

# Spotify

The background of the entire image is a dense, overlapping collage of various cassette tapes. The tapes are in different colors, including black, green, and yellow. Some tapes have labels with Cyrillic text, while others have English text. The tapes are arranged in a way that creates a textured, layered effect, with some tapes appearing more prominent than others. The overall color palette is dominated by dark greens and blacks, with the yellow cassette in the center providing a strong contrast.

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A photograph of a collection of vintage electronic devices, including radios and televisions, displayed on shelves. The devices are arranged in three rows. The top row features a small black radio with a circular dial and a larger black television set with a wooden frame. The middle row shows a small white portable radio and a larger wooden television set. The bottom row displays two small black portable radios and a large black television set with a prominent metal grille. The text "Digital Disruption" is overlaid in large white letters at the bottom of the image.

# Digital Disruption

# Ch. 1

## Digital Disruption

Technology continuously reinvents itself, pioneering new products and establishing new markets. New advances sometimes disrupt the 'old school' way of doing things: where new internet technologies and companies replace old business models. Digital disruption happens when a new company has a better value proposition than its already established competitors. New value propositions can exist in the Age of New Media which could not have existed before (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). Netflix used cloud storage to offer the consumer shows and movies at a lower subscription price, which disrupted if not replaced the need for cable companies in some households. Netflix's idea worked: forcing other movie distribution channels to answer some hard questions and decide how to make changes or downsize. As the textbook mentioned, established companies are quick to detect a digital distribution threat, but slow to make changes (Zahay, Roberts, 2018).

## Spotify's Inception

Spotify has a similar backstory: In the early 2000s, advances in cloud computing (the backbone of many digital disruption stories, according to the textbook (Zahay, Roberts, 2018), created an environment where internet piracy was able to thrive. Because of file sharing capabilities that arose from better devices and digital information sharing, record labels were faced with a threat that they had never seen before (D.J. Song, 2020). Spotify was created in by Daniel Ek and Martin Lorentzon in Sweden, 2006, in order to provide a legal streaming service that would give artists the revenue they deserve by providing a free or cheap alternative to music piracy (D.J. Song, 2020). Early in its inception, it partnered with Facebook to grow its user base and establish credibility, a business decision which was the perfect steroid to get the platform growing, and a success story on partnering with social media for other businesses to emulate (Buisness of Apps, 2020). To grow its mainstream sound bank during its creation, Spotify partnered with Sony Music Entertainment and Universal Music Group. Spotify pays its record labels 52% of the profits garnered from each stream (D.J. Song).



2000s

cloud  
computing

Spotify  
digital  
disruption

## Advantages

Spotify's competitive advantages are 1) it has easier streaming access, 2) a freemium model where any listener can play whatever music they want, and money is garnered from ads unless the listener becomes a premium member, and 3) an early partnership with Facebook and later partnerships with social media companies like Instagram ensures a growing user base, and 4) Spotify's algorithms connect listeners to artists better with features like Discover Weekly and Release Radar (Cooper, 2020), including lesser known artists who might not be signed to a record label (meaning that Spotify can garner the entirety of the profits), increasing music exposure and encouraging independent artists to put their music on Spotify (D.J. Song, 2020). This business model, made possible by cloud computing and digital technology, poses a huge threat to record labels who haven't utilized digital and streaming to the maximum potential. That's how Spotify successfully accomplished a digital disruption in the highly competitive music distribution industry.

## Mobile vs. Desktop

How do consumers access digital information in relation to Spotify's product? First of all, we know that consumers spend on average 12 hours a day on the internet, 35% of that time being spent on desktop or laptop, and 65% of that time spent on a mobile device (including tablets) (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). PCs are more heavily used only in the following categories according to the textbook: 1) portals, 2) business news, and 3) entertainment news. Qualitatively, how can this behavior be explained? Maybe people use computers as part of their work life (explaining the business news and portals categories), or maybe people log on to the computer routinely as a daily ritual, such as in the morning or after work to catch up on news. Or, another explanation could be that older internet users tend to use their PCs instead of phones more than younger internet users. Whatever the lifestyle reason explaining this data is, none of the three main desktop categories applies to Spotify's brand.

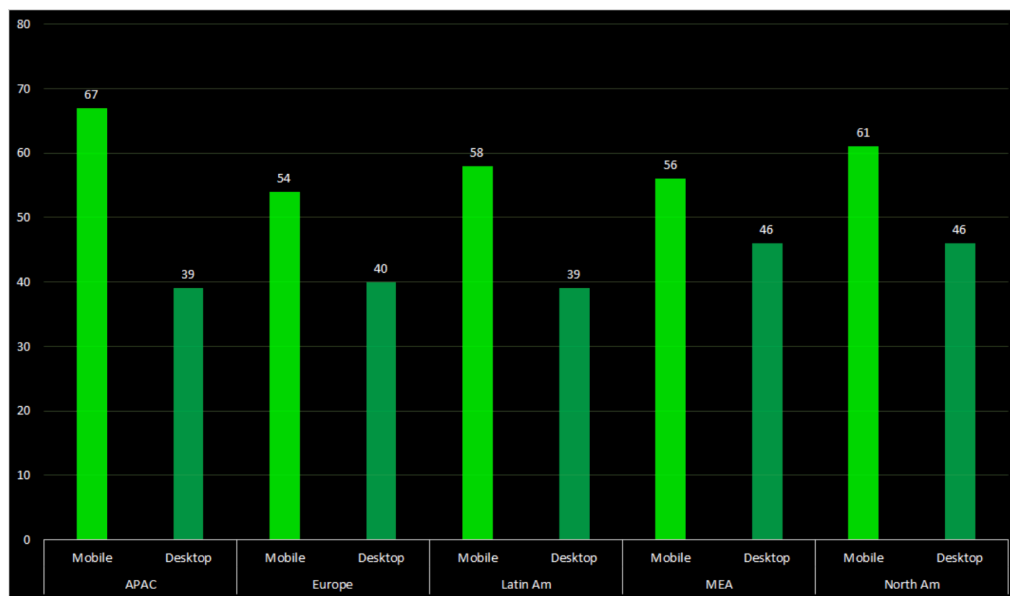
Mobile trends are more important to study in the exclusively in the categories of maps, photos, and online games (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). Spotify has brilliantly integrated itself within other platforms (D. J. Song, 2020), such as Instagram's feature where you can connect Spotify lyrics and music on your story, or its partnership with Google Maps where music can be controlled as part of the Maps app in order to facilitate convenience and no tab switching while driving. All these factors provide insights on how mobile users connect to Spotify, and why Spotify's marketing campaigns have been and should be positioned for mobile users and their lifestyle in addition to desktop. Problems that marketers face when designing content for mobile use is that mobile loading speed is 2.6 times slower than desktop. Loading speed is hugely important when converting potential consumers: in fact a study by MoEngage on Search Engine



Land revealed that a 1 second page loading speed decrease resulted in a ~8.7% increase in engagement (MoEngage, 2020). To appeal to mobile users, Spotify needs to prioritize efficient loading speed and balance it against quality content.

The breakdown between mobile and desktop for Spotify is a majority of 67% mobile versus 39% on desktops (Business of Apps, 2020). The graph below shows the distribution across different regions:

*Spotify devices by region*



(Business of Apps, 2020)

North American has a higher distribution of desktop plays than other regions, however it is still mobile dominated. Because Spotify is a global brand, Mobile content should be a priority, however North American service should still incorporate desktop versions. Spotify has the ability to curate content differently for geographic regions because it is a digital product.



A collage of vintage cassette tapes. The central focus is a white cassette tape by Richard Marx, titled "REPEAT OFFENDER". The tape is slightly angled and shows signs of use. In the background, other tapes are visible, including a black one by "Sony Music" and a red one by "BASF". The overall aesthetic is nostalgic and artistic.

# Model



# ch. 2

## Profits and Direction

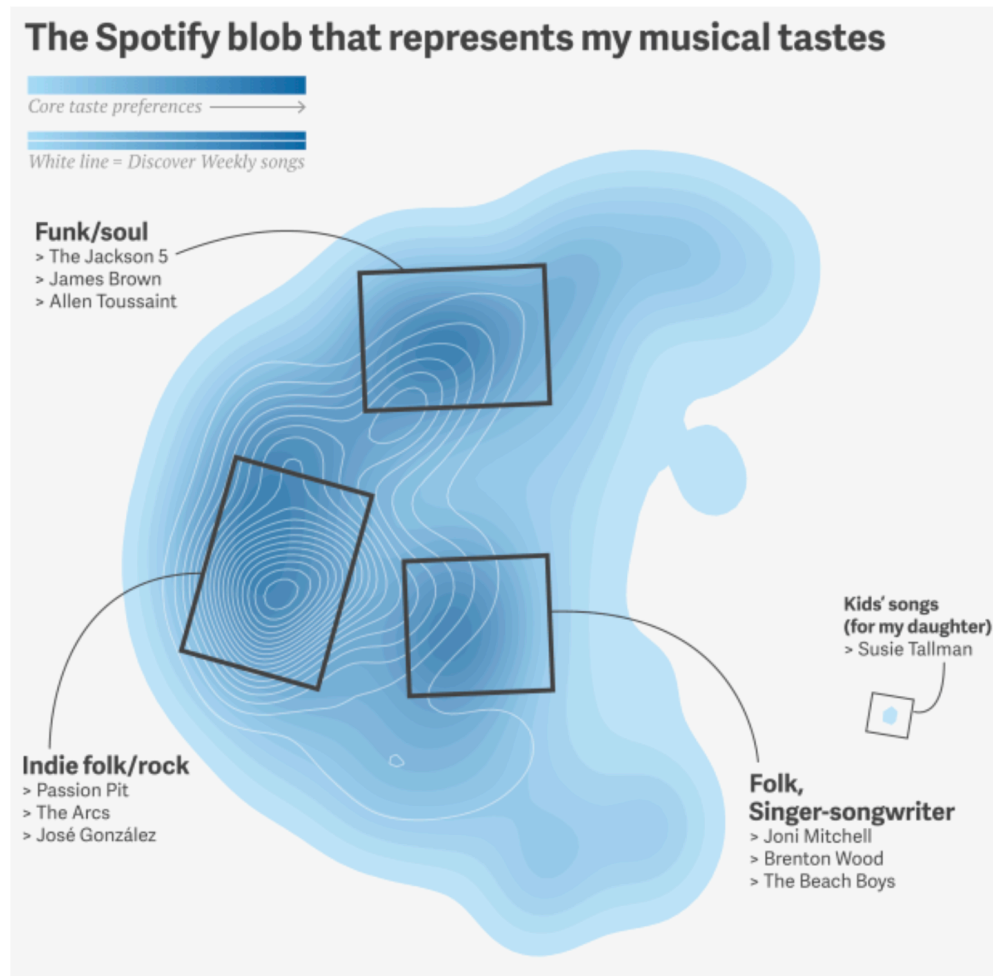
Profits are made through Spotify's freemium model: free-version users listen to ads, and Premium members pay a monthly fee instead. 286 million people use spots monthly, 130 million are Spotify Premium members: meaning that 45% of monthly users are Premium members (Business of Apps, 2020). Spotify has been working on many podcast-related campaigns, working to establish Spotify as a place to listen to podcasts as well as music, called the Key Podcast Strategy (Business of Apps, 2020). Because 65% of podcast listeners access podcasts on their mobile devices (Meisener, 2019), Spotify should be positioning itself heavily towards mobile users over desktop, in order to contribute to the success of their huge Key Podcast Strategy marketing campaigns.

## Distribution Model

87% of the content in Spotify's music libraries come from the top 4 record label companies. For the purpose of analysis, Spotify's product is not music: in the sense that Spotify generally doesn't commission composers to write songs. Their product is digital access to a huge library of audio. Recordings stored on the cloud are distributed to whatever device a consumer is listening on.

