

## **Academic Charts Online: Music**

ACO WHITEPAPER SERIES

### **Research questions answered:**

Whitepapers on evidence based research as used in training workshops.

Based on discussions with Marci Cohen, librarian at Berklee

School of Music, Boston

### **Comments:**

*“Great for comparative analysis of artists”*

*“Check the actual extent of an increase in sales through winning a Grammy”*

### **Research questions (reviewed in this whitepaper):**

1. Show the point where Nirvana overtook Michael Jackson in January 1992.
2. Look at weeks in chart over the decades. How do these change (influenced by Storm Gloor's Journal article for MEIEA)
3. Mumford and Sons: what is the extent of the impact on sales of their wins in the 55th Grammy's which propelled them to a level of attention they had not experienced before.

See below for some of the research – just a small fraction of the insights available by manipulation of the chart data in the ACO platform.

Using these analytical tools in the ACO platform new questions can be asked. Insights derived from evidence based scholarly research uncovers new avenues of scholarship.

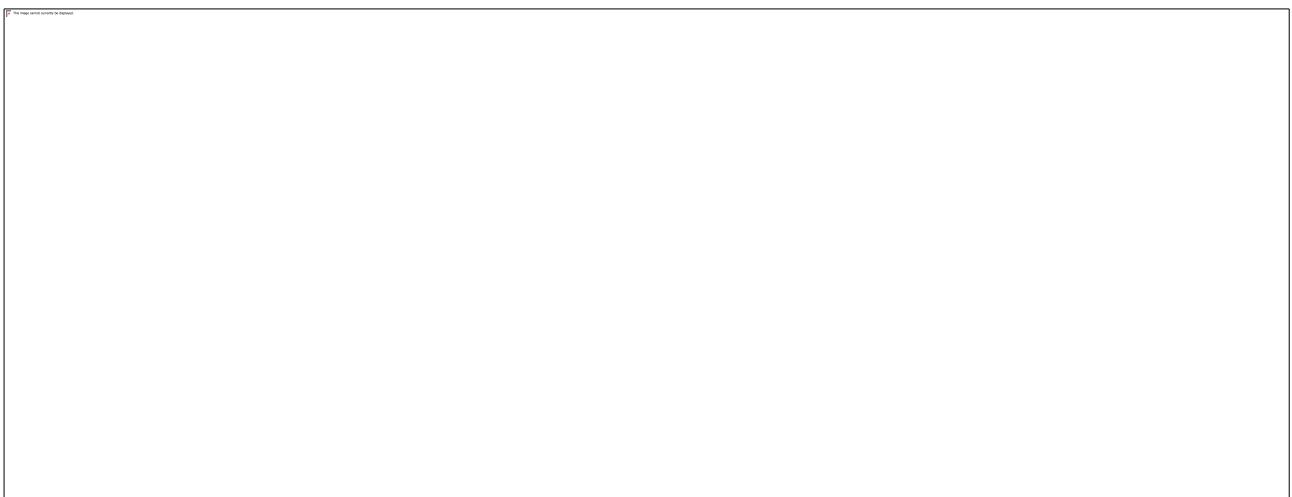
**Why is ACO so useful?**

The insights in the whitepaper below could not be derived from the usual chart listings. The time series graphs, and the interactive chart listings and the international scope enable scholars to make discoveries which were not previously available.

