Dear New York Times Editor,


The page is a very creative and informative way to visualize the movie sales patterns and frequency of blockbuster releases. The page contains movies’ box office performances from 1986 to 2008, which is a period long enough to discover frequent patterns across months in a year and compare movies/box office receipts from different time frames.

An interesting pattern that is revealed easily by observing the visualization is that blockbuster movies are usually released during two times of the year: early summer and Christmas. Users have an option to either scroll through the graphic, or search for a specific movie. I found it more entertaining to scroll through the graphic and scan the names appearing inside the “movie hills”. Searching for movies is easy and fast, and a very helpful features is the recommendations the search bar shows as the user types in a name. I was happy to see that the designers adjusted the data for inflation, which is the correct way to represent financial data over time.

Although 22 years of data is enough to catch some patterns, I am sure much more could be revealed if the user could search movies starting from early 1900s. This would allow a better comparison of how the cinema market has evolved throughout this century, and how it relates to the development in movie quality.

The visualization is strong, however it lacks some options and filters. For instance, I would like to look at the worldwide box office results, in order to compare and contrast with the US box office. Genre filters could be helpful, with a drop-down menu to choose movies only from certain genres into the graphic.

One feature I could not find is to zoom in and out of the graphic. It would be much nicer to see the 22 year-long graphic at once, given the zoom-out capability. On the other hand, zooming in could help to see the details of the graphic in a specific period, especially parts where there are many movies and it is hard to distinguish between them.

As for color, I would personally use a brighter color like green or blue as opposed to brown. Allowing the user to choose the color is not vital in this application, since it is not a significant aspect of the visualization. Yet, it would be an easy improvement to include this capability.

As a conclusion, I find this work very inspiring and entertaining. Just by interacting with the graphic, one can get most of the information needed, which makes this design very successful. A few improvements could be made, as I mentioned above. Nevertheless, this is a very good example of information visualization. Thanks!

Regards,
Ferhan Ture