Cutting-edge AI is what sets Spotify apart (Business of Apps, 2020). Their innovative algorithm can sift through big data to find surprising and shockingly accurate music selections for the listener. As far as researchers can tell, the algorithm discovers and predicts song preferences through 1) cross-referencing with other users' song preferences, 2) scanning the internet for common terms such as a eclectic subgenera title that match keywords associated with the listener's previous liked songs, and 3) possibly comparing audio waveforms with each other to select similar songs (Business of Apps, 2020). One innovation that characterizes the 'Internet of Things' concept is that, increasingly, the world of things and the internet are becoming connected through huge amounts of data and advances in a machine's ability to think and sense (Zahay, Roberts, 2016). Just like a living organism, the digital environment is made of innumerable connected sensors like cameras, microphones, motion sensors, and so much more.

Because of this, innovative programming like Spotify's algorithm will continue to become more sophisticated as big data teaches engines like Spotify to work even better. Below is a fascinating visual from Spotify of a person's music preference map, generated from the aggregate of all data quantities the algorithm could gather when connected to the user's profile and listening history:

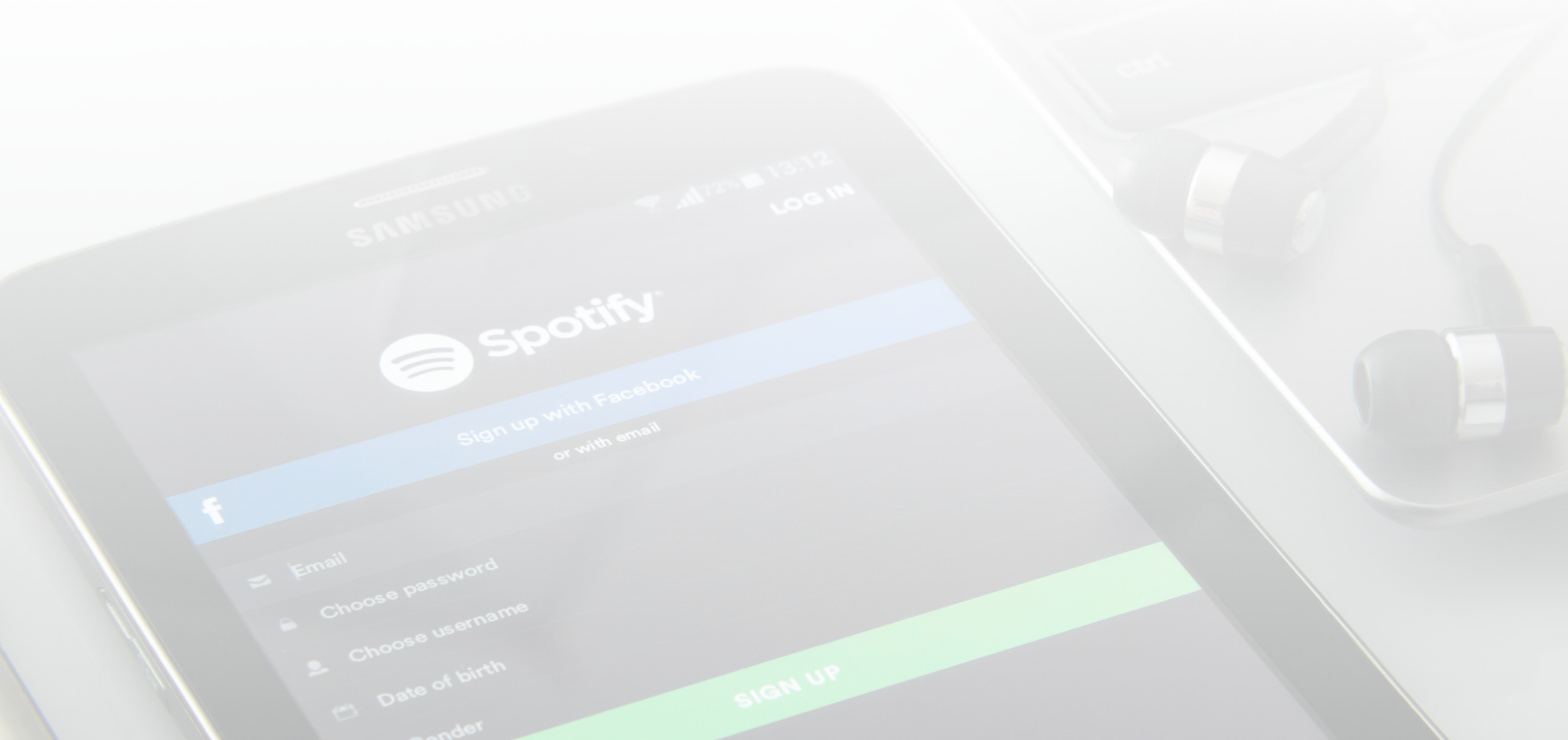


(Business of Apps, 2020)

If a user continues listening to a song for about 30 seconds, Spotify will weigh that experience with other listening trends in order to deliver users personally curated playlists, like 'Discover Weekly' (Business of Apps, 2020). An AI called BaRT finds professionally curated playlists and radio stations to present to the listener on the homepage (Business of Apps). Different kinds of data sorting functions make conclusions in order to enhance the listeners experience: an example of how Spotify is a service-centered digital business (Zahay, Roberts, 2016).

# Competitor Business Models

Spotify is on the cutting edge of digital innovation, and must continue to innovate in order to stay competitive. Spotify just passed Pandora several years sooner than predicted in listening analytics (eMarketer, 2020), growing by 25.8% in 2019, and has the greatest competitive threat from Apple Music (Business of Apps, 2020) and Amazon Music (eMarketer, 2020). Apple music and Spotify have very different business models, which is why their showdown is particularly important to watch for marketers. Apple Music was innovative in its inception, when cloud storage gave rise to the business model where songs could be purchased for a small price as digital files (D.J. Song, 2020). In other words, it was more or less analogous to the old school method of purchasing a vinyl or CD, only it was a digital file in a digital marketplace. Spotify's freemium model is different (not necessarily unique), where ads or monthly premium account payments are pooled together to 'pay for the music'. Because Apple Music and Spotify have such different value chains (Zahay, Roberts, 2016), it is interesting to study how these two companies compete for the market. Apple Music, although once widely popular, has been having difficulty because there is no free way to listen (eMarketer). So far, Spotify's freemium model was even more successful than projected by eMarketer because of 1) its superior algorithm which helps curate content for listeners, 2) the 2019 Key Podcast Strategy described above, and 3) partnerships with voice activated device companies like Google Home Mini, as well as Samsung and Hulu. These strategies helped penetrate new markets and spread the user base faster than predicted (eMarketer, 2020). Podcasts are becoming incredibly important, and are projected to continue growing in the U.S. (eMarketer, 2020). Spotify is expected to continue excelling in this area, and Podcasts will most likely be the main digital innovation to track for Spotify.





# ch. 3










## The Business Model Canvas

Designed for: Spotify

Designed by: Jeremy

Date:

Version:

<div>Key Partners</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Google Home</li><li>- Samsung</li><li>- Hulu</li><li>- Facebook &amp; Instagram</li></ul></div>	<div>Key Activities</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Podcasts</li><li>- AI personalized playlists</li></ul></div> <div><div>Key Resources</div><div></div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- partnerships with the 4 largest record labels for content</li></ul></div></div>	<div>Value Propositions</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Enjoy music for free or enjoy music without ads.</li><li>- Incorporate music in your lifestyle</li><li>- Find the freshest new music</li></ul></div>	<div>Customer Relationships</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Free listening is increasing in importance</li></ul></div> <div><div>Channels</div><div></div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Spotify app on mobile or desktop</li><li>- Spotify web player</li><li>- Offline playlists</li></ul></div></div>	<div>Customer Segments</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Majority mobile over desktop</li></ul></div>
<div>Cost Structure</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Freemium model</li></ul></div>		<div>Revenue Streams</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ads on free version generate revenue</li><li>- Monthly subscription fee for Premium members</li></ul></div>		

DESIGNED BY: Strategyzer AG  
The makers of Business Model Generation and Strategyzer

**Strategyzer**  
strategyzer.com





# Algorithm



# ch. 4

## 4 'I's

**Interactive:** The entire concept of Spotify's algorithm is that it gets smarter the more a person listens to music (D.J. Song, 2020). Spotify generates personalized playlists for users to enjoy, providing a high depth of interactivity.

**Information:** Data drives the algorithm. Every song an account listens to helps define what that user's listening map looks like, even helping define other users who are connected over Facebook (Business of Apps, 2020). That way, the algorithm continues to grow more accurate and serve the listening tastes of each consumer better.

**Immediacy:** Music is a medium of sound through time: that's why ads are so disruptive, making listeners willing to pay for a Premium account. By capitalizing on the consumer's need for immediacy in their listening habits without the interruption of ads, Spotify succeeded in crafting a profitable business model which is sustainable and growing over time.

**Involving:** The consumer must be the forefront of the app's experience. By starting with a homepage where the listener makes choices on what podcast, professionally curated playlist, or radio station to listen to, control over the listening experience is easy to navigate for the consumer, involving them as the guiding force of the Spotify experience.

## Customer Lifetime Value

Spotify has been growing more rapidly than projected (eMarketer, 2020), and is overtaking competitors and penetrating new markets (Business of Ads, 2020). Spotify's success is an indicator that their freemium business model worked brilliantly, and the amount of revenue generated from the specific combination of free version and Premium membership listeners is sustainable long-term and profitable for the future.

A rare article by Ed Shelly unpacks an F-1 document that Spotify released in 2018, providing insights into how much each customer is worth to Spotify, and how well their model is doing. One reason why Spotify has seen so much growth is that its churn rate (the rate that customers unsubscribe compared to subscribe) is around 5.5%, well under 10% (the cutoff for a

healthy business), in spite of its rapid subscriber climb (Shelly, 2018). The average subscriber will maintain ownership of their Spotify account for an average of 18 months. Spotify's free version ads generate only 10% revenues, but is growing consistently. Monetizing the free version is vital for sustainability over time, especially if Spotify decides to increase the Premium subscription cost, like many cloud subscription services have been doing (Shelly, 2018). Because the free version is making some money, it is an indicator that Spotify's business model is stable.

Spotify has paid over 9 billion dollars in royalties over the course of its existence, showing that they are in an expensive industry (Shelly, 2018), however their median gross margin (meaning the proportion of profit they make out of a sale) is 71%, which is extremely lucrative (Shelly, 2018). The median gross margin is increasing, but according to Ed Shelly, royalty fees have historically been Spotify's greatest financial hurdle.

Based on the available data from the F-1 report analyzed by Shelly, the Customer Lifetime Value is probably \$25.51. In order to increase CLV, Spotify could increase Premium cost, or get a longer customer retention duration (Shelly, 2018). Balancing these two options is sensitive: with an increase of Premium membership cost, retention could become shorter because consumers can't afford or don't find the expensive price worth it when juxtaposed against competitors. Surpassing Pandora in listeners (eMarketer, 2020) is an excellent step, but new strategies designed to increase retention time is important to continue Spotify's growth.

## New Directions

Spotify's biggest competitors like Apple Music and Amazon can really off of revenue from other markets and products, like tech and marketplace, whereas Spotify is confined to streaming (Shelly, 2018). Although investing in podcasts is a clever way to get listeners to stay plugged in for a longer period of time (building podcasts into a lifestyle habit, or keeping membership status to follow specific podcasts), other innovations need to be explored. One prediction is that Spotify will begin to sell live show tickets and engage in music press coverage in order to expand into new industry segments and create a more stable business model that can rely off of multiple revenue chains.



