

# OLD MAN, LOOK AT MY LIFE

## Neil Young Archives contain decades of music, memories

Neil Young has been singing about society's woes since the '60s. He has created a melancholy, musical chronicle covering war, injustice, poverty, drug abuse, racism, love, loneliness, terrorism and more — punctuated with soulful and searing guitar tracks.

In addition to being a rock and roll icon, Young is an accomplished technophile with numerous inventions to his credit.

His most well-known technical endeavors are in the field of electronic model train controllers and audio systems designed to deliver high-quality music.

Young is an outspoken critic of the music industry, too, claiming it prioritizes profits over delivering affordable, high-quality music to consumers.

Combine a rock star, technophile and audiophile activist, and you get **NeilYoungArchives.com**. The site is a collection of all of his music delivered in a high-resolution digital format called Xstream, which he had a hand in developing.

Despite Young's love of hi-tech, the site has a decidedly low-tech look. It looks like a file cabinet drawer with analog switches, gauges and other controls above it.

Clicking on the drawer opens it, revealing file folders for all of his albums and songs. There's a timeline on the left and a slider on the right that allow you to scroll through the years to find the music you're looking for.

The album folders contain a list of the songs, credits, release dates, cover art and other information. A little strip of masking tape with the words "buy album" hand-written on it allows for in-site purchases.

The song folders contain credit information on the performers and production of the song. There's also cover art and lyrics.

If you don't want to rummage through the file cabinet, there's a timeline section that lets you explore in a different way. You can scroll horizontally through the years from 1961 to the present, stopping wherever you like. Album art and little hand-written notes indicate when music was released.

And of course you can listen to the music. The main point of the site is to bring high-quality audio to the masses. There's information about the type of computer setup (processor speed, bandwidth, etc.) that will give you the best listening experience. If your system isn't up to par, a switch will let you listen to it in standard MP3 quality.

While I appreciate the richness of the visuals created for the site, they don't provide the best user experience. When you're organizing that much information, searchable chronological and alphabetical lists can be more useful than engaging graphics. Even so, Neil Young Archives is great to look at and even better to listen to.

**KEVIN O'NEILL** is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites and apps with him at [koneill@times-shamrock.com](mailto:koneill@times-shamrock.com).



**KEVIN  
O'NEILL**

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