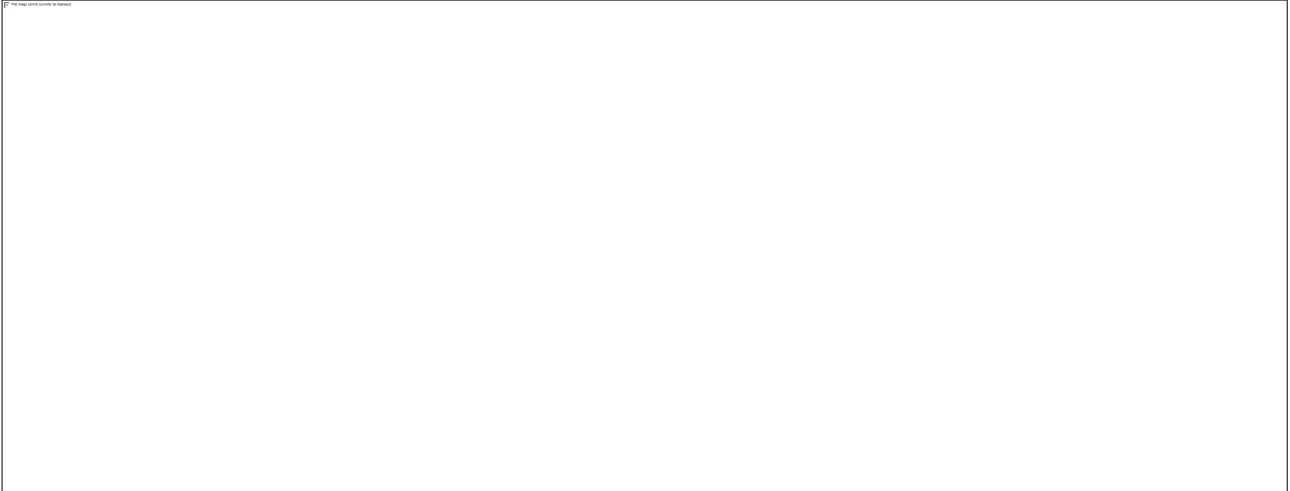
**1. Show the point where Nirvana overtook Michael Jackson in January 1992.**

**Finding: the Jackson/Nirvana duel was exciting, but other artists as diverse as Metallica, U2 and Natalie Cole had very similar successes over this period, with subtle differences for each.**

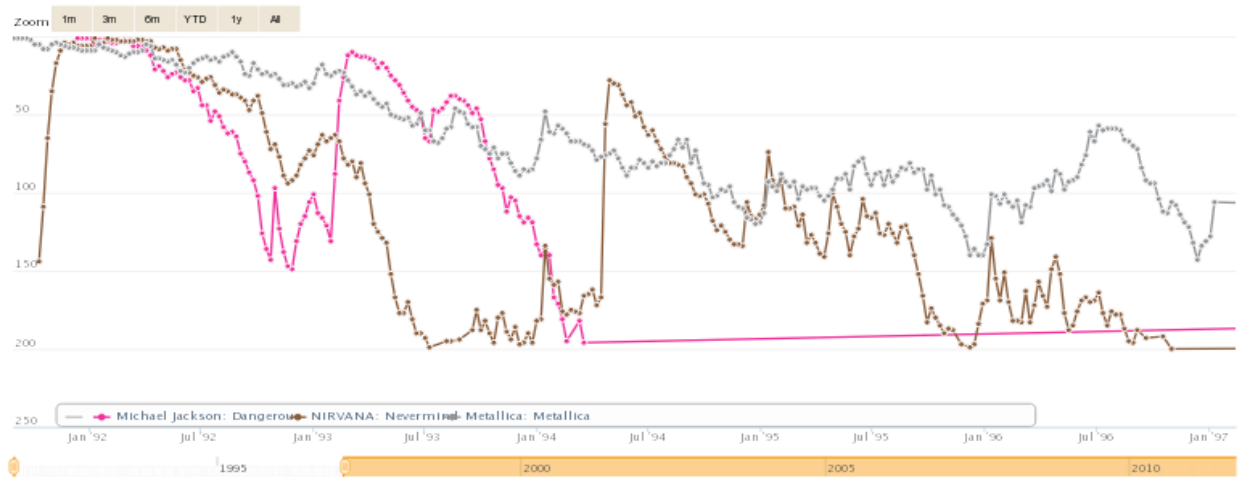
Nirvana entered the charts (brown line) in October 1991 at position 144 and took until January 11th 1992 to secure the number 1 spot from Dangerous.



