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23 Personal Tools to Learn More About Yourself

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September 12, 2008

Topic

[Self-surveillance](#)

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In the not too distant past, the Web was all about sharing, broadcasting, and distribution. The tide is turning. The Web is moving towards the individual. Applications spring up every month that let people track, monitor, and analyze their habits and behaviors in hopes of gaining a better understanding about themselves and their surroundings.

We saw what data can be recorded in the [personal visualization project](#). Some data lend themselves to easy tracking while others are easier to monitor with the aid of an application. These 23 tools, to track the minutiae of everyday life, try to fill that niche.

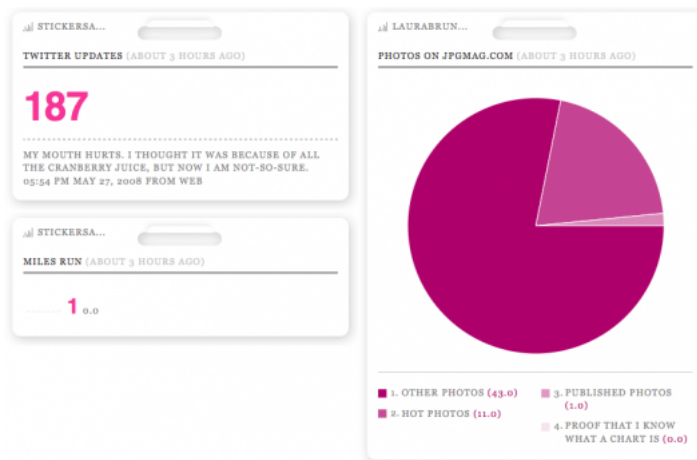
Is it information overflow or are we learning more about ourselves?

Track Everything In Your Life

Applications to record data pretty much about anything and everything seem to be coming all at once.

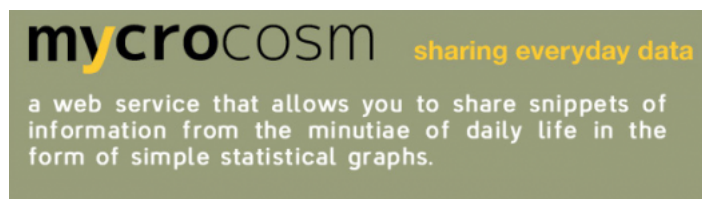
Daytum

[Daytum](#), by Nicholas Felton, is based on Felton's annual [Feltron report](#). Data entry is manual and makes heavy use of the [Google charting API](#).



mycrocosm

[mycrocosm](#) is a project from the [MIT Social Media Group](#) that is similar in spirit to Daytum. The main difference is the interface. Users send Twitter-like messages via SMS or email to add to their personal datasets.



Me-trics

[Me-trics](#) is described as a Google Analytics for, well, you. It's sort of an aggregator of all your personal data from applications like RescueTime, Twitter, etc. You can also enter data manually, and then it does some statistical voodoo (which sort of worries me) to find correlations. Not so sure about that part. It will offer an API, however.

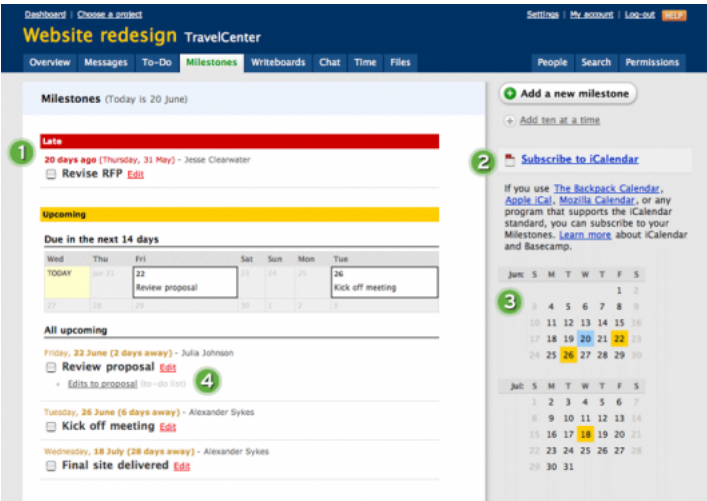


Time Management

Let’s face it. We all waste time, and when we do, we feel like a lazy bum. There are plenty of applications that help you keep track of how you spend your minutes.