# CLV = \$25.51

median  
gross margin  
71%

free version  
revenue  
~10%

churn  
~ 5.5%





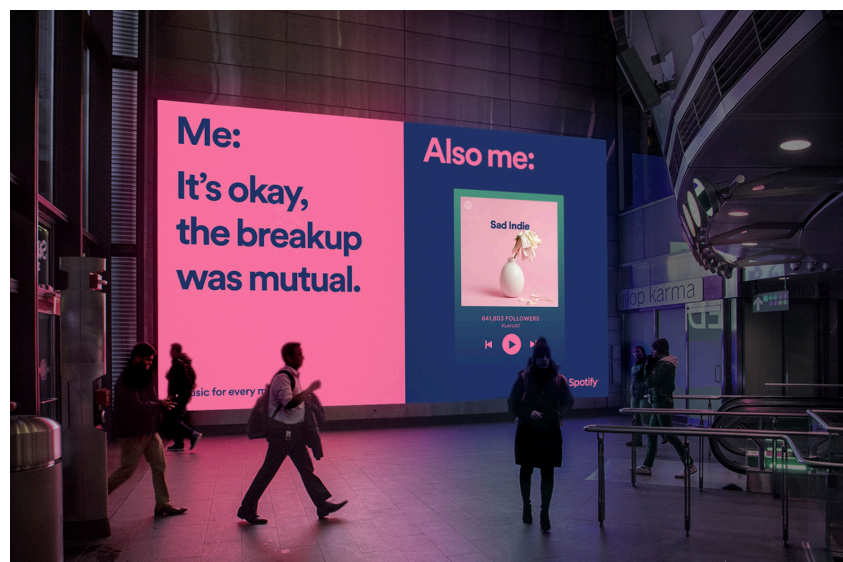
# Campaign

# ch. 5-7

A resilient brand is a brand which is in touch with its customers. It matters to consumers who they are procuring services from, and it matters that consumers feel that their brand understands them: especially for a service like Spotify, which offers content designed to match the lifestyles and preferences of their users. Spotify is a resilient brand because they use analytics to figure out exactly who their customers are, what they have done with the app, and what music and lifestyles they like and prefer. Proof of this resilience comes from a series of very successful campaigns in the past, along with explosive growth in user base as described above in the Consumer Lifetime Value section.

## Historical campaigns

Spotify has had huge success with their previous campaigns, especially in 2017 and 2018 (Hanlon, Chaffey, 2020). Their content was successful because their ads empathized with their listeners in a fun and quirky way that felt personal—especially effective in growing a connection with millennials (Gorbach, 2019). A visit to Spotify's website instantly portrays this personal, quixotic feel, where Spotify talks about its employees as band members, and uses bright colors, clean and simple shapes, and modern fonts (Spotify, 2020). The content of these successful 2017 and 2018 campaigns was highly original and personal, and came directly from their consumer analytics (Gorbach, 2019). Here are some of the creatives portrayed via OOH advertisements:





(Gorbatch, 2019)

This ad gets to the point but is clever. Instead of a normal headline structure to the ad, Spotify isn't afraid to use a whole line of text, with no traditional slugline, CTA, or body copy. In fact, the ad is laid out more like a meme than anything else: which is why it is postulated that it was specifically targeted towards millennials (Gorbatch, 2019). Furthermore, Spotify most likely used their detailed analytics to find out exactly what genre of music their target audience for this campaign listens to: and they found a clever way to incorporate it into their creative.



(Hanlon, Chaffey, 2020)

Again, Spotify isn't afraid to use a large amount of text which defies normal ad structure. There isn't really a headline, but it's not proper body copy. Spotify used analytics to determine every aspect of the creative: notice the feminine pinks, and the references to 'vegan' 'leftist'. Furthermore, mentioning the playlist makes Spotify seem very in touch with its listeners, and inspires viewers of this billboard to see what the mentioned playlist is actually like. Humans are curious creatures, which this campaign very subtly and masterfully incorporates.

Based off of previous successful campaigns, we can see that targeting Millennials is a good choice, and creating creative that engages curiosity is key. The ultimate goal of a new campaign should make the viewer feel that Spotify is in touch with what they like and who they are.



# Podcasts

Spotify is engaged in a massive podcast revolution. Spotify is currently developing a method with which to insert real-time, highly targeted ads into a podcast that are customized to a person's location and demographics (Carman, 2020) when they stream a Spotify podcast. Other podcast distributors are facing advertising problems with limitations in access to consumer demographic profiles, and the inability to alter or customize an ad after the podcast is released (Carman, 2020). Spotify is pioneering this new technology which will boost the effectiveness of their targeting.

According to Nielsen data, half of all U.S. households are fans of podcasts fans (Winn, 2020). Furthermore, the amount of people listening to podcasts weekly is 24%, and the percentage of Americans exposed to, listening to, and understanding what a podcast is has been increasing by several percent in those categories (Winn, 2020).

## **So, what demographic of the population is more likely to listen to a podcast?**

- 1) 27% of US podcast listeners have a college degree which is 8% greater than the population,
- 2) 63% of podcast listeners are white, which is 5% greater than the population,
- 3) the greatest percent of monthly podcast listeners are 25-54 years old (32%), which is 8% less than what would be expected of their share of the total population, but
- 4) 12-34 year olds have a 11% greater likelihood to be podcast listeners than their percentage of the population, indicating that 12-34 year olds are the up-in-coming podcast audience (Winn, 2020).

Based on the research on podcast trends and podcast listeners, an two general targeting choices could be made: 1) target 12-34 year olds who are the greatest percentage of podcast listeners, but who have a lower listening rate than what would be expected for their percentage of the population (indicating that it is difficult to penetrate this market, possibly because of a lack of understanding of how to use or where to find podcasts, or difficulty incorporating it into their routine or lifestyle). 2) a second target audience could be the up-in-coming demographic of 12-34 year olds, who are slightly more likely to listen to podcasts as a group than they are to not listen to one. This would indicate that it is a normal part of their lifestyle or culture to listen to podcasts. Based on qualitative knowledge gathered from casual interviews of peers who listen to podcasts, it seems that podcasts are usually listened to concurrently with some kind of low-cognition task such as driving, walking, running, or exercising. Based on these two possible target audiences, I'm inclined to target 12-34 year olds because my age is within that category, and employers may be more likely to assign me this group for projects because I fit within the group. Great opportunity exists marketing to 25-54 year olds through campaigns that would help show how to incorporate podcasts within their lifestyle. An expected goal for marketing to 12-34 year olds would be to generate long-term dedication to weekly listening habits in concurrence

with lifestyle activities, and loyalty to Spotify podcasts over listening on other podcast apps or websites.

One guiding idea for my research is that people, especially below age 34, listen to podcasts along with another less cognitive or non-social activity such as driving, running, cooking, or working out—perhaps because of short attention spans and a need to multitask, or maybe a need for learning and stimulation during the age of new media. Because fitness represents both a lifestyle and a regular commitment, it is the perfect activity to pair with listening to podcasts in a way that builds loyalty to a specific podcast or type of podcast (at least weekly listening) and therefore, a loyalty to the podcast app, which in this case would be Spotify. Research on the fitness trends of the target audience, 12-34 year olds, would help understand what BB will be used to consume podcasts, and what direction the campaign should take in promoting podcasts as a lifestyle choice in combination with other activities.

The fitness industry is dominated by Millennials and Gen Z, who form 80% of the market. Fitness habits include a preference for group fitness, and an adoption of new technology (which is good for podcasts). Think of Peloton studios, where new technology is paired with group fitness to create a new type of lifestyle. In fact, 2020 is the year that has seen the highest and greatest % change of fitness app downloads, with a projected plateauing in 2021 and 2022, according to a new report from eMarketer (eMarketer, 2020). This would indicate that the U.S. consumer market is highly fitness sensitive right now, but that sensitivity should be capitalized upon now. One reason that could explain these findings is the Coronavirus, which would cause normal gym or fitness class goers who do not use fitness apps to download an app because gyms and studios are closed. If this trend is accurate, it is even more reason to begin a fitness oriented lifestyle campaign promoting podcasts on Spotify, because Millennials and Gen Zers who tend to prefer group fitness are currently unable to engage in fitness classes and gyms, therefore being forced to work out alone (which is a better environment to listen to podcasts because the social aspect is removed).

**Target Audience:** 12-34 year olds who have some college or are planning to go to college, who have a BB of not listening to podcasts regularly or at all, who engage regularly in fitness activities and are looking for something to listen to while they are active.

**Objectives:** 1) Convert non-listeners and people who listen to podcasts on other apps or websites to Spotify. 2) Help target audience find ways to incorporate podcasts into their lifestyle, especially with fitness activities, 3) build loyalty to weekly podcast listening.





# US Podcast



8% more likely to have  
a college degree

5% more likely to  
be white

12-34 penetration 11% greater  
than expected for population size

Millenials + Gen Z are  
80% of the fitness market

# Social Media

Which social media network should be used for this campaign?

## Platforms/Methods Used by US Gen Z vs. Adult Internet Users for Social Connection During the Coronavirus Pandemic, May 2020

% of respondents

	Gen Z	Total
YouTube	81%	54%
Text messaging	81%	72%
Instagram	68%	34%
Snapchat	60%	21%
TikTok	45%	16%
Facetime	52%	35%
Zoom	50%	28%
Facebook	37%	60%
Facebook Messenger	30%	49%

*Note: Gen Z ages 13-23; all adults ages 18+; "often" and "sometimes"*  
*Source: Morning Consult, "How COVID-19 Is Changing Gen Z's Worldview,"*  
*eMarketer calculations, June 22, 2020*

256699

www.eMarketer.com

(eMarketer, 2020)

According to the chart above, YouTube (81%) may be the top choice when placing social media ads for 13-23 year olds, with Instagram (68%) being the second best choice (because text messaging does not offer advertising). Limitations of this data are that 1) the purpose of use must be for social connection, and 2) 13-23 is close but does not encompass the entire target audience proposed earlier (eMarketer, 2020). Based on this data, a YouTube ad would be a strong choice for paid advertisements in combination with Instagram advertising. When users see Instagram ads, their audio is often muted, which poses a problem when advertising a podcast service, which has an offering that only exists in an audio format. The advantage is that users have to look at it to identify that it is an ad before scrolling onward. This pairs well with YouTube advertising where users are more likely to have the sound unmuted, but also can identify that it is an ad and skip it without having to look at the advertisement.

## Timeline & Budget

A good duration for the campaign would be concurrent with the Coronavirus, because more members of the target audience may be participating in solo fitness activities who would otherwise attend gyms and group fitness classes if businesses were open or the pandemic was no longer a threat. The question of how long the Coronavirus will last is fairly impossible to answer, however what is more relevant to ask is how long group fitness will be closed. A duration of September 1 - November 25 would be a duration, and more advertising space can be bought if market conditions do not change in that duration. Ads will be run on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10-12 in the morning, because those times have special engagement peak on Instagram because of social media habits during the Coronavirus, and Wednesdays generally have higher engagement in the morning even before the pandemic (Hutchinson, 2020). No data on ideal YouTube ad days and times were found. Ads will be billed via CPV on YouTube (defined as viewed for 30 seconds or until end of ad), costing \$0.15 per view, and billed via CPC for Instagram for \$3.56 (webfx, 2020), (clicks would take the user to a specific Spotify podcast that was advertised to them).

- 1) There are 26 days in this proposed campaign, and a total budget is highly scalable, but
- 2) \$9,000 would be an incredible chunk of money that could generate real results. According to Webfx, a digital media booking company, the recommended amount for Youtube and Instagram campaigns is \$1,000 to \$2,500 each per month.
- 3) Therefore, spending \$9,000 would mean spending \$1,500 on Instagram and Youtube each, which would equate to
- 4) \$57.69 per platform each day that the campaign is run.
- 5) On YouTube, \$57.69 will generate 384 views.
- 6) On Instagram, \$57.69 will generate 16 clicks.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TRsE8IQertOgicZoXNlh6opusRk2qXILwfot0hCWhP8/edit#gid=0> is a spreadsheet that shows the campaign calendar as well as budget and results.