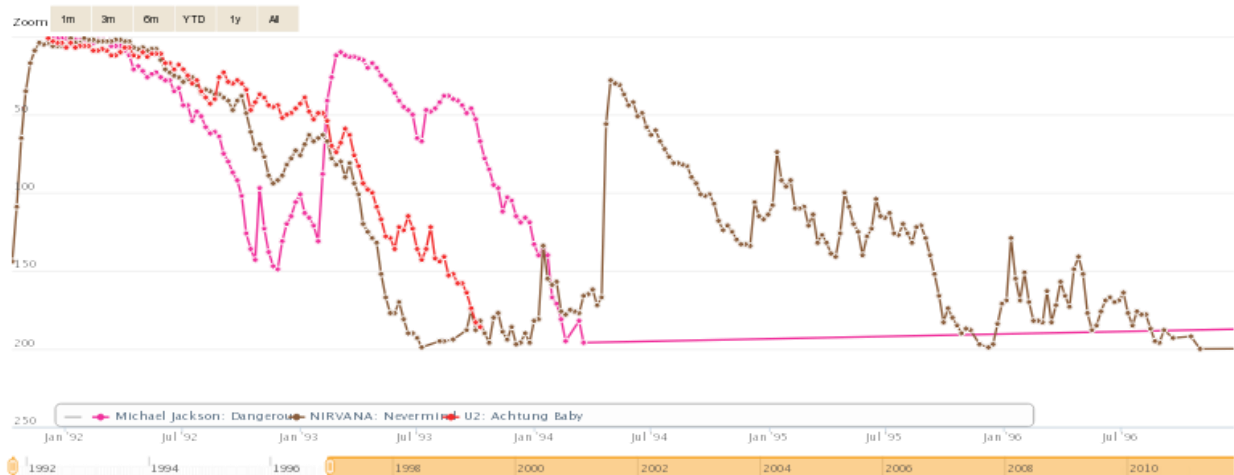
This is the longer trajectory from 1992 through 1996.



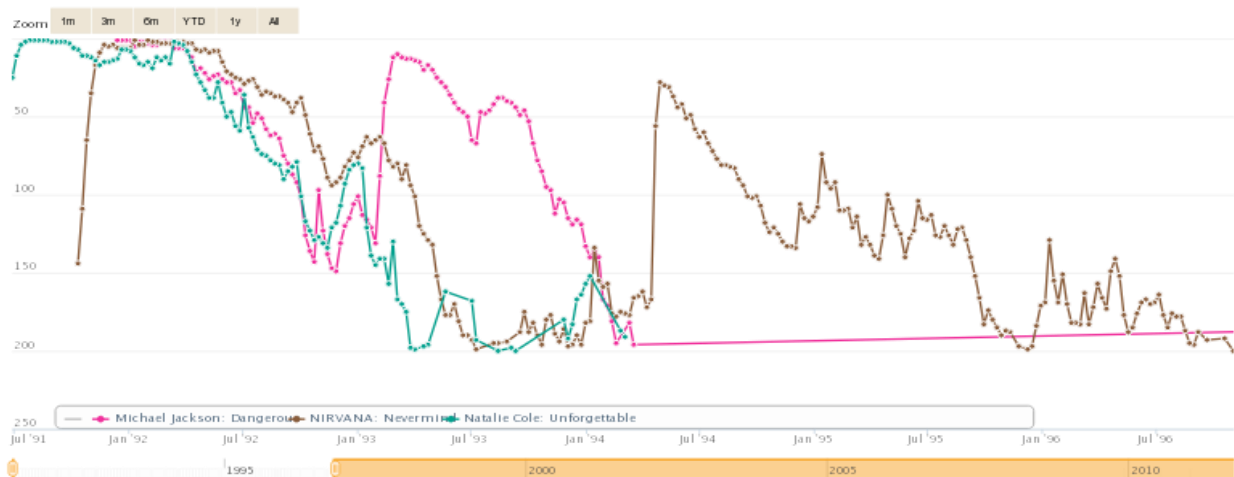
But the cultural impact is made clearer when compared to some other artists at the time. For example, Metallica (grey line) making a sustained showing. It was at No. 1 prior to the release of the Jackson/Nirvana albums:



Consider diverse artists as comparisons, for example U2 (red line, Achtung Baby) moving in a strikingly similar way to Nevermind over a short period (red line):



And now for something completely different, Natalie Cole's rendition of her father's 'Unforgettable' (blue line) making a significant impact with new renditions of music from earlier decades – also finding a place almost parallel to the Jackson/Nirvana duel whilst it remained in the charts:



Within minutes ACO enables this type of commentary on the cultural significance of a wide range of artists. Research which would not be possible without these evidence based analytical tools.