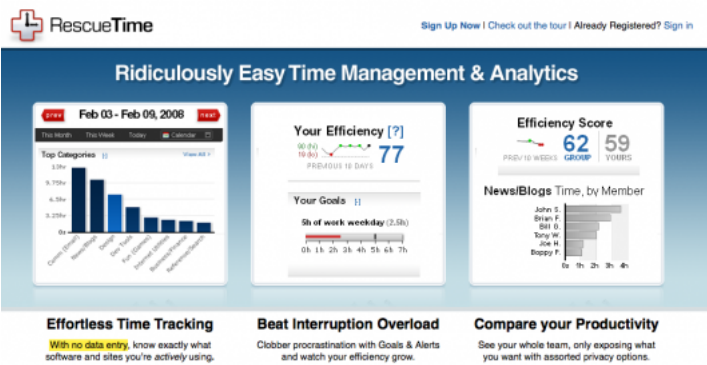
Basecamp

Most of us have heard of [Basecamp](#), which is used by many for project management.



RescueTime

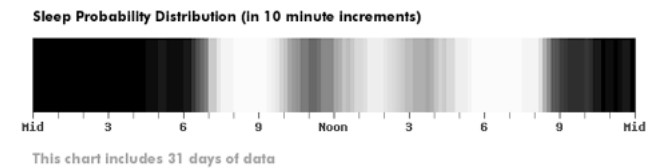
I use [RescueTime](#) pretty much [all the time](#). Start it up, run it in the background, and visit your dashboard to find how many hours you spent watching YouTube last week. Shameful.



Trixie Tracker

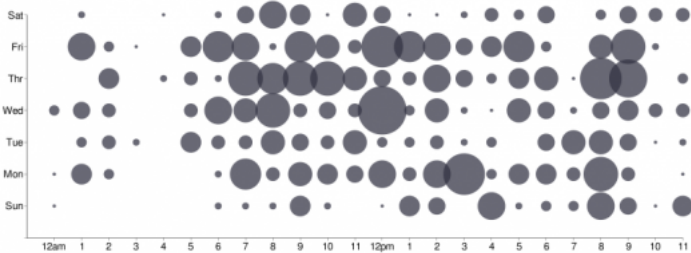
Ok, [Trixie Tracker](#) isn’t for you specifically. It’s designed to monitor your baby’s habits – poo, pee, sleep, and eating. However, I can see how an adult might find it useful... or at least senior citizens.

12 Months Old



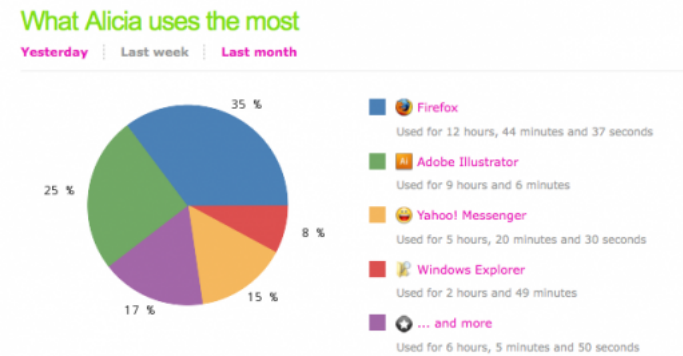
Twitter Charts

What are your peak tweeting hours? Find out with [Twitter Charts](#).



Wakoopa

[Wakoopa](#) is sort of like RescueTime, but I think it's more about the video games.

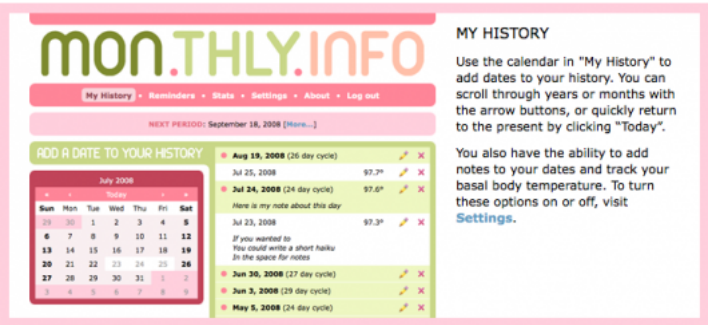


Health

You want to live a long and healthy life, don't you? You better keep track of your bodily functions and what not.

Mon.thly.info

[Mon.thly.info](#) is an application for women to keep track of their monthly cycles and stuff. I'm out of my element on this one.



MyMonthlyCycles

Welcome to MyMonthlyCycles.com!

Free Tools for Your Cycles!

Use MyMonthlyCycles® free personalized tools to track, monitor, and manage your monthly menstrual cycles!

