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

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Abstract:
In March of 2017 Spotify reached 50 million paid subscribers, continuing to grow even after the launch of rivals Apple Music and Tidal. Users of this streaming music platform are creating a huge amount of data – tracks played, playlists curated, artists favorited – without an understanding of how or why to manage it.

The possibilities of music streaming data are immense - we can track the trends in our own listening habits, note what songs we were drawn to during pivotal moments in our lives, even gain new insight into the habits of others. What playlist was an author listening to as they wrote the latest bestseller? What song did your mother have on repeat in the days before you were born? Music streaming data can illuminate each of these topics. However, Spotify makes this data especially difficult to come by, so managing personal music history takes some initiative and some simple tech tricks. By tracking, storing, and preserving their Spotify data, users can control the data they are creating that they wouldn't otherwise have access to. This presentation will include an overview of how streaming music has affected archival work, why archiving this data is important, a few different methods for approaching this challenge, and practical recommendations for implementation.

About the author:

Jennifer Eltringham is a recent MLIS graduate from the University of Denver, currently working at the Pikes Peak Library District in Colorado Springs, CO in interlibrary loan and adult services. In the near future, she hopes to work in a public library or university archive with a strong public service focus. Her professional interests include representation and social justice in archival practice, advocacy, and feminist approaches to library services. She can be contacted on Twitter @bookuporshutup or at jennifereltringham@gmail.com.