Archiving Spotify: How and Why to Track Your Music Streaming Data
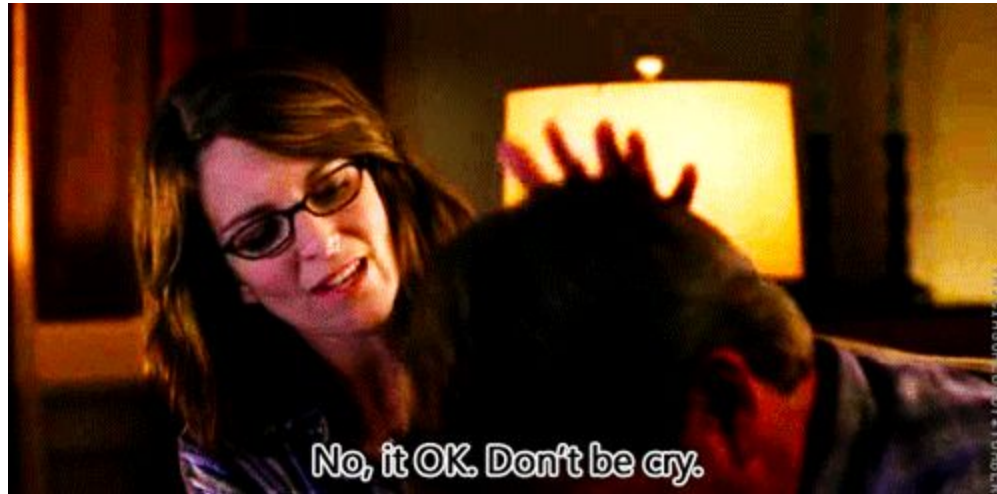
Jennifer Eltringham

What Others are Saying:

- NOTHING
- Especially not in the last 5 years.
- Music streaming services are unsustainable and are having a negative effect on the way we collect music. (Burkart, 2008)
  - 2008 was a long time ago and this guy is probably wrong.
  - Even if he's right, people are using these services and there is data to be had.
- Anderies (2005) thought that librarians were real music streaming pioneers and he was also probably wrong.

Method 1: Cry and Give Up

Just kidding, mostly

Method 2: Last.fm Scrobbling

- Spotify isn't good at collecting data that it lets people see.
- Last.fm is better at it, but not by much.
- https://benjaminbenben.com/lastfm-to-csv/

PROS	CONS
- Really easy - Minimal staff time - Real-time streaming data - Can connect more than your Spotify account - Can access any user's information with just their username - no password required. But then, of course, you have to know their username.	- Cannot be used in retrospect - have to work with the donor to set up system beforehand - Maybe kind of invasive - Unsure about the reliability of data - Last.fm could die

Method 3: Archiving Playlists

- Right click on selection and select "Share" > "URI"
- Can be copied to text file or to new Spotify playlist
  - Text file can be run through a Ruby script from GitHub to get track and artist information
  - If your archive has its own Spotify account this can be a cool way to make information available to users online

PROS	CONS
● Works for others' playlists without login. ● Spotify has playlist version control so you can retrieve previous versions ● No Spotify playlist is ever deleted! ● Can be used to easily make new playlists to increase access	● If you can't figure out the Ruby script (*cough*) you're stuck with Spotify's proprietary URI which could die someday. ● Only public playlists without password login ● Not real-time data, more music curation habits.

Recommendations

- If you can talk living donors into scrobbling with Last.fm, do it!
- The best-case scenario is to do a combination of these tactics - scrobbling for more in-depth data and the URIs for keeping track of how creators organized and enjoyed their music.
- If you want this data in your archival collection when you're rich and famous and people want your old junk, start now!