**2. Look at weeks in chart over the decades. Used in a workshop on Music Business research techniques.**

The charts of singles over five decades were analysed – 1963; 1983; 2003; 2013.

**Finding: the time in charts over the decades increased significantly from 17 to 28 to 34 to 55 weeks in April of these years. A strikingly increase reflecting changes in the recording industry marketing techniques, and business focus on maximising time in charts.**

In April 1963 the longest time in charts was 17 weeks.

Recording	Artist	Label	First Charted Date	Position	Previous Position	Peak Position	Weeks In Chart
<a href="#">Cast Your Fate To The Wind</a>	<a href="#">Vince Guaraldi Trio</a>	Fantasy	08 Dec 1962	61	53	22	17
<a href="#">Wild Weekend</a>	<a href="#">The Rebels</a>	Swan	29 Dec 1962	24	15	8	14
<a href="#">Hey Paula</a>	<a href="#">Paul &amp; Paula</a>	Philips	29 Dec 1962	29	14	1	14
<a href="#">Mama Didn't Lie</a>	<a href="#">Jan Bradley</a>	Chess	05 Jan 1963	40	18	14	13
<a href="#">Walk Right In</a>	<a href="#">The Rooftop Singers</a>	VANGUARD	05 Jan 1963	48	22	1	13

April 1983 time in charts had extended to 28 weeks.

Recording	Artist	Label	First Charted Date	Position	Previous Position	Peak Position	Weeks In Chart
<a href="#">Baby, Come To Me</a>	<a href="#">Patti Austin, James Ingram</a>	Qwest	24 Apr 1982	23	21	1	28
<a href="#">You And I</a>	<a href="#">Eddie Rabbitt, Crystal Gayle</a>	Elektra	09 Oct 1982	32	26	7	25
<a href="#">I Know There's Something Going On</a>	<a href="#">Frida</a>	None	06 Nov 1982	13	15	13	21
<a href="#">Down Under</a>	<a href="#">Men At Work</a>	None	06 Nov 1982	24	22	1	21

Recording	Artist	Label	First Charted Date	Position	Previous Position	Peak Position	Weeks In Chart
<a href="#">You Can't Hurry Love</a>	<a href="#">Phil Collins</a>	None	06 Nov 1982	93	64	10	21

April 2003 the time in charts was up to 34 weeks.

Recording	Artist	Label	First Charted Date	Position	Previous Position	Peak Position	Weeks In Chart
<a href="#">Don't Mess With My Man</a>	<a href="#">Nivea Featuring Brian &amp; Brandon Casey</a>	Jive	10 Aug 2002	33	29	8	34
<a href="#">Don't Know Why</a>	<a href="#">Norah Jones</a>	BLUE NOTE	28 Sep 2002	34	35	30	27
<a href="#">The Game Of Love</a>	<a href="#">Santana Featuring Michelle Branch</a>	Arista	02 Nov 2002	26	22	5	22
<a href="#">Your Body Is A Wonderland</a>	<a href="#">John Mayer</a>	none	02 Nov 2002	32	28	18	22
<a href="#">Ignition</a>	<a href="#">R. Kelly</a>	none	09 Nov 2002	2	3	2	21

April 2013 time in charts was up to 55 weeks.

Recording	Artist	Label	First Charted Date	Position	Peak Position	Weeks In Chart
<a href="#">Some Nights</a>	<a href="#">Fun.</a>	RRP	10 Mar 2012	39	3	55
<a href="#">Wanted</a>	<a href="#">Hunter Hayes</a>	WMN/RRP	12 May 2012	46	16	44
<a href="#">Ho Hey</a>	<a href="#">The Lumineers</a>	none	23 Jun 2012	14	3	40
<a href="#">It's Time</a>	<a href="#">Imagine Dragons</a>	Interscope	23 Jun 2012	23	15	40
<a href="#">Little Talks</a>	<a href="#">Of Monsters And Men</a>	none	21 Apr 2012	26	23	39

