

For the “Me, Graphically” assignment, I chose to depict my music taste and its relation to my everyday lifestyle. For context, I am a big fan of electronic dance music (EDM) and that has come to define the majority of my listening hours, but this was not always the case. Before taking a liking to EDM, I would very rarely listen to music; I would often just work in silence. Thus, I thought it would be interesting to observe how the relationship between music and my life has changed with this new interest. To do so, I plan on showing how music has now become an integral part of my daily routine. My initial objective for this graphic was a product that looked neat and clean without too much information. I believe we can explore greater details through alternative methods of visualization like interactive visuals, so I prioritized simplicity here. I began my creative process by first sketching out what I wanted my graph to look like. Once satisfied, I moved on to the digital creation; I took on a trial-and-error approach to what features to include and exclude. When the general layout was finalized, I recreated everything digitally using Inkscape and took advantage of the selection tools to visually arrange objects.

For the logistics and organization of the graphic, I chose to create a chart resembling a music sheet with circles shown in varying sizes and colors. This graphic recorded my music patterns for a week in February on the x-axis, observing from morning to night on the y-axis. Each circle represents an occurrence where I listened to a playlist on Spotify, and the size of the circle represents information for the playing time. The color of the circle depicted the specific playlist I listened to, organized by genre. I hoped, that by making the colors follow the order of a rainbow, the genres with higher beats per minute (BPM) would be more easily distinguishable since the colors orange and yellow are more alarming and bright. In the legend, I indicated the playlist/genre behind each color circle and ranked them in descending order by their average BPMs. Inspired by an example, I thought an interesting way for the graphic to be more engaging was to make the legend resemble the annual Spotify wrap screens. In addition, I have a box dedicated to information on the other symbols, explaining the meaning of the circle sizes and boxes for my classes. I separate the two legends because I feel that there is an intuitive grouping to the information, and comprehending them in this manner prevents overloading the viewer with information in one section. I also created a box highlighting the average initial, middle, and end-of-the-day BPMs since I noticed a listening trend similar to a bell curve. Specifically, I would start the day listening to songs with low BPM, and after I hit a peak around noon as I gym, the pacing gradually slows down through the day, reaching around where we started.

In this process, the biggest challenge I encountered was attempting to make the visualization more unique and trying something new. My initial graph lacked a lot of stylistic elements, so as a solution, I added music notes and turned the graph into a music sheet. I also played with other ideas but the ideas clashed with my data visualization technique. At first, I was hesitant about making any aesthetic additions to the graph since I came into the class with the preconception that anything other than the data itself would be too distracting. However, I realize visual components are extremely valuable since they help with viewer engagement.

In terms of additional discoveries from the outcome, I notice that the majority of my listening patterns center around classes. This is likely because I enjoy background music while I walk to class. Moreover, on days that I am less productive (Sunday 2/3 and Saturday 2/4), I listen to less music since I can devote my undivided attention to watching videos. Lastly, I noticed that certain genres with specific BPMs are linked to certain tasks. For instance, I only listen to “head BOPs” when I gym since the BPM is usually over 150 which energizes me.

Ultimately, this graphic reveals that my liking of EDM has a correlation with my day-to-day activities, changing the visualization from one that would be blank a few years back.