Comparing the two, it is easy to see that Instagram is vastly more expensive: however it is important to remember that a click is a direct action which will guide the user to a landing page, and therefore a higher price is expected. Clicks represent an action, and although they are less valuable for certain industries, clicks for a digital media distributor with a good reputation like Spotify are gold. Advertising is about matching the consumer with the product, and for a digital product like Spotify, gathering clicks is a good way to go. In comparison, YouTube advertising for views is comparatively cheap, and a good deal because views represent at least 30 seconds of watching the ad. How many people on YouTube skip ads after 5 seconds? Only a



viewer who is interested in the ad, or who accidentally left their app running would listen to 30 seconds of an ad (30 seconds feels like a long time on digital platforms). Furthermore, YouTube ads have a lot of creative possibilities because video content is the most expressive type of fixed media advertising, and the sound on YouTube ads is not muted by default unlike Instagram video ads (which the user can mute if their sound is off or the mute control is toggled).

## Summary

This social media marketing campaign will advertise to garner **Youtube views** and **Instagram clicks** in order to 1) **Convert** non-listeners and people who listen to podcasts on other apps or websites to Spotify. 2) Help target audience find ways to **incorporate podcasts into their lifestyle**, especially with **fitness** activities, 3) build **loyalty to weekly podcast** listening within the **12-34 year old** market segment who have some college or are planning to go to college, who have a **BB of not listening to podcasts regularly or at all**, who **engage regularly in fitness activities** and are **looking for something to listen to while they are active**.

## Creative

After studying the successful 2017 and 2018 campaigns geared towards Millennials, I generated three sample ads for this new campaign. I used similar fonts and colors that would appeal to a vibrant young audience, and I used videos of people doing solo fitness activities with (hopefully witty) podcast recommendations. I chose an upbeat tone and referenced popular shows and topics that would be understood by and appeal to the target audience. Notice that I wasn't afraid to use a lot of headline text, which defies normal ad structure: I was following Spotify's previous campaigns where long headlines were written in a casual, personal tone. Here are three stills of my ads, with royalty free photos from Pexels:

**check out videos here :** <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/3/folders/1W7i1rf2f4fy5SrRwJZgoGntL86UAmiJ>



**To the  
listeners of  
1,001 Heroes,  
Legends, Histories,  
& Mysteries: Know  
that you are one.**

**Listen on Spotify.**

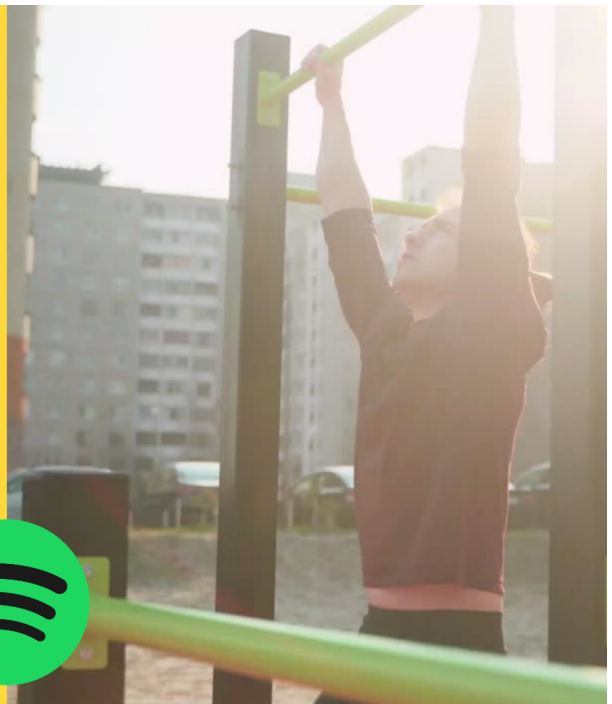
**You'll never skip  
your run, so find  
a podcast you'll  
never skip  
either.**



**Listen on Spotify.**

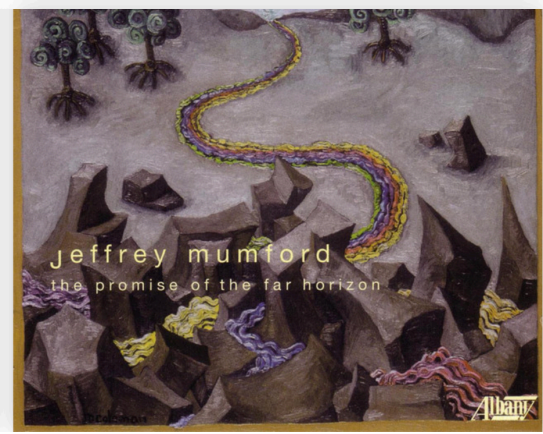
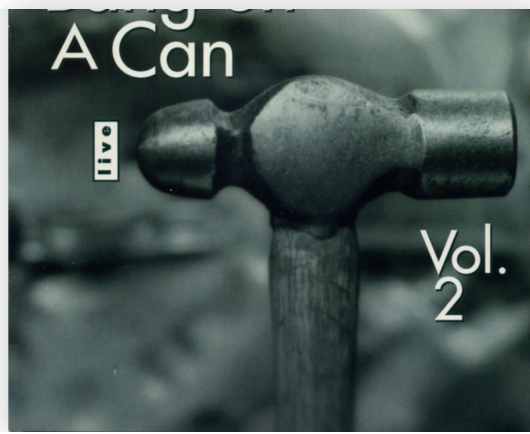
**To the listeners  
of Avatar:  
The Podcast,  
check out this  
airbending.**

**Listen on Spotify.**



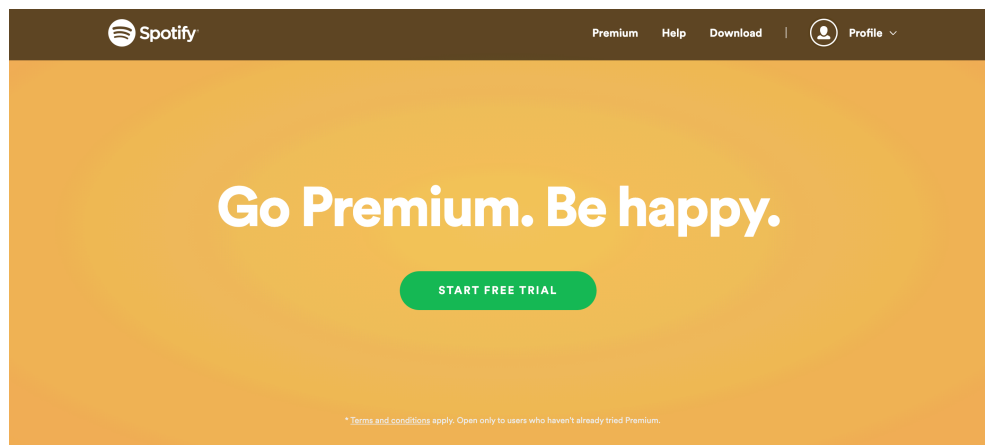


# Website



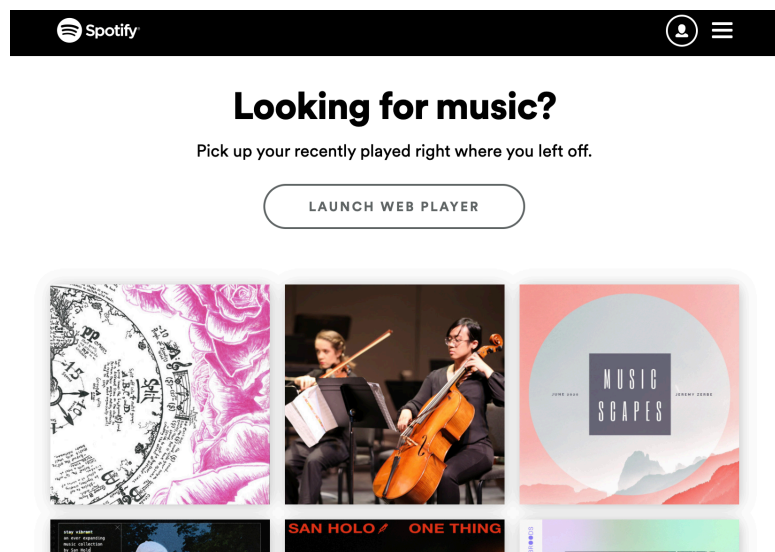
# ch. 8-9

## Website



(Spotify, 2020)

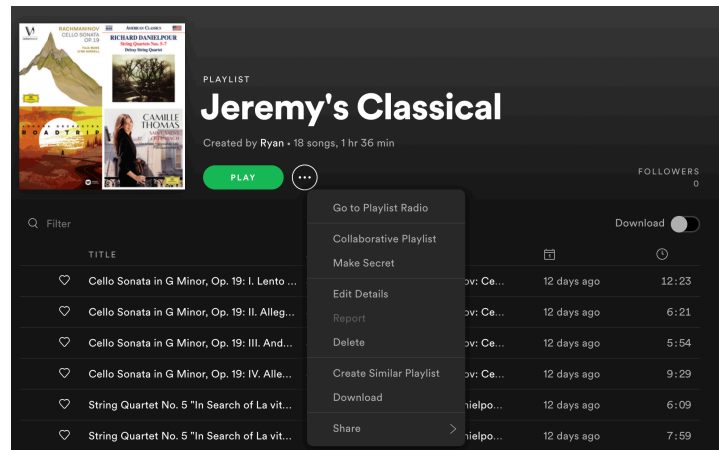
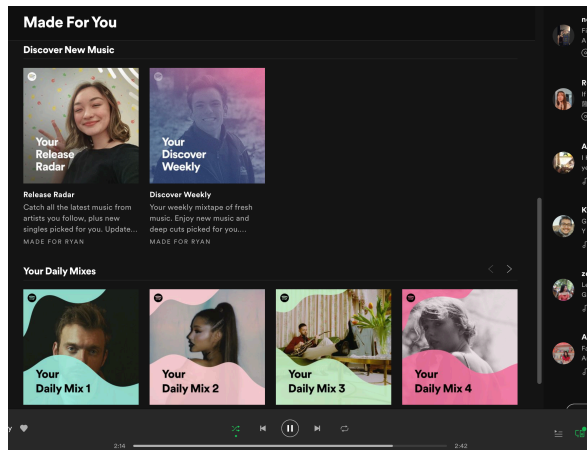
A quick look at Spotify's website confirms that 90% of Spotify's income is generated by monthly Premium subscriptions (Perez, 2020), because the desktop homepage is completely premium focused with the very on-the-nose headline. The Website's home page also has a bright green Premium promotion with a free trial button.



(Spotify, 2020)



Continuing down the page, Spotify's website will direct the user to the web player, including clickable song recommendations. Because my account is logged in, it recommends songs that I've been listening to (including my own compositions at the top). The website is designed to funnel users into Premium subscriptions, or free version listening on the web. Its design is simple and clean, with more buttons than text or images, and bright popping colors. It's a very utilitarian site, and Spotify has another website which contains updates, information, and hiring information, but this conversion site is the top result on a google search.



