Dear Team of Designers,

As a reader of NYTimes and a huge fan of Hollywood movies, I would like to thank you for presenting “The Ebb and Flow of Movies: Box Office Receipts 1986 — 2008” published on February 23, 2008. The first thing that caught my eyes is the eccentricity of the visual representation, it took a little time to understand the idea, but as I carefully watched it, it made more sense.

Usually representing revenues in bar charts is common, but this ebb and flow also shows the time the movies lasted on theatres. In scatter graph, there is possibility of overlapping of points, which is avoided here; and representing movies by area worked better than by points. A user need not see the coordinate values in axes because the area gives a comprehensive idea.

Some information and link to NYTMovieOverview show up as a tooltip by clicking on the movie that helps find out more. The search option is useful as it highlights the movie in the graph.

Most movies earned the maximum revenue on starting week, but there are exceptions too, like the movies Elizabeth and Good Will Hunting that did not start well, but after a few weeks, they succeeded to attract the mass people. Some movies made their revenue by staying longer in theaters, like My Big Fat Greek Wedding. Several lower earning movies also stayed longer. Thus, it helped finding out these types of outliers.

As expected we can see that most part of the yearly revenue is earned on summer and then on the festive year-end. Another interesting finding is as years pass the total revenue is getting higher and higher.

The color variance is nice; looking at the color of the movie one can easily understand its box-office-wise success. Though I would prefer more colors and more range, here 250$ to 862$ million is put under the same color range which is over simplification. There could be at least two more divisions between these ranges. More contrast color usage would give a better idea.

As we are accustomed to the idea that higher coordinate means higher value, sometimes this presentation creates some misconception, like for the movie Pretty Woman, its color indicates high revenue, but it does not have any sharp peak point, which is different from our usual understanding.

Considering both side of the horizontal axis as positives makes it hard to compare which movie earned higher on a
single day. I tried for Spiderman and Star wars, but could not guess which on did better. The height does not start from ground, so you need to measure the gap between starting point and the highest point, and secondly, in this case one movie’s crest point is facing upwards while the other one is downwards. My feedback is to show the total gross profit of the movie in the tooltip box.

Sometimes I scroll back and forth and cannot see which year I am looking at, so I have to scroll again to see the year. For example, in this snapshot, there could be a label for the year.

I would also like some filtering options so I could filter out movies by their category to see which type of movies earn more and make some predictions.

Best wishes for future works,

Awalin Sopan.

Graduate Student,

Department of Computer Science, UMD.

awalinnabila@gmail.com

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