- Track your cycle events - periods, symptoms, BBT, breast exams, weight, notes, and so much more!
- Use calculators to plan and check your key cycle dates: next periods, ovulation, fertile days, if you're late, pregnancy due date, many more!
- Timely reminders about your cycles and upcoming events.
- Detailed history reports - review your cycles, share with your OB/Gyn.

[Take Tour](#) [Join Now!](#) [Features](#) [Member Login](#)

Article: Fertility Charting
CycleViews: Could I be...?

Polls: Ovulation, Pregnancy
Calculator: Retro Conception

Premium Services also available! Value-packed, cycle accessories:

- MyMonthlyCharts™** - instantly see your cycle patterns and trends!
- Premium Fertility** - enhanced fertility tracking calendar, plus BBT charts, and more fertility charts.

Pre-AF Poll

Which best describes you in the days just before AF arrives?

☐ Hippopotamus
☐ Lioness
☐ Porcupine
☐ Hyena
☐ Serpent

[Vote Now](#)

cycleViews™

- Could I be pregnant?
- Endometriosis, Heavy Periods, Fibroids...
- Being a mom - SAHM or Working Mom?
- You, TTC, and Your Partner
- TTC - To Say or Say Not?
- Conception Frustrations?
- Mom and Intro to Periods

Have a gynecologist appointment soon? Take Your Charts!

MyMonthlyCharts

Shows your doctor exactly what's going on with your cycles.

Instantly charts your menstrual cycle and symptom data & more!

Bedpost

I think I read that people who have sex more often live longer, so you better um, stay up-to-date.

Sleep

I, myself, have pretty weird sleep habits, so I should probably take a look into these. The [Sleeptracker](#) is [a little pricey](#) for me though. I might consider purchasing a [Fitbit](#) though, which is a pedometer slash sleep tracking thingy. Not sure yet. Like Me-trics, it was introduced at [TechCrunch50](#) and is still private.

Sleep Tracker



FitBit

Fitbit automatically tracks your fitness and sleep

near it anywhere

it's tiny

it's wireless and rechargeable

track your 222's

\$99 Available in late Dec. / early Jan. Preorder to make sure you get one!

BUY

Just want to get notified when they get in? [Submit](#) your email address.

Emotions

I'm happy. Now I'm sad. Wait no, I'm happy. I'm perplexed. Confused. Crazy. Happy again. Oh life, you are an emotional roller coaster you are.

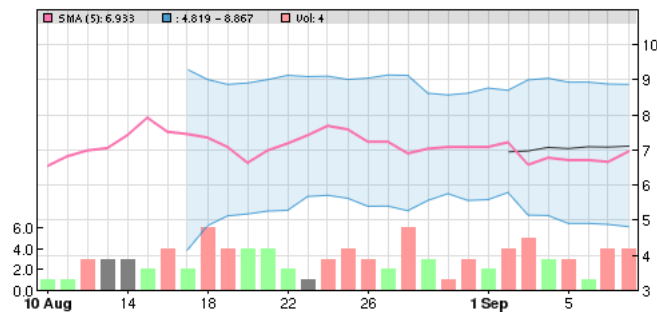
Moodstats

Record your moods and evaluate over time with [Moodstats](#).



lifemetric

[lifemetric](#) is similar to Moodstats, although it sort of has a social component to it too.



Exercise

Oh man, I seriously need to monitor this. I have a gym membership, but I don't even remember the last time I went. I do know my waste size is getting bigger though.

Traineo

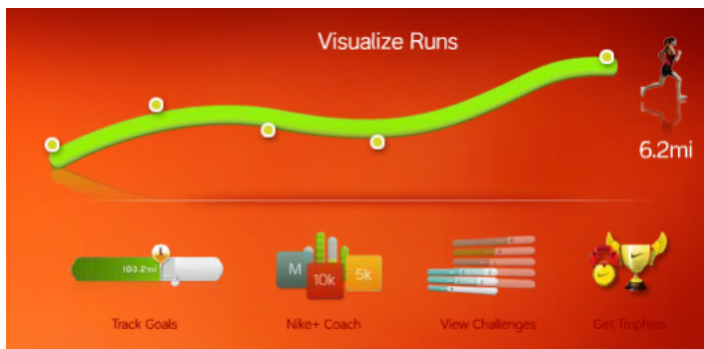
Use [Traineo](#) to track what you eat, how you exercise, calories lost, and all that good stuff.