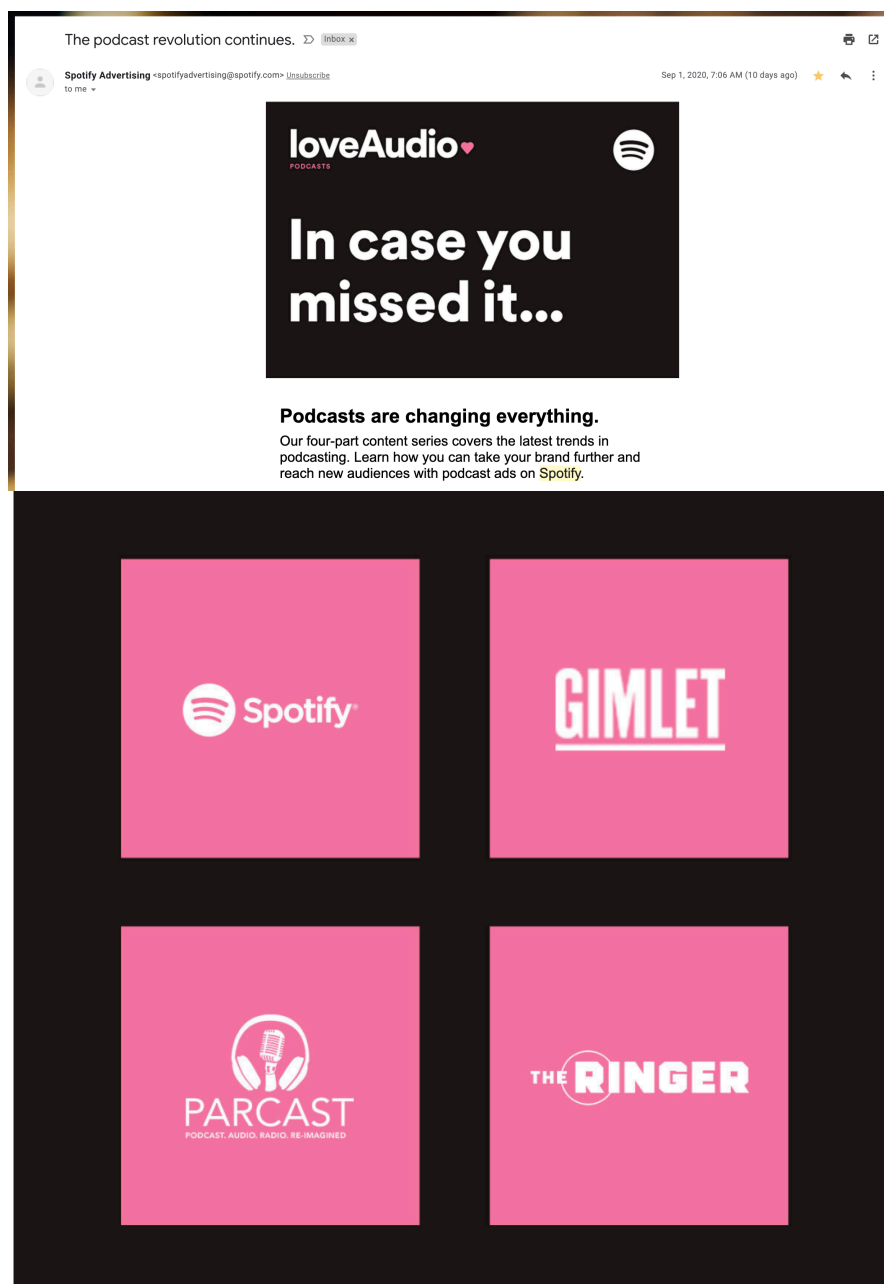
(Spotify, 2020)

The Spotify App includes several social elements: Firstly, if the account is connected through Facebook, the listening activities of your Facebook friends are displayed in a column on the left hand side, with real-time updates on what each person is listening to (with a name and profile picture). The discover section has Discover Weekly and Daily Mix playlists, designed by Spotify's algorithm (which takes into account the listening habits of your friends). And finally, you can directly share Spotify playlists, albums, artists, and tracks with the '...' element: enabling the user to copy a link or post to a social media platform such as Facebook Stories. Furthermore, many social media platforms have built in Spotify functions, such as Instagram which allows you to share a song with scrolling lyrics on your story. Spotify itself could be classified as a social media itself in a way.

Spotify's email marketing team sent me an email about podcasts within the past couple weeks. As part of their podcast marketing initiative, Spotify is buying out and creating advertising campaigns to promote podcasts. This email began with a headline that grabs the attention of the reader, and the power line "podcasts are changing everything" to hook marketers on the concept that Spotify is the best place to stream podcasts. Scrolling down through the email, links to different podcasts help marketing professionals learn about trends and interesting content.

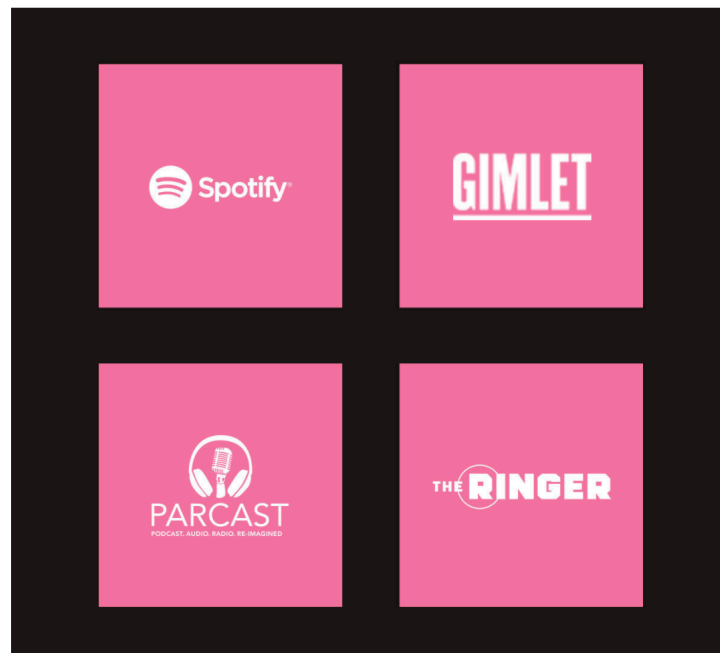
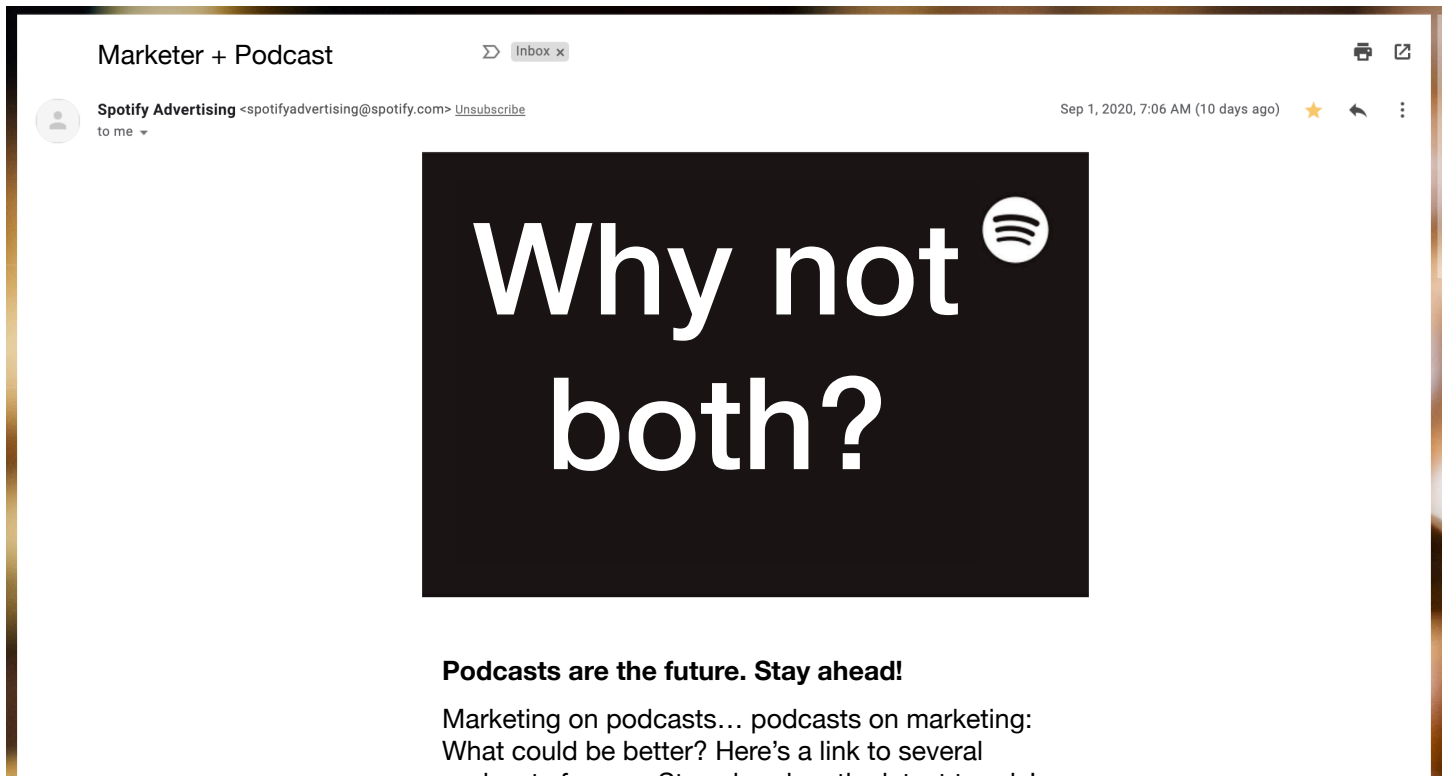


Take a look at the screenshot below. This campaign could be improved with a more interesting take on podcasts. The message is very general (“podcasts are changing everything”), and a more focused topic would grab the attention better. A very general headline, while more applicable to a greater portion of the target audience, lacks the power to call attention to itself because it is not curated for the audience. The subject line is “podcasts are changing everything”, like the slogan. With a large scope of internet content available, reader open rate would reach a higher percentage if the content was gripping and more specific to the target audience. A general headline with one word or at least shorter content will get a better open rate (Marrs, 2020). A funny subject line might have worked better as well or something conversational (Marrs, 2020). The headline did, however, appeal to a fear of missing out, which is a good direction (Marrs, 2020). The problem is that the headline isn’t the subject line.



# Newsletter

The first attached image on the next page (page 35) shows my edited email newsletter, based on the research and comments explored in the paragraph above. Below that (page 24) is an original screenshot. I changed the subject line to be shorter, clearer, and more 'trendy', I changed the headline to be more assertive and shorter by posing an engaging question that plays off of the subject line. I changed the slogan to address the target audience's goal (marketing professionals interested in Spotify) of staying ahead on industry trends, with a future-oriented tone. I cleaned up the body copy by starting with a clever hook 'marketing on podcasts ... podcasts on marketing: what could be better?' because marketing professionals love wordplay, and I ended with a CTA that reflects the reader's goals: 'stay ahead on the latest trends!'. I kept the same design elements and links because they did not need improvement. Adjusting the text in the way that I did was based off of the research above. The content I wrote is designed to hook the people who would subscribe to this newsletter: marketing professionals. The newsletter is about advertising and marketing updates/trends on Spotify. Every copy choice that I made was implemented with the goal of the reader in mind (stay ahead on latest trends by learning about podcasts), while using less text and more clever wording.





# SEM





# ch. 10

## SEM

According to the Zahay & Roberts book, 32% of Americans agreed that they could not live without search engines. Google itself has about 40,000 inquiries per second (Zahay, Roberts, 2016). Search engines aren't just a map of the internet environment: they're the road itself. To travel the internet, most people enter search terms into an engine (google being the primary platform representing 71% of desktop and a stunning 95% of mobile searches). Web pages include keywords which help the engine index (after 'spiders' use AI to analyze the content) and show search results to the engine user (Zahay, Roberts). Keywords are search words, terms, or phrases which appear in the HTML code that generates a web site: most commonly extracted by the 'spiders' from meta tags (descriptions, such as an image description) or title tags (like a heading) (Zahay, Roberts, 2016). The words used in the URL itself are vital for determining what keywords the page will link to. Many other factors influence what results are shown to a particular user, including local search targeting and preference for mobile friendly sites (Zahay, Roberts, 2016).

Marketers are recommended to include between ~1% to 3% keyword density so that 'spiders' can categorize the page effectively without suspecting foul play on the page with keyword stuffing, invisible keywords, or overly promotional content (Zahay, Roberts). Searches on an engine can be categorized into two big boxes: organic and paid. Organic relies only on optimizing keywords, loading times, content, and other characteristics of a web page so as to align itself most perfectly with the standards that Google's algorithms have set out. Paid optimization uses a bidding system where websites will compete for top spots on the search results list (Zahay, Roberts, 2016). Inherently, a serious SEM plan must have a symbiotic combination of both. One effective strategy is to bid on keywords which previous organic research has already revealed to be used to successfully find the marketer's client brand.



