Dear New York Times Visualization Staff,

I had the pleasure of enjoying your “A Peek Into NetFlix Queues” visual application. The simplicity of the sliding bar and ‘Next’ button to cycle through movies and the quickly updating main map (and subsequent smaller menu-maps) allow a user to cycle through a lot of data quickly. I found this site addictive as I chose to run through all data sets in an attempt to identify patterns and anomalies. One can easily recognize which movies have a universal demand across all areas and which ones may have a concentrated demand due to Netflix’s ‘Local Favorites’ or possible demographic regions. The white background and yellow to red color gradient allow anomalies, such as Tropic Thunder viewership in 22211 and 21077, to be easily recognized.

If I may though I’d like to add a few comments where I believe the interface could be expanded and improved. Though I like the feedback of the outlining of the zip code and the hovering data box when the cursor is over a zip code, an accompanying name would be nice. I believe this is one time where humans relate better to names than numbers. While I know my own zip code as well as the names of the surrounding towns and areas, names would help identify unfamiliar geographic areas. It would be nice to know 20732 represents Chesapeake Beach, MD without having to perform an additional inquiry. Another extension to this hovering data box could include a link to other facts about the corresponding zip code. Demographic data could be linked or provided as an overlay to provide further analysis.

I noticed the data set is limited to only 12 cities. If you decided to allow a search on all of the US, you might want to include a mechanism to center the map on a particular zip code. As it is the only way to find a zip code is to pan the map and hover the cursor over the zip code. A zip code locator that takes either zip codes or city/state tuples as text and centers the map could assist a user in viewing the results for a particular area. Though rudimentary, the following example illustrates my suggestion when one search via ‘Key Zip’: http://maps.huge.info/zip.htm

The one flaw I find with this web page is the lack of a zoom feature on the map. In the case of New York, a user is forced to view a large number of zip codes at once. Differentiating between them is, at times, difficult at best. This is especially true when searching around downtown Manhattan. The lack of a zoom makes it almost impossible to tell the difference between some zip codes or even place the cursor over a particular zip code.
Sincerely,

Nick Gramsky

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