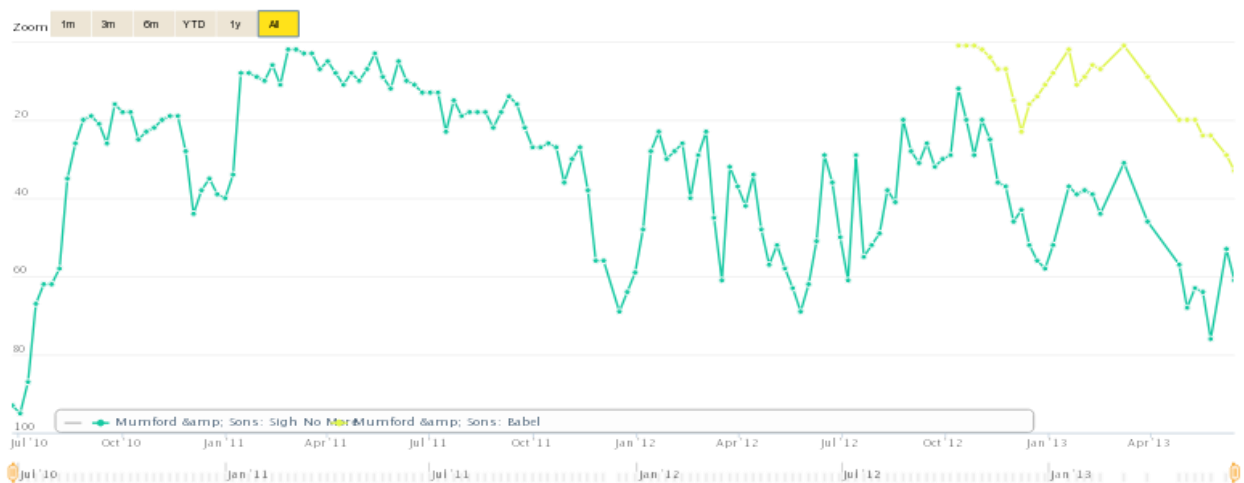
With a few clicks the data can be further manipulated, and create new research topics which were not possible before. The impact of music and types of song which lasted longer in the charts over a full half a century of data. Further analysis of those which also made No. 1 provides further new areas for research.

**3. Mumford and Sons: the 55th Grammy's propelled them to a level of attention they had not experienced before. There are many articles discussing the spike in sales. Look at the charts around that date, and analyse the extent of the increase in sales, and the effect on other artists.**

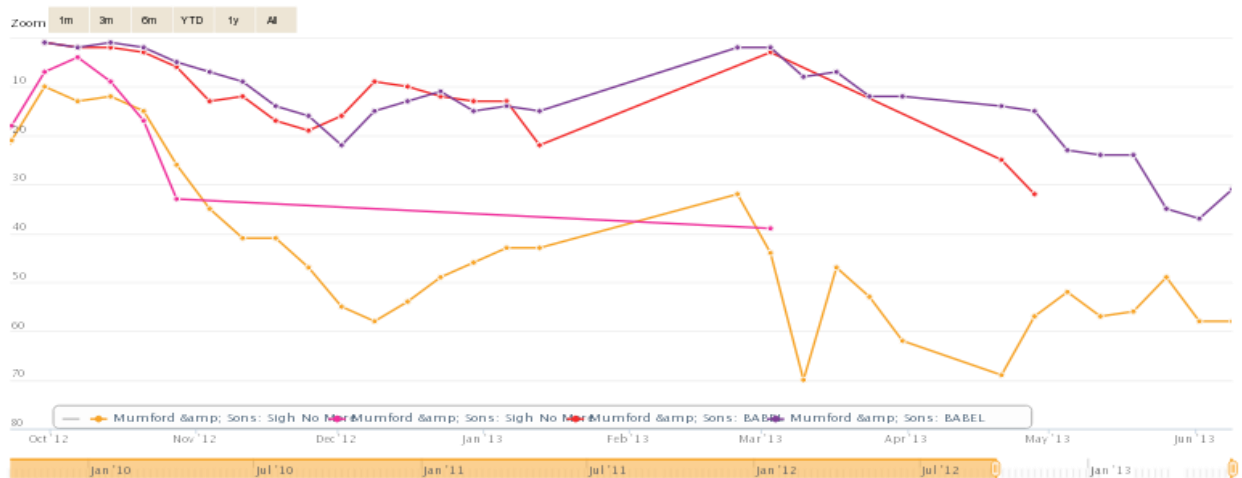
The perception from the media is one of an exceptional boost to sales. ACO is able to separate the hype from the reality.