FitDay

MotionBased

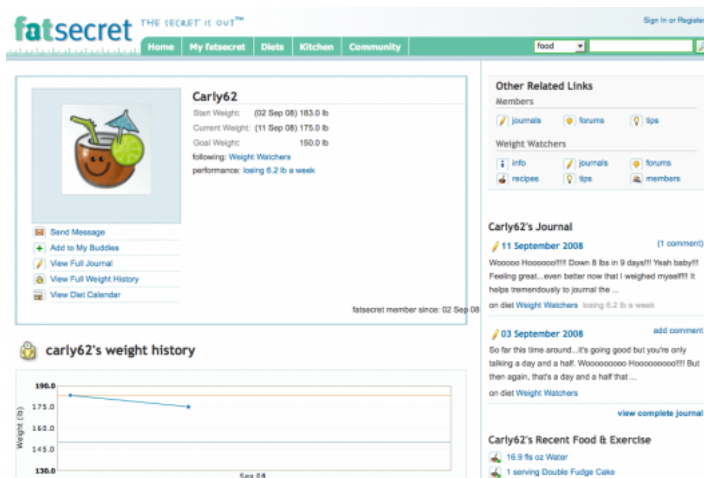
Nike+

I haven't used [Nike+](#), but it seems [really popular](#) and a cool concept. You put something on your shoe, connect it your iPod and you get feedback as you run.



FatSecret

I actually do use [FatSecret](#) sometimes. Several months back I set my goal weight to 10 pounds less than I am now. My weight graph is literally straight across.



Finance

More money, more problems. Seriously.

Mint

To keep track of my billions of dollars, I use [Mint](#), which grabs data from your bank, credit cards, and investments.



Travel

With all our environmental concerns, we should all be aware of our driving patterns.

CarChip

Plug [CarChip](#) into your car and it automatically records your driving behavior like speed, braking, etc.



My Mile Marker

I know there are a lot of people who write down their mileage and money spent after each gas fillup. [My Mile Marker](#) takes that data and helps you make sense of it.

The screenshot shows the 'My Mile Marker' website. At the top, there's a logo with a green '0' and the text 'MY milemarker'. Below it, a sign-in section with the text 'GO AHEAD, sign up »' is followed by input fields for 'EMAIL ADDRESS' (containing 'you@yourdomain.com') and 'PASSWORD'. A green 'Continue »' button is to the right. Below the sign-in section, there are three columns of icons: 'Record your miles...' with a gas pump icon, 'View reports...' with a report and pie chart icon, and 'Even on the road!' with a mobile phone icon.

Resources

- [Bytes of Life from Washington Post](#)
- [TechCrunch50](#)
- Thanks [Tim](#) and [keyvowel](#)

Related

- [A Perfect Personal Data Collection Application](#)
- [Personal Data Visualization, More Details \[PROJECT\]](#)
- [Learn about politics in your state with Open States](#)

41 Comments

- [Time Tracker](#) — [September 12, 2008 at 3:38 am](#)

Wow! Nice roundup here! I'm using a few of these already (Woopra, Mint, Me-trics) and find them quite useful. Thanks for this list, as I'm off to try a few more right now!

- [Seraphina](#) — [September 12, 2008 at 4:00 am](#)

Oooh, more fun stuff to play with. Thanks!

- [Brendan](#) — [September 12, 2008 at 4:58 am](#)

I remember reading about RescueTime but had forgotten its name, so it's great to be reminded of that. I'm not sure I'm looking forward to what it has to tell me about myself though...

Anyway, this is a great collection of tools – thanks for posting!

- [Ehren Cheung](#) — [September 12, 2008 at 1:58 pm](#)

Thanks for the great round-up Nathan :) Now all we really need some aggregator to come along and put all this data together so that we can mash it up and see what

interesting things we can find out about ourselves.

- [Nathan Yau](#) — [September 12, 2008 at 1:59 pm](#)

@Ehren – that seems to be what me-trics strives to be, but we'll just have to wait and see how it works :)

- [Hadley](#) — [September 12, 2008 at 3:28 pm](#)

You also want to check out <http://www.kk.org/quantifiedself/>

- [Tami](#) — [September 12, 2008 at 5:27 pm](#)

For finances (budgeting) I'd also recommend <http://www.pearbudget.com>. It's super simple and straightforward to use. Last year our family made the switch to cash only spending and Pearbudget has been a great tool to help ease that transition.

- [Emanuel Souto](#) — [September 12, 2008 at 10:44 pm](#)

Muito interessante...

