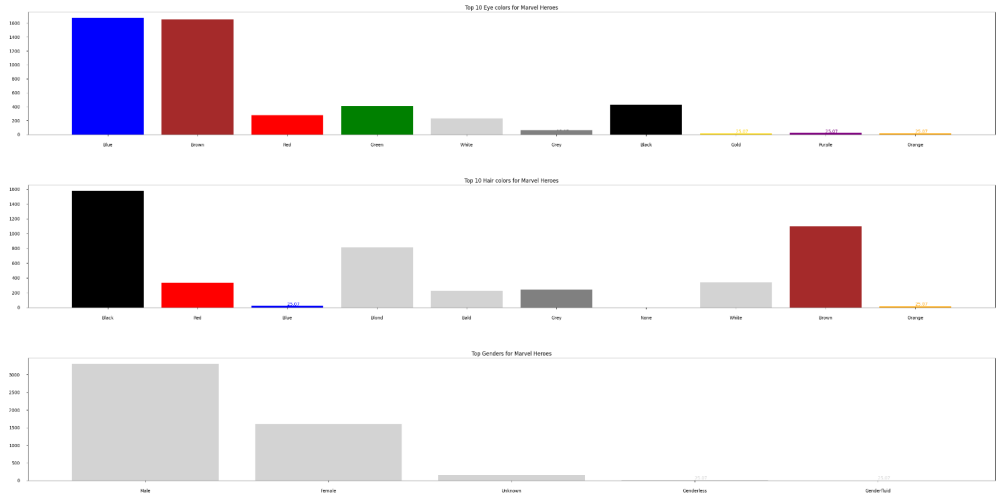


Marvel's Hero-to-Villain ratio is much steeper than in comparison to DC. When referring to the death rate for Marvel Heroes, we can compare it to their shockingly low existence rate in comparison to all other characters. Marvel Heroes having the lowest death rate can lead us to infer that in order to keep characters both alive and relevant, they would not need to create more, but rather iterate on who they already have. Marvel is infamous for rebooting popular characters as means of reiteration, creating entirely different takes on pre-existing characters.

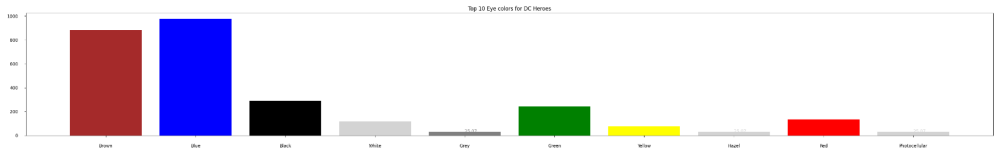


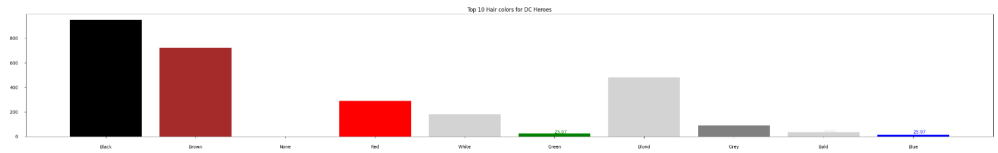
Directly comparing the datasets between Marvel and DC character ratios shows the overwhelming existence of Marvel Villains and Heroes, greatly overshadowing DC Heroes and Villains. Concluding this dataset with information from the death rates received previously, Marvel Heroes have the lowest overall death rate due to the constant variations and iterations between characters that they constantly keep alive in addition to a rapid rate of introducing new characters for a more Quantity-based Roster. DC Villains having the highest death rate yet a modestly low existence suggests an entirely different trend, where their low existence rate implies that since they are not created as often, they tend to last a bit longer than the standard “Marvel Villain of the Day”, but out of everyone have a more certain chance of demise.