**Finding: the impact of the Grammys on sales of Mumford (albums, singles and downloads) lasted two months, with subtle differences between the anglo saxon countries and European countries.**

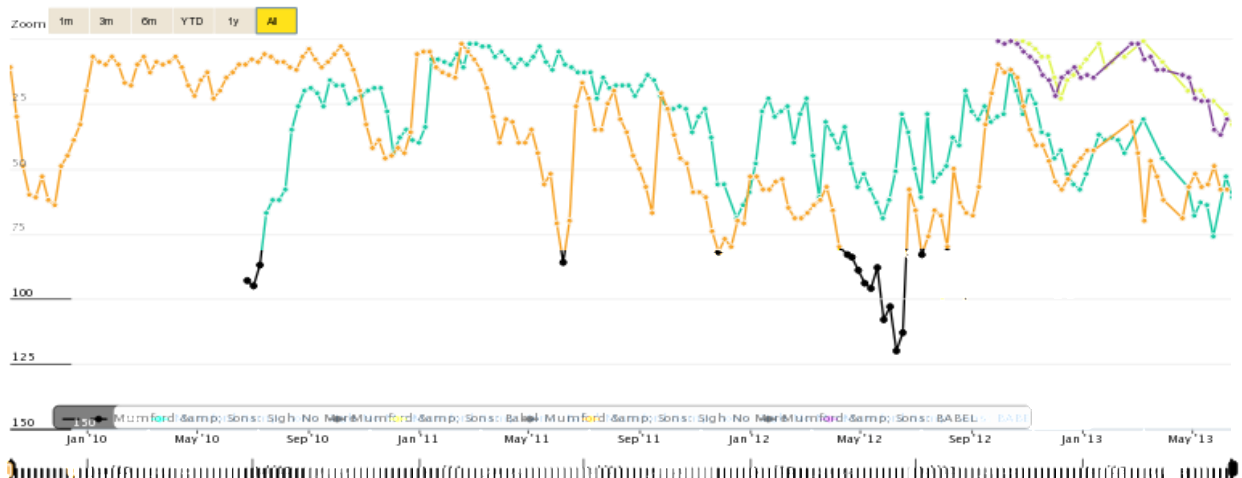
First look at the US sales which peaked on 9th March, shortly after the Grammys. The data continues until 9th June, the date of this white paper:



In the UK the pattern was surprisingly similar – here we show both the Top 200 Album chart and the Album Download charts for each – zooming into a narrower time period from October 2012 to June 2013. The upper pair is Babel, which peaked on 3rd March, and the lower pair is Sigh No More which peaked slightly earlier on 24th February. The Brit awards in the UK were on 20th February, which marked the peak of Mumford and Sons in the UK charts – there is no evidence of a spike resulting from the awards ceremonies.