# Innovations & Predictions

Because the details of Google's algorithms are secret, it is impossible for a page to be perfectly optimized (at least currently, perhaps AI will automatically optimize pages in the future). Other predicted developments are the expected integration of social media (perhaps by including 'likes' when trying to understand the user's intent and interests) for search results (Zahay, Roberts, 2016).

Google is currently developing quantum computers which have a higher level of data capabilities, enabling a larger collection of big data which allows AI to learn how to deliver search engine results better (Kahn, 2020). This next wave of AI is tailor-made to 1) boost the relevancy of searches for individual users, 2) introduce new functions which can detect keyword stuffing and other usurping SEO tactics, 3) make algorithms more reactive quicker, 4) weight relevant content and prestigious websites over sites that have more backlinks, 5) revolutionize how Google Images provides content (Kahn, 2020). Updates to the 2019 BERT algorithm (which will be discussed shortly) will help Google understand the way that people phrase what they mean with everyday speech. BERT is a Natural Language Processor (or NLP). Furthermore, better handling of semantic language (which focus on the user's intent, often in a question or heading type format (Zahay, Roberts, 2020), (Kahn, 2020)) will improve how Google is able to pull apart meaning from different sections of the HTML code which compose a web page. Voice searches are also rapidly becoming more important to optimize for, and Google's quantum update is going to have heavy improvements on the understanding of voice search query formats. We've already talked about NLPs, but that will be the focus of development in how Google reacts to voice searches (Kahn, 2020). Google already ranks pages based on speed, but that is going to be taken further with quantum processing (Kahn, 2020). Branded queries are a very exciting development: Google is going to increase its abilities to understand which brands are popular based on how many people use the brand name as a key word (Kahn, 2020). Videos are also continuing to receive greater weight in Google searches (Kahn, 2020).

I am personally excited to see how the internet will become a different environment for each user: perhaps one day every person will have their own 'unique internet', where insanely powerful predictive and learning AI will be able to customize content uniquely for every user based on the new levels of big data that will be achieved in the next decade. My professor Brian Hemsowrth perpetuated the idea that the internet will continue to become more and more like a curated experience. With an exponentially increasing amount of content existing on the internet, and better AI to sort this content, a day where different people aren't even able to find the same websites could be the future.





# Google Algorithmes

# Google's 9 Algorithms

Google's older algorithms are quixotically named after different animals, with the more recent algorithm updates named after 'people'.

**1) Panda:** Panda is an algorithm implemented in 2015 which sorts out the sheep from the goats: giving a lower "quality score" to pages with repetitive or off-topic entires (Zahay, Roberts, 2016). To mitigate the effects of Panda, marketers should practice "cumulative optimization", the process where a search engine marketer will continuously update a website to strive for a perpetually evolving definition of optimized perfection (Kahn, 2020). Tools like SEO PowerSuite's Website Auditor can be utilized to check the quality score (Rosenkrans, 2020). Spotify's website, as reviewed above, has minimal content and a Premium subscription driven message. Furthermore, links to previous listening make Spotify's website less of an informational source about the brand, and more of a hub for different Spotify programs to include links. If Spotify were a small/unknown brand, a minimal website like this would not work: nowhere on the homepage is it clearly stated what Spotify is. In fact, the navigation at the top only links to Premium, Help, Download, and Profile. The about page can only be accessed by scrolling to the footer of the page, hidden among lines of different topics. I suspect that Spotify's website might have a low Panda quality score, because the homepage and navigation bar pages contain scant information about what the brand offers. However, because Spotify is an established brand that 1) has a high paid search budget, and 2) that has high brand recognition, a homepage and website that presents brand offering information in the form of body copy is not required. The headline 'Go Premium. Be happy.' is an odd choice for the homepage because it presents no information on what the brand offers, and it is overtly promotional. However, if the user scrolls down, the headline2 and body copy says "Looking for music? Pick up your recently played right where you left off." which gives enough context clues for a person or spider to deduce what the brand is about, although it is assumed that the user already has an account (at least according to my search abilities, because I do have an account. I suspect someone without an account would be shown a different page).

**2) Penguin:** Penguin deals with links, including in-website links and backlinks (Zahay, Roberts, 2016). Make sure that all links are relevant, and do not try to farm backlinks because Google will always find out. Use SpyGlass to check backlinks (Rosenkrans, 2020). Spotify's website has a minimal headline that promotes a premium subscription, with a premium free trial button directly below, linking the user off of the page immediately. Scrolling down, the rich content with previous listening trends of the user links to the Web Player in a new browser. Both these links are part of Spotify's website, so although it is strange for a brand's website to direct users off the page on the homepage immediately with links, at least the links are internal pages. In fact, most of the links on Spotify's website are either internal, or direct to the app or web player. Although the in-website links generally don't leave the website, Spotify should have an impressive number of backlinks: think of how many people share links to Spotify's web player or app every day.

Because Spotify is an established digital brand whose offering can be represented with a link, Penguin would rank Spotify very highly, as long as links to the app and web player can be tracked to the overall website.

**3) Pigeon:** Pigeon (community named) had a very exciting implementation of locality being used to weigh search results and bids (Zahay, 2020). User's location comes from the IP address (Zahay, 2020), a computer's inherent signature which allows it to communicate with the web. This has the most potent affect when searching for a business location (Rosenkrans, 2020) (for brands like Spotify which are a digital app, searches for app content are less locality sensitive, but searches for office locations and events are). Becoming listed in directories helps Google understand where the business is located (Rosenkrans, 2020). A Google My Business Page also would be an effective location-based search to maintain. Search Engine Land advises the use of Website Auditor as a testing site, which will help locate directories to list a specific business (Rosenkrans, 2020). Spotify is a digital business, so locality perhaps has less effect on search results than it would for a brand with an in-house offering, like a violin shop or a clothing store. However, this is relevant because Spotify has been campaigning to expand its reach to new countries, such as increased market penetration this year in Russia (Perez, 2020). Creating content that is targeted to locations with low penetration in combination with an SEO strategy that utilizes the inner workings of Pigeon would help grow Spotify through expansion in new territories.

**4) Possum:** Possum builds off of pigeon, causing closer businesses to be listed above farther businesses, and it also helps detect when a businesses's listed location is false (Rosenkrans, 2020). One tip from Search Engine Land is to add locality sensitive keywords from the location that you are targeting (Rosenkrans, 2020). Again, because Spotify is a digital brand, geographic have a lower level of effect than it would for other brands. Because Spotify has many offices in population hubs all over the world, the negative effects of Possum prioritizing businesses with a closer office should be mitigated but relevant. For example, a Spotify search would not yield the Los Angeles office first on Google My Business or maps, it would yield the official brand website (which contains multiple office addresses that Possum would have indexed for the search).

**5) Hummingbird:** Hummingbird applied smarter semantic search analysis tools to the engine, distilling the actual intent of a query instead of clinging only to keywords when ranking results. When listing keywords, Search Engine Land advises to think about concepts over tags (Rosenkrans, 2020). Google Related Searches and Google Autocomplete are two online resources which can help generate keywords that work better for semantic searches (Rosenkrans, 2020). Hummingbird is huge for Spotify, because there are a million ways to search for a song - and a million artists to search on Spotify. Spotify's keywords must be designed to weigh keywords like 'music by', 'on spotify', 'listen to' or 'where can I find music by' in combination with a search for an artist's name from within Spotify's app directory. To explain what I mean: I am guessing that Spotify must be able to yield results for artist-specific search terms like 'listen to Beethoven' by combining keyword 'listen to' with internal app information listed under



‘Beethoven’. There’s no way that Spotify would list individual artist names as keywords on their website just for the sake of Hummingbird, because there are so many artists on Spotify.

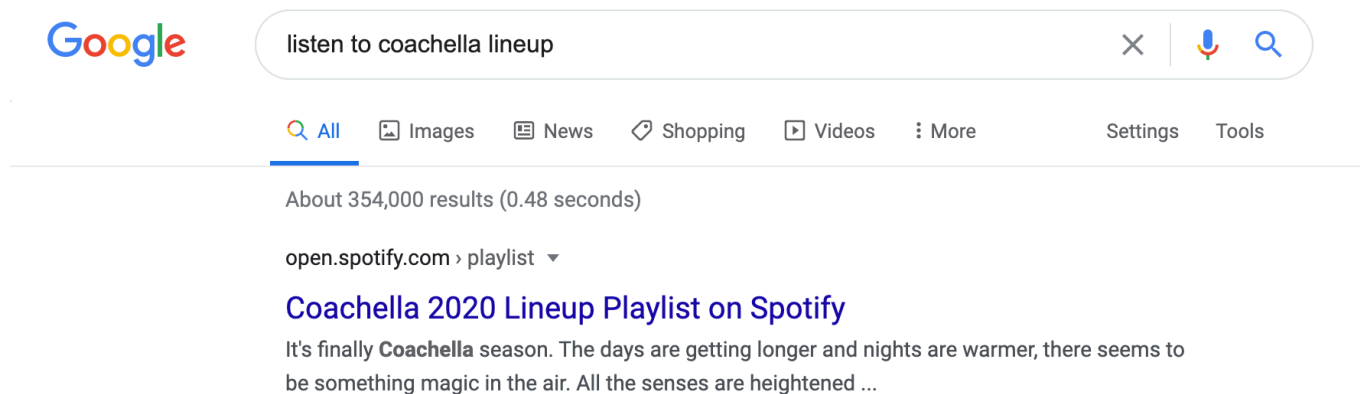
**6) Mobile:** Moving away from the fun animal names, this algorithm contributes to the great mobile move of the internet (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). Google is the overwhelmingly dominant mobile search engine used (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). This ‘Mobile’ algorithm gives drastic ranking consequences to sites that are not accommodating to mobile (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). Speed and usability are key for defining what constitutes a ‘mobile-friendly site’. In my experiences, smaller image sizes, less text, and a navigation schema that funnels users including a logical page button structure are the best ways to make a site more mobile friendly. Search Engine Land reports that page speed is an increasingly vital component for mobile-first web design (Rosenkrans, 2020). Furthermore, avoid autoplay videos, pop-ups and interstitial content (Rosenkrans, 2020) and effects like parallax images. Spotify works great on Mobile: with a majority of 67% mobile streams (Business of Apps, 2020), which is lower than the Google search mobile majority of 95% (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). Spotify’s app is designed perfectly for mobile, with a high focus on social aspects and integrations with Facebook, Instagram, and Google Maps as explored in sections above. All of these integrations matter to Google’s mobile-friendly algorithm. And the website has a simplistic, minimalist approach that should facilitate a short loading time (no images and scarce text), but more on that in later sections. The homepage does have a song insert that links to the web player, which may decrease loading speed and harm mobile ranking, however. Removing this built-in listening might be helpful, although because it is a redirect link it shouldn’t be too much of an issue.

**7) Rankbrain:** Probably my favorite algorithm title, Rankbrain added to Hummingbird (which added semantic search understanding) by improving context clue analysis (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). Online tools like Website Auditor’s TF-IDF can help evaluate how well a website is able to be understood based on its content. Building off of the keyword discussion on Hummingbird, I wanted to mention that a potential SEO challenge dealing with semantic searches and context-sensitive queries: Spotify’s app and web player content contains audio files, which can’t be ‘listened to’ by the ‘spiders’ that index the page content to make them searchable. Although audio files have artist name and titles, a possible development for Spotify would be to include a lyric transcription in the html of the song files so that the ‘spider’s are able to include lyrics in their indexing process: that way a person can search for a song with certain lyrics even if they don’t remember the artist or title, and it will appear on Spotify. Having released music on Spotify, it is not part of the upload process to include a lyric transcription.