- Pingback: [Sich selber erkennen - I-Do-Method](#)

- [Markus](#) — [September 13, 2008 at 9:03 am](#)

A great collection!

- [Mark Baratelli](#) — [September 13, 2008 at 12:25 pm](#)

Can't wait to get home and check these out.

- [John](#) — [September 13, 2008 at 3:53 pm](#)

Another great app to add under the time management category is [Intervals](#). It is ideal if you are freelancing and need to keep track of your time and tasks, especially when it comes to billing clients. Thanks for the list. There are some good nuggets in there.

- [Rob W](#) — [September 14, 2008 at 6:40 am](#)

Whoa — maybe your waste size is getting bigger, but I sure don't want to hear about it. Maybe you mean waist size? :)

Seriously, excellent list; thanks.

- [Nathan Yau](#) — [September 14, 2008 at 1:49 pm](#)

@Rob W – haha, i think i'm on to a new idea for tracking

- [Ian J](#) — [September 14, 2008 at 7:54 pm](#)

great post.. :)

I made a site to test appengine when it initially came out and haven't touched it since. Its a very simple wiki for data, i tried to focus on making querying the data easy.

Seeing the list of applications made me think you might find it interesting.

<http://www.daatum.com>

- Pingback: [Web Tools to Track your Fitness, Sleep, Money, Exercise, miles...](#)

- [Tex](#) — [September 15, 2008 at 2:03 pm](#)

I so WANT to believe that Bedpost.com is real, certainly the BETA site looks solid :) Either way, all of us here signed up to see if we get an invite...could be quite a distraction.

Tex

<http://www.hookupdigits.com>

- Pingback: [D&D%D'DuN'D°D, NCDuN NfNEN D, NCDuD°D°D°D°D°, D>D, N+D°D°D, NCD%D'N\(D°N, D, D°D°D°D°N, D, D, D°N, DuNCD%DuN, D+D, D:D°D°N : 16.09.2008](#)

- Pingback: [links for 2008-09-16 at deqay.org](#)

- Pingback: [AsmeninA—statistika : neA%inqu.lt](#)

- [fivekitten](#) — [September 17, 2008 at 12:41 pm](#)

These are great...gee I could spend all day adding data and REALLY not get anything done. Well, since we have four girls in the house now....going to visit the female-biased tool first...it'll help with my shopping plans and maybe we can pre-post a PMS warning sign to all who dare enter....

Going to put a link back on my blog after I play a bit...

- [Nathan Yau — September 17, 2008 at 12:49 pm](#)

@fivekitten: hehe, i never thought of using it that way. i'm sure someone would appreciate the warning.

- [Sleep Deprivation Ninja — September 17, 2008 at 11:12 pm](#)

oooaoaaaaaaAAaaAAaaAA <- sung sound of holy awakening

I am so getting one of those sleep tracker watches :)

- Pingback: [Rest of You » Blog Archive » Notes From Class 3](#)
- Pingback: [» Flowing Data blog recommends the PRO as a great tool to learn more about yourself Sleep Tips - SleepTracker the Sleep Watch](#)
- [Tex — September 25, 2008 at 5:40 pm](#)

OK, signed up for Bedpost...when is that dang BETA? :)
On a serious note, what's their revenue model?
AdSense? Condom sales?
Bedpost FTW!

Tex
<http://www.hookupdigits.com>
Free, Anonymous phone numbers for dating sites

- [Nathan Yau — September 25, 2008 at 6:27 pm](#)

@Tex – well it is just one man with a side project. i'm not so sure he has a revenue model (yet), since it was originally designed for himself. I'm sure your beta will come soon :)

- Pingback: [Weekly Roundup: Hustle and Flow | Sarah Morgan](#)
- [Dave — September 29, 2008 at 11:39 pm](#)

For fuel tracking there is also Fueelly.com

You can upload a .CSV with all of your data for a quick import.

- Pingback: [Flow + Logging plan • Blog Archive • benyee](#)
- Pingback: [Links for 5 October 2008: | refractal](#)
- Pingback: [Recession Proof Your Job with Web Based Tools](#)
- Pingback: [Rest of You » Blog Archive » Flow. Plan, Snap-a-Day\(s\)](#)
- [Auke — October 23, 2008 at 4:42 am](#)

Met up with Ruth at Wired Nextfest and mentioned [IYOUIT \(and on wikipedia\)](#) as well. I've been running it over 2 years now, and see some similarities with the PEIR platform. Curious how PEIR would be with a local sharing model (shared responsibility, competition element etc. etc.). Love to chat about that.