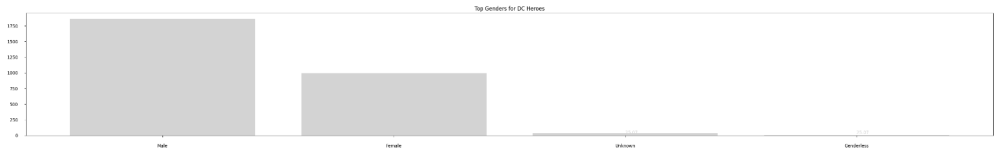
Common Traits found in characters

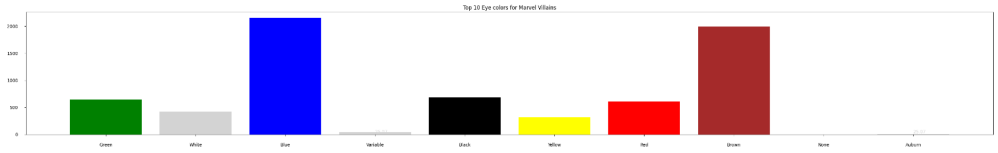


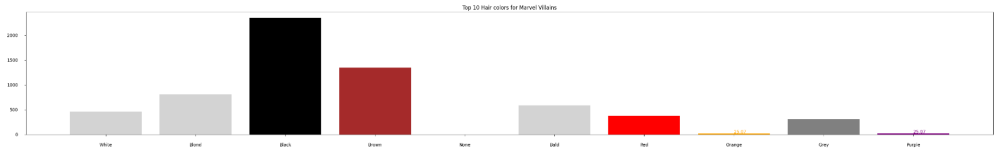
Most common traits found between Marvel Heroes, prove to be Black Hair, Blue Eyes, and Male. However, when scanning through this same information, this is actually just as common in every other type of character across the board. DC Villains, DC Heroes, and even Marvel Villains all share the most common features of Black Hair, Blue eyes and being Male, shown below.

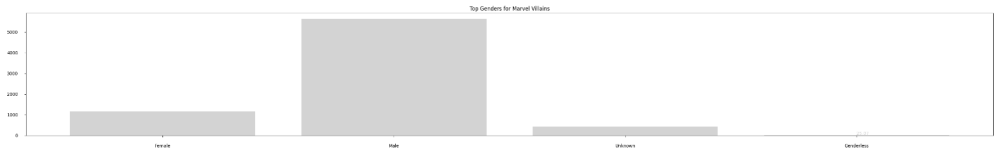

Top 10 Eye colors for DC Heroes
1000
800
600
400
200
0
Unnm
Blue
Black
White
Grey
Green
Yellow
Hazel
Red
Photocellular

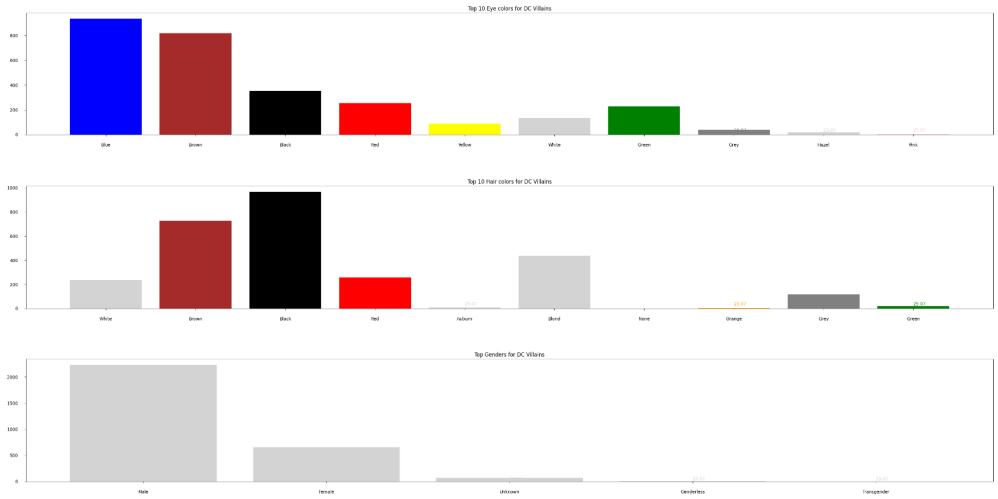

Top 10 Hair colors for DC Heroes
800
600
400
200
0
Black
Brown
None
Red
White
Green
Blond
Grey
Bald
Blue


Top Genders for DC Heroes
1750
1500
1250
1000
750
500
250
0
Male
Female
Unknown
Genderless


Top 10 Eye colors for Marvel Villains
2000
1500
1000
500
0
Green
White
Blue
Variable
Black
Yellow
Red
Brown
None
Auburn


Top 10 Hair colors for Marvel Villains
2000
1500
1000
500
0
White
Blond
Black
Brown
None
Bald
Red
Orange
Grey
Purple


Top Genders for Marvel Villains
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
Female
Male
Unknown
Genderless



Conclusion

Scanning through the data reveals rich information in regards to how comic studios Marvel and DC handle their characters. We can infer that Marvel will very rarely kill off one of their heroes, but comparatively, Marvel has a similar likelihood of killing off Villains and DC. Contrastingly, DC has some of the lowest existing heroes and hero appearances, leading to a more “Quality over Quantity” approach. Marvel Villains have an overwhelmingly large existence rate, more than double the appearances of DC Heroes. We can infer this is due to Marvel's Quantity driven approach, where they tend to have a “Villain of the Day” that is promptly killed off only for a new villain to be created in a continuous cycle. The Most common traits found across all characters, regardless of Alignment or Universe, are Men with Black hair and Blue eyes. Fitting this bill are some big names such as Batman, Iron Man and Superman.