**8) Fred:** Fred is the first of the person-named algorithms: designed to catch websites like promotional sites and blogs written by a company to promote their links or make money off of ads. This algorithm is highly relevant to advertisers, particularly marketers who are hired to write promotional blog content. These practices violate Google’s Webmaster Guidelines (Rosenkrans, 2020). Reading the published Google Search Quality Guidelines will help improve and understanding of Fred (Rosenkrans, 2020). Fred is very relevant to Spotify’s homepage, which as discussed in the Panda section is overly promotional in the first headline, which pressures the viewer to try a premium subscription. Because this promotion is on the brand website itself and

not some kind of promotional blog or link trap, it will probably not be affected too negatively by the Fred algorithm. However, the optimizers working for Spotify should have already checked to see if their promotional homepage checks out.

**9) BERT:** Bert is the most recent update. He's a Natural Language Processing algorithm which better understand the way that humans phrase what they mean, building off of the semantic searches (Kahn, 2020) which were the target of Hummingbird and Rankbrain. BERT stands for Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers. (Nayak, 2019) In layman's terms, transformers are so named because they indicate the process of how words used together in a sentence change the meaning of a specific word. It's all about context clues which humans use frequently in speech, but which machines are still being taught to understand. The goal is once again to understand intent. As was discussed in Hummingbird, Spotify must thoroughly understand the ways that searches combine specific artist names which are difficult to turn into keywords with phrases like 'music by' or 'listen to'. Building off of this concept, BERT focuses on context clues and strange ways to structure a sentence. For example, someone could search "where to find dope Indie rock band at concert in LA" which is a very convoluted sentence with a lot of context clues, including locational context clues. By using geographic understanding and finding a way to track what artists (who have music on Spotify) are performing in which locations at certain times, Spotify could foreseeable provide enough data for BERT to piece together the clues given in the search to actually find the name and Spotify profile of the artist that the user was trying to find. By matching context, location, and data from Spotify's app with BERT's context abilities, Spotify can even provide top results for a query like "listen to coachella lineup". You'd think that using the keyword Coachella would link exclusively to the massive music event's website or perhaps a press release, but Spotify was actually able to get a *Coachella 2020 Lineup Playlist* on Spotify as the first listing.



(Google, 2020)

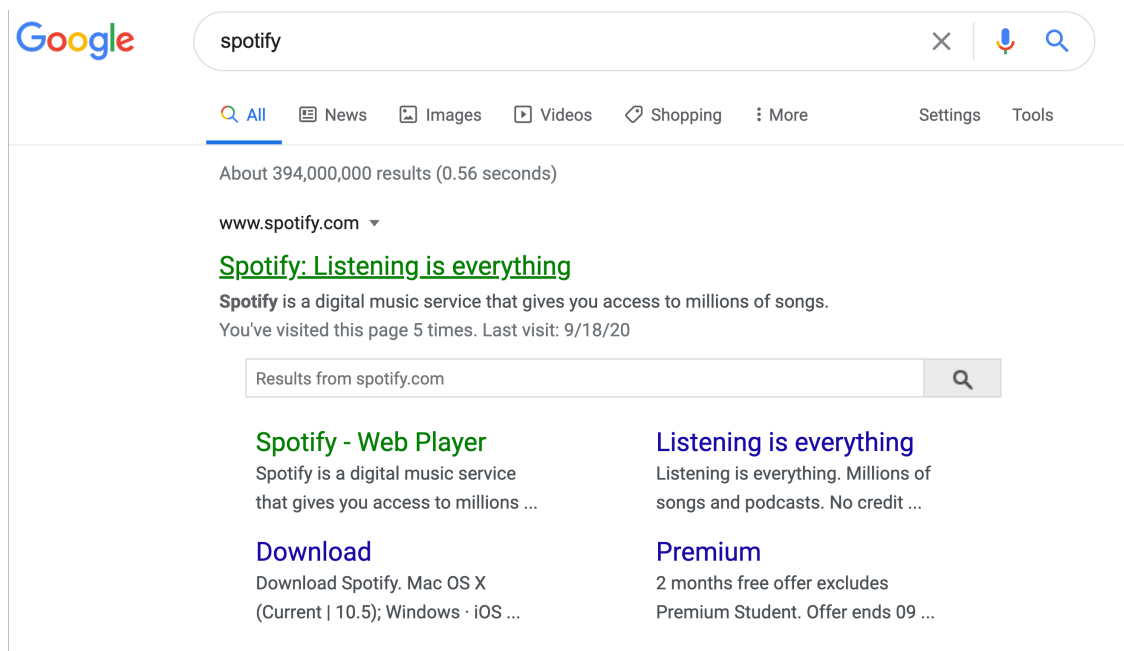
# Possible Keywords

**music searches:** music by, listen to, music download

**music for a purpose:** music for sleep, family, spotify zoom, spotify zoom integration, gaming headphones, spotify jobs, gaming music (keywordtool.io, 2020), car ride, directions to, driving

**subscription searches:** students, spotify family, spotify college, spotify gift card, spotify versus youtube music (keywordtool.io, 2020).

# Search Tests

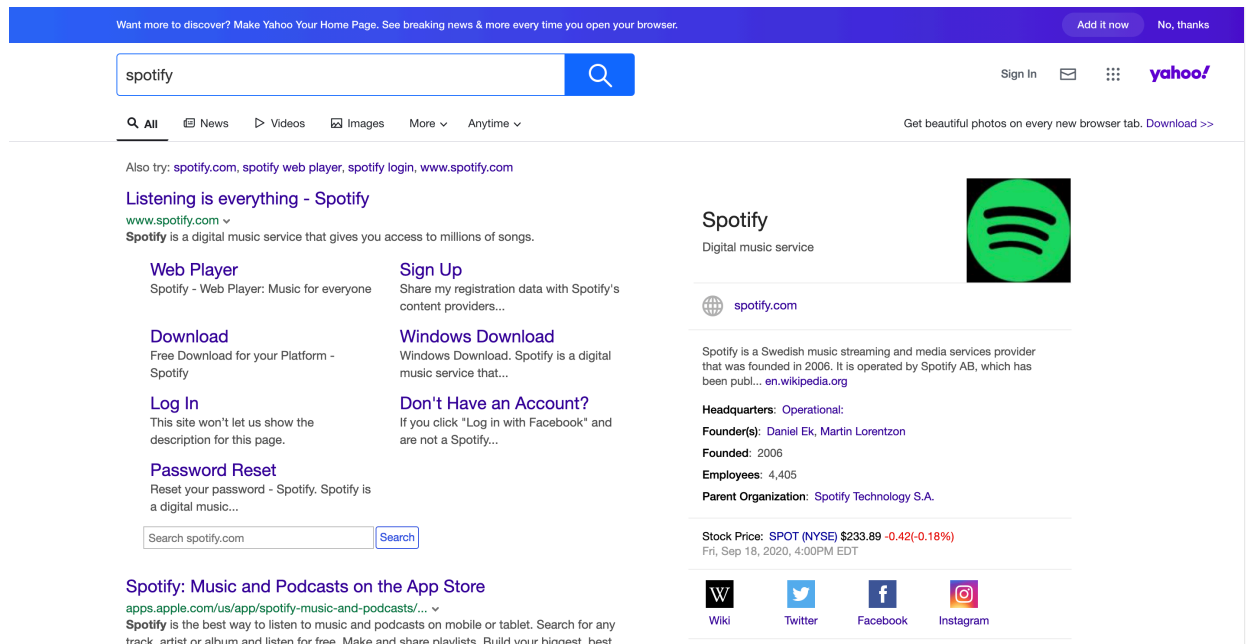


(Google, 2020)

Spotify is the first listing on Google. It's not an ad, but I can't tell if it's paid or organic.

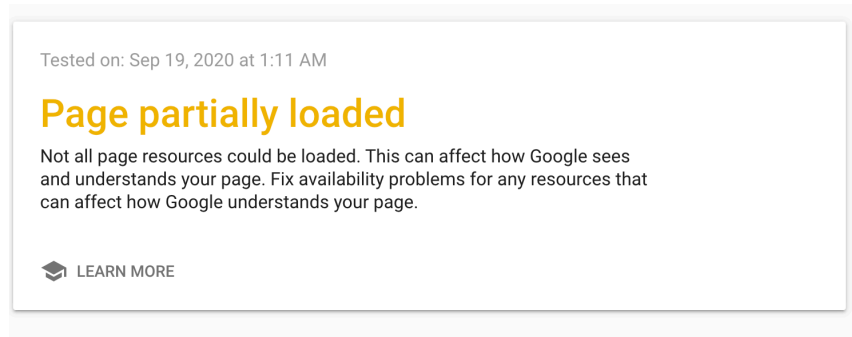
(Yahoo, 2020)





Spotify is the first listing on Yahoo. Likewise, it's not an ad, but I can't tell if it's paid or organic. A prestigious, stable, and widely known brand like Spotify is clearly going to be the first search result.

The site is mobile-friendly according to Google's Mobile Friendly Test (Mobile-Friendly Test, 2020). However, the page could only partially be loaded (there were 19 unloadable items), and among the items that couldn't be loaded were html functions that seemed to be broken, multiple links to Pinterest which didn't work, and a connection to a printer which could not be established (Mobile-Friendly Test, 2020). A bare minimum and easy SEO effort to improve the website would be to find the broken Pinterest links and remove them.



(Mobile-Friendly Test, 2020)

According to the mobile test provided by Think With Google, the page needs improvement. The site speed is 2.8 seconds on a 4G connection. A movement speed of 2.5 seconds is a good goal - the site is below the 4 second cap fortunately (Think With Google, 2020). The site hasn't changed within the last month: regular updates might improve SERP.

Your speed results for spotify.com ⓘ

**Your mobile site speed is 2.8 seconds in United States - on a 4G - connection.**

#### RATING

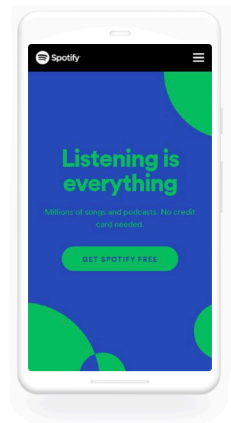
**Needs improvement**

Needs improvement sites start to load in 2.5 to 4 seconds.  
[Learn more](#)

#### MONTHLY TREND

**No Change**

Your site speed has not changed since last month.  
[Learn more](#)



(Think With Google, 2020)

I downloaded the web developer's report and understood some of the most important issues with the site: 1) there are multiple page redirects. This means that the links don't work correctly, they are either redirecting because the original link doesn't lead to a page any more (maybe the pinterest links analyzed in the Mobile-Friendly Test?) or maybe the link is programmed to jump to another link instead of only using one direct link. These interpretations are my best guess based on what I understand of how html works. 2) Javascript content is taking up more time and space in the html code than it should: in fact there is extra Javascript written which does nothing. Finding which Javascript is unnecessary with some additional tools could fix this problem. 3) no theme color is assigned for the address bar: to fix this, I would have to research where the theme color exists on the html document which is something I could do with limited knowledge and a few instructional videos. 4) Page load not fast enough for mobile. This issue is probably caused by the extra java script or, 5) page styling and rendering resources are delaying the visibility of fonts and visual elements. Think With Google recommends checking to see which visual elements are actually important, and removing some of them. I suspect that images or rich elements like the web browser song displays are causing this issue (Think With Google, 2020).

## SEO Analysis Summary

In addition to the practical fixes introduced in the above two paragraphs with Think With Google and Mobile-Friendly Test, the following advice can be distilled from the analysis so far:

- 1) Campaign aggressively to generate social media likes rather than reach or impressions, because Google's quantum computer AI is rumored to take social media 'likes' into account when weighing searches (Kahn, 2020).

