

The central theme of my project was the way we represent data. Even something as organic and freeform as music can be recorded and represented mechanically. So I decided to take something that I thought of as very human--a clip from Toro y Moi's song "Still Sound", and apply a very rote, bot-like purpose to the data that I could collect from that clip. I found an API (<http://hawttrends.appspot.com/api/terms/>) that spit out popular Google search terms and wrote a Python script that would collect these terms, assemble them into a list, and query Google Images for the first few image results for each term. I wrote a C binary that would, using the portsf library, spit out the sound file's amplitude at each beat (normalized between 0.0 and 1.0) of a given .wav file when supplied a BPM value. These amplitudes were then used to select search terms from the corpus to be displayed.

I wanted to keep kind of a minimalist, old Internet aesthetic, so lots of black and white and Times New Roman, and a couple of hidden features.

I really only chose the song "Still Sound" because it's one of my favorites, but I think it suits the theme well. The old Internet aesthetic that I mentioned before has a very rigid, barebones, generated feeling to it, and I think the fact that a song as fluid and analog-sounding could be reduced to something so bot-y could be a little jarring. The section is decidedly human: an imperfect choral bridge over snappy, vintage movie soundtrack backbeat and an exceedingly warm bassline overhead. Toro y Moi, however, isn't an old musician. He's new artist whose rise in popularity was almost entirely blog based. In many ways, Toro y Moi is a child of the Internet, and, though the style of his craft harkens back to decades past, his place in the modern age is almost entirely predicated on the ease with which we can pass around mp3's.