

# Optimizing Spotify Users' Experience: UX Research Project

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# Table of contents

**01**

Background

**02**

Research  
Objectives

**03**

Methods

**04**

Participants

**05**

Findings

**06**

Deliverables

01

# Background

# Background



Spotify is the most popular music streaming service *in the world*, and yet many Spotify users have expressed dissatisfaction with the platform's functionality

- Reddit and Twitter/X users discuss how Spotify caused them frustration, instead of being a useful tool for music discovery and easy listening

Features users are often disappointed by include:

- Curated Mixes
- Discovery tools
- Automatically-generated recommendations

Needs and wants are *not being met* by the platform



02

# Research Objectives

# Research Objectives



1.

Gain a thorough understanding of the needs and expectations that are most common for users



2.

Understand where users feel Spotify does not meet their needs



3.

Assess how the potential gaps between expectation and reality negatively impact users' music listening experiences

03

# Methods

# Methods: User Interviews

## Interview Process

Interview questions consider:

- General experiences with Spotify
- Features that user may have had negative experiences with;
- Dive into causes and impacts on use/overall experience

## Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:

Spotify Users

who

Use Spotify at least 3 days/week

and who

Aren't 100% satisfied with Spotify



# Methods: Contextual Inquiry

Additional data is collected during the interview via a contextual inquiry:

- I ask the participant to share their screen and show me how they navigate a typical Spotify session during the interview

Motivations:

- Visual context to affirm/explain their experiences with Spotify
- Provides better understanding of each participant's behaviors and desires as a user

04

# Participants

# Participants

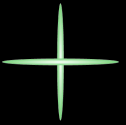


All participants were students at the University of Michigan

Though all participants mainly used Spotify for music streaming, some also used other platforms (e.g. Apple Music, Soundcloud) regularly



Participants' satisfaction with Spotify ranged; none were entirely satisfied with the platform



05

# Findings

# Findings: Common themes

## Users' habits strongly impact their use of (new) Spotify features

Some of Spotify's newer features don't appeal to users because of their comfort with habitual decisions. Changes to the UI and feature additions can interrupt/hinder users' experiences.

Many users' issues with Spotify don't prevent them from enjoying the platform

Most participants were satisfied with Spotify overall, despite some of its features irritating them/making their experiences with the platform worse.

## Users' opinions on Spotify's discovery features vary

Though some participants enjoyed Spotify's discovery features, others felt they weren't useful for their needs. Many participants preferred to find new music outside of Spotify.

## Users are not necessarily loyal to Spotify

Though participants praised Spotify's available range of music, some used other platforms to fill in any gaps. One participant was repeatedly wrongly overcharged for their Spotify subscription, and experimented with other streaming platforms as a result.

# Findings: Common themes

## Spotify Premium supports most user's needs

All users spoke positively of Spotify Premium; the participant who was overcharged for their subscription stated they “missed” the features it offered.

## Some of Spotify's issues arise from bugs, not features

Features working differently than intended had memorable impacts on users' experiences.

## Many Spotify users would enjoy the platform more if it were more considerate of certain user needs

All participants stated ways in which Spotify could be improved to be more useful to themselves/other users, and that they'd be much more satisfied with Spotify if its features were more aligned with their needs.

06

# Deliverables



## ALAN

- University student
- Music lover
- Spotify Premium user



### ABOUT ALAN

Alan is a student who has been using Spotify for years, and started using Spotify Premium once he started college because of the reduced subscription price. He listens to music nearly constantly-- during his walk to and from campus, while studying, and to de-stress at the end of the day-- and over the years has become fiercely loyal to a variety of genres and artists.

### HABITS/BEHAVIORS

- Listens to music throughout the afternoon and evening
- Creates playlists based on what he's been enjoying recently/the vibes of songs/albums
- Primarily uses playlists and albums to listen to music
- Discovers new music mostly through friends and music forums

### FRUSTRATIONS

- When Alan shuffles his playlists, Spotify plays some songs more than others, making him sick of songs quickly
- New Spotify features like the daylist and AI DJ take up space on Alan's homepage he wishes he could use for his playlists
- Frequent changes to the UI, and differences between desktop and mobile, sometimes makes using Spotify confusing and frustrating

### ALAN'S TRAITS

- Down-to-earth
- Reliable
- Busy
- Loyal

### GOALS AND NEEDS

- To curate and organize his favorite music easily
- To have a balanced listening experience, where he can listen to *all* the songs he likes
- To quickly navigate Spotify without confusion over UI shifts

# Persona



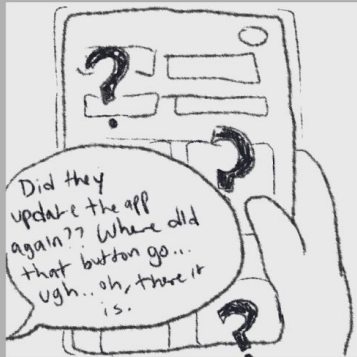
This has been such a long day... some music might help.



Ugh, this song again!! I thought I shuffled this playlist...



Maybe I'll try something new, I've been getting sick of my own music lately.



Did they update the app again?? Where did that button go... ugh... oh, there it is.



More for You

Mix

And why does Spotify think I want all this stuff? This isn't anything like what I like listening to.



I guess hearing the same four songs on shuffle in this playlist isn't so bad.

# Storyboard



# Thanks!

**Do you have any questions?**

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