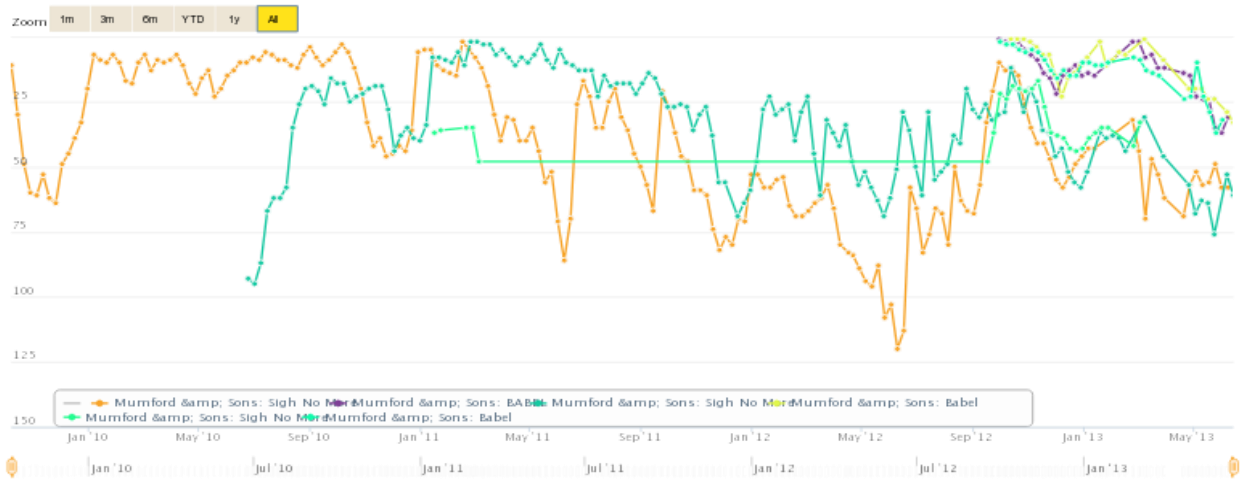


If the US and UK charts are superimposed, we see a striking similarity (just album and singles charts, no album download chart shown here):



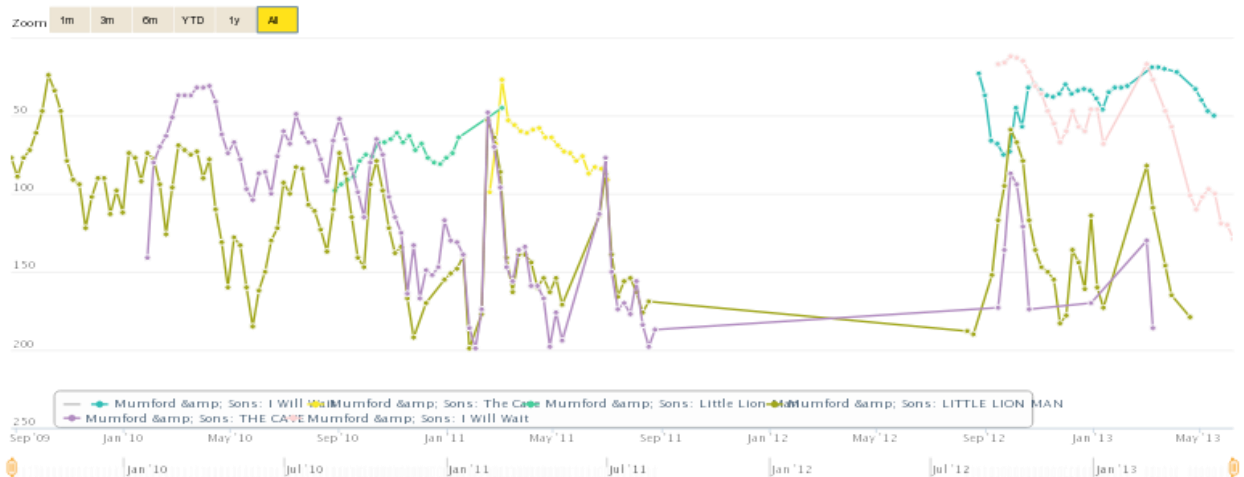


Going further afield in the English speaking world, adding Australia gives the same pattern again:



As a resource ACO enables the user to look at the impact in other countries from Canada to Germany, Spain and many more, which show subtle differences to the anglo saxon region. (More charts for Brazil, Japan and China being added shortly).

As a final observation, the singles. Here we have just the US and UK performance of Little Lion Man, The Cave and I Will Wait.



Again, a peak in March 2013 for all of these. The publicity of the Grammys did give new life to the singles which had been released earlier, but this spike did not last more than a month. The analytical tools enable researchers to zoom into the detail for any time period, and look at the trajectories of other performers and songs in the charts at the same time.

In conclusion, the spike for Mumford around the Grammys had a very limited impact for two months.