“IYOUIT is a mobile application developed in Python, and running on Nokia Series 60 phones. Its aim is to make it easy for an end-user to automatically record, store, and use context information, e.g. for personalization purposes, as input parameter to information services, or to share with different types of relations, or just to log them for future use or to perform statistics on your own life.”

- Pingback: [» Bookmarks for October 8th through October 22nd rajit](#)
- Pingback: [Flow + Environment logging plan - ben yee = \(\(at itp\) in yeeality\).](#)
- Pingback: [i buy cannabis seeds - OXYLUS Flash Board](#)
- [dekay — February 22, 2009 at 8:26 am](#)

have you seen <http://patrickrhone.com/2009/02/20/you-visualized/> ?

- [benjismith — April 8, 2009 at 10:44 am](#)

My personal favorite (which I'm surprised no one else has mentioned!) is <http://last.fm>

You install a few plugins for the media software on your computer (winamp, wmp, itunes, etc) and the software keeps track of all the music you listen to, posting every track to a web service.

On the website, you can track stats about the artists, albums, and tracks you listen to most often. But the best part is that the software finds similarities between your own

tastes and the tastes of other users, recommending new music to you based on the stuff you listen to already.

I've discovered tons of new interesting music with it.

And as a narcissist myself, it's fun to keep track of my stats:

<http://www.last.fm/user/benjismith>

- [Brad](#) — [May 7, 2009 at 6:52 am](#)

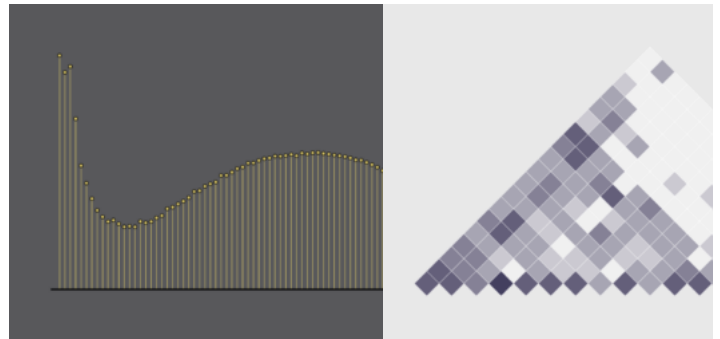
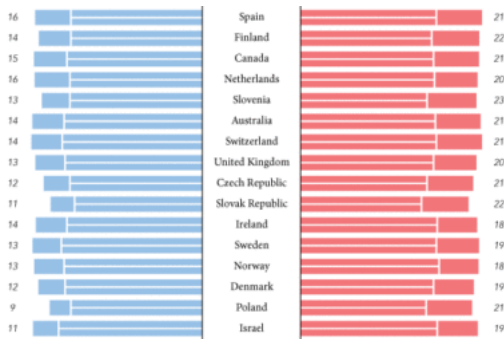
Nice write up. Just added to this on a primer about lifetracking here...

<http://www.whatbraddidnext.com/2009/05/getting-started-with-lifetracking.html>

A good app has to offer:

- * The social element – share, view, network, meet like minded people
 - * An element of voyeurism that makes looking at others' stats intriguing
 - * A layer of analysis over the raw stats. So I drink 25 cups of water a day? What does that make me?
 - * Not too techie. Make the statistical side fun and accessible.
 - * Offer multiple and easy ways to log data. This is the boring side of lifetracking.
- Going online to tell an app I just had another can of coke is not really compelling and any barrier to logging data is a big turn off.
- * Common units of measure. It's great that I can creat my own unit of measure on some apps (e.g. cups of water) but then I can't compare myself to others, which for me is more interesting. It's not ALL about me.
 - * Auto-logging of life data
 - * Adding a location-aware dimension will make it really interesting
 - * Easy to use, of course
 - * Offer multiple ways to display data – widgets, RSS, etc.
 - * iPhone integration, naturally

Projects by FlowingData [See All →](#)



[Who spends the most years in retirement?](#)

[Early retirement. That's what most people want, unless you're lucky....](#)

[Cost of College](#)

[We know that more education usually equals more income, but as the cost of education continues to rise, the challenge to earn a college degree also increases.](#)

[Commonness of Divorce in America](#)

[I wondered how common it is for someone to get a divorce. While I've touched on the topic before, I've never calculated it directly, so I gave it a go.](#)

[How People Meet Their Partners](#)

["So how'd you two meet?" There's always a story, but the general ways people meet are usually similar. Here are the most common.](#)

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