- 2) Add more relevant content in text form to the website, in case the website is currently too reliant on good backlinks, because Google's quantum computer AI is predicted to prioritize relevancy of content over backlinks unlike the current BERT setup (Kahn, 2020).
- 3) Create marketing campaigns which advertise a music app in a video format because Google's next algorithm is going to further prioritize video content (Kahn, 2020), in addition to many social media sites prioritizing video content of at least 3 minutes, such as Facebook. Think of imaginative creatives that combine a music app with video.
- 4) Continue to develop and stay cutting edge with Spotify's song map algorithm (Business of Ads, 2020) because, according to my beliefs and advice in my academic experience so far, the internet is likely to become more and more of a personalized environment as the decade advances. Keeping Spotify's famous algorithm a step ahead, and perhaps combining it with Google's search algorithms in the future could help deliver incisively personalized search results based on Spotify music content.
- 5) To satisfy the Panda algorithm's quality and relevancy requirements, I strongly believe that Spotify's homepage needs to have more text content which explains what the brand is and does. Minimalist is great, but a headline that is overtly promotional of the Premium subscription is not going to rank well for SERP.
- 6) On the homepage, add more elements to the top navigation rather than the footer navigation so that the different pages are more salient, and provide a user experience that funnels viewers to the subscription, account, and web player pages more gradually, rather than having an overtly promotional front-end of the site structure.
- 7) From what I can tell, Spotify has a really effective keyword system which satisfy's the algorithm Humming Bird's semantic search structure: conduct further research if necessary to see exactly what turns of the phrase users will search, and what words are combined with a Spotify artist name to yield a successful listing.
- 8) To give google's indexing 'spiders' more content information for to yield Spotify search results, consider including an html text transcription or database of song lyrics for each Spotify song that has words, so that the 'spiders' can understand the song lyrics, and yield Spotify results even when a user types in key lyrics to listen to a song, even if they don't remember the song name or artist. I think this process, although time consuming, could have incredible implications. I tested a couple lyric searches on Google, and the YouTube version of the song is always the first result (Google, 2020). Spotify is listed in the same 'card', indicating that lyric searches are a special form of google search, however the point still stands that YouTube is a major threat to Spotify, because many people listen to music on YouTube that they can't find on Spotify. Furthermore, it's likely that YouTube is the first result (perhaps generating links to other apps like Spotify) because YouTube has lyric transcription files as part of its upload studio. Spotify lacks this, and should make it part of the upload process for songs that have lyrics (and even podcasts).



- 9) The Fred algorithm (Zahay, Robert, 2018) might damage Spotify's SERP because of the promotional homepage headline, and immediate premium trial button, combined with minimal other content on the homepage with which to dilute this promotional content.
- 10) Spotify already does this fairly well, but it should continue to develop location-sensitive searches, such as a search for a music group at an event in a certain city without any artist or song information that yields the intended artist on Spotify. With developments in BERT which improved Google's ability to understand context clues (Kahn, 2020), this method could become an effective way to connect artists and listeners.







# SEO



# ch. 11

## CPC & Paid SEO

Paid search advertising involves 1) CPC advertising and 2) paid SEO. CPC search advertising enters an ad with a definite word limit into the bidding process to have text ads appear above the organic search results, and a click on this ad will cost the advertiser money, scaled based on how competitive the bid was (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). Paid SEO advertising involves boosting the organic search result of a website by investing ad dollars into a separate bidding process, but there is no cost for a click (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). Google Adwords is an example of CPC search advertising, where keywords are bid upon for the ad spots (Zahay, Roberts, 2018).

An eMarketer report on what types of industries were receiving a change of ad spending this quarter showed that for Retail&consumer goods (the category which best fit Spotify's product) was up 11% on paid search ad spending, up 42% on clicks, and down 28% of CPC (eMarketer, 2020). In fact, the only category that reported a positive growth for CPC was B2B advertising, which functions very differently from Spotify's probable goal of either driving app downloads, increasing the number of app visitors (including the recent emphasis on marketing podcasts on Spotify), increasing consumer brand awareness, or increasing premium memberships. Although data showing that spending is down this quarter for CPC does not necessarily mean that Spotify should not invest in CPC, it does show a correlation that it might not be the most efficient use of ad dollars because others in a similar category of industry are not spending in this area. A reason for this could be that companies in the retail / consumer goods category simply is making less money over all and cannot spend more on a budget, or current business closings could be eliminating the need to advertise products at all because sales are halted for some industries. However, another reason could be that marketers are viewing CPC as less favorable for their goals nowadays, and the composition of ad budgets may be changing in the next few years to include less CPC advertising. The data does not show, but other data will confirm my suspicion that CPC should not compose a large chunk of the ad budget.



# Digital Media Trends

Another recent eMarketer report interviewed a sample of marketing experts to ask about what types of digital media are 1) most effective, and 2) have the greatest portion of the budget allocated. The sample size consisted of 51% C-suite owners, 19% non-management professionals, and 29% VP/ Director/Owner level marketers (eMarketer, 2020). The breakdown of this group's strategy recommendations was a highest amount of social media budget allocation (54%), and the highest amount go social media effectiveness rating (55%). CPC was rated the second lowest in both budget allocation and recommendation, composing only 17% in both. Paid SEO was 43% recommended, and represented 51% of the budget allocation (eMarketer, 2020). This report indicates that professionals right now are recommending a smaller amount of budget and lower effectiveness for CPC search advertising. The data continues to confirm my suspicion in the article above, that CPC is not a good choice for the client. Paid SEO and social media advertising are both recommended choices by professionals interviewed.

## Google Paid Search Growth Metrics in North America, by Industry, Q2 2020

% change vs. Q2 2019

	Ad spending	Clicks	CPC
B2B	8%	-4%	13%
Financial services	1%	41%	-28%
Retail & consumer goods	11%	42%	-22%
Nonprofit	-5%	11%	-14%
Travel	-47%	-34%	-20%

*Note: based on campaigns analyzed by Merkle, broader industry metrics may vary*

*Source: Merkle, "Digital Marketing Report - Q2 2020," July 28, 2020*

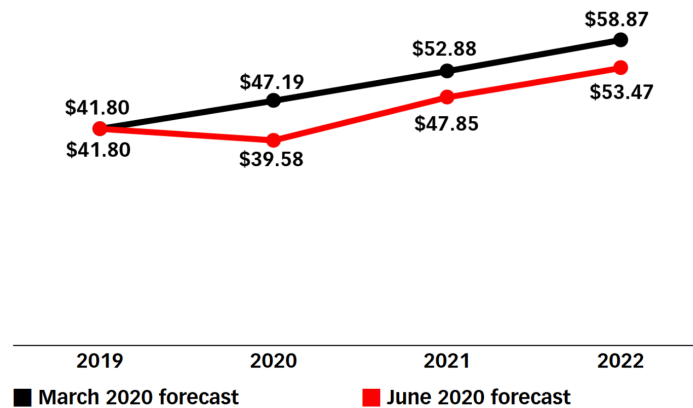
257554

www.eMarketer.com

(eMarketer, 2020)

A third article has a broader scope, looking at the first ever dip in Google ad revenues. Revenues projected for the end of the year is a 2 billion dollar decrease from last year, over almost 8 billion less than what was projected in March. Google's first ever dip is probably coronavirus related: but it confirms that advertisers are spending less on Google, including both CPC and SEO dollars.

**How Has the Forecast for Net Google Ad Revenues in the US Changed? 2019-2022**  
*billions, March 2020 vs. June 2020*



(eMarketer, 2020)

## Social Media

Upon a review of these three reports, it is concluded that CPC advertising is not the most efficient use of ad dollars for Spotify. Paid SEO is always a good place to put ad dollars, but it is important to remember that Spotify's product is an app: which does not necessarily require a visit to the website. ~90% of Spotify's revenue comes from Premium subscriptions (Perez, 2020), so it may be important to capitalize on funneling consumers to the free version of Spotify, have them try the product, then upgrade to premium: the point is, funneling consumers to the Website (where the premium upgrade happens) with obscure search terms doesn't have to be the priority, since ads should often drive to free version downloads instead. Besides accruing app downloads, Spotify has historically also pointed consumers towards playlists and podcasts (Hanlon, Chaffey, 2020). CPC is not the best way to get app downloads or promote playlists: the purpose of CPC is to funnel consumers to a website where they can buy/learn about a product or service: if CPC ads don't drive conversions, they are more expensive than they are effective and create a deficit ROI. Rather, display ads and social media ads would be a better fit for Spotify, because a 'download app' button or a link to an applicable Spotify playlist could be used in a campaign.

Social media is a great fit for a product. Check out the 'Timeline / Budget' heading far above. Expanding upon the points and budget amounts already explored there, the current Coronavirus season presents a unique opportunity for certain industry segments. According to an eMarketer article, social media advertising in 2020 Q2 and beyond is defined by a vastly reduced CPC for advertising: because many businesses are shut down which would otherwise compete for bids (such as bars and gyms), leaving a lower demand for businesses which are still open and would have a reason to advertise (like a digital app such as Spotify) (eMarketer, 2020). Facebook CPM fell by a staggering 50% in march, although Snapchat was stunted in march but has since made up for it in grown (eMarketer). Technology, telecom, and consumer packaged goods

continued the same level of ad spending, because their products are still safe with a remote lifestyle / still open or necessary: Spotify being represented in the technology category (eMarketer, 2020). eMarketer predicts that CPM will remain lower throughout Q2, normalizing in Q3 if businesses continue to open (eMarketer), so far some businesses have opened but because of increasing cases and political climate, it is likely that the pandemic's effects on closures will continue for a while more.

Furthermore, social media use has dramatically increased during the pandemic. In Q1, 50.8% of U.S. adults spent more time on social media, with 49.7% of that population spending a dramatic 1-3 hours more on social media, with a 17.9% spending a staggering +3 hours on social media (eMarketer). This bizarre increased usage is another contributing factor to the low CPM across most social media networks. Other important social media changes during the pandemic is the prevalence of livestream content watching (+28% in US and UK) (eMarketer, 2020), with 58.8% of Americans watching more live-streamed content like YouTube more during the pandemic. YouTube is used by 81% of Gen Z during the pandemic, with an equal percentage on Instagram, as pictured below (eMarketer). All this data, showing the prevalence of Instagram and Youtube support the social media spending decisions established above in the 'Timeline / Budget' section.

<b>Platforms/Methods Used by US Gen Z vs. Adult Internet Users for Social Connection During the Coronavirus Pandemic, May 2020</b>		
<i>% of respondents</i>		
	<b>Gen Z</b>	<b>Total</b>
YouTube	81%	54%
Text messaging	81%	72%
Instagram	68%	34%
Snapchat	60%	21%
TikTok	45%	16%
Facetime	52%	35%
Zoom	50%	28%
Facebook	37%	60%
Facebook Messenger	30%	49%
<i>Note: Gen Z ages 13-23; all adults ages 18+; "often" and "sometimes"</i> <i>Source: Morning Consult, "How COVID-19 Is Changing Gen Z's Worldview,"</i> <i>eMarketer calculations, June 22, 2020</i>		
256699	www.eMarketer.com	

(eMarketer, 2020)

A final note from eMarketer is that brand loyalty built during the pandemic season will last after the pandemic: making it a perfect time for brands who are still open to spend more on ads during the pandemic to surpass competition (eMarketer). Social media is an excellent place to spend more on because CPM is much cheaper, and people are on more social media than ever in quarantine.



## Instagram Ad



image from [pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com/photo/achievement-activity-adolescent-arms-347135/): <https://www.pexels.com/photo/achievement-activity-adolescent-arms-347135/>

Here's an example instagram ad (1080 x 1080) using Spotify's font (proximo novo), and their branding style of having a really long and specific headline, which I talked about in earlier sections. The headline references a niche playlist on Spotify, in following with the campaign I've already started. Again: it is vaguely fitness-themed, and follows a style which fits Spotify's historical ads. This ad directs users to the Spotify app because it references a Spotify podcast in a clever way, without a tone that is overly promotional. The target audience fits Instagram: Gen Z, female (eMarketer, 2020). The style is purposefully meant to include a similar large headline with a lot of words. The purpose is to have a very personal, understanding tone (like a friend talking) just like their historical campaign towards Millennials which was very successful (Gorbach, 2018), while instead targeting Gen-Z with a more positive and upbeat tone to expand the user base to the next rising generation.

# Mobile



# ch. 12 - 13

## Mobile Strategy



(Zahay, Roberts, 2018)

**Design:** follow branding guidelines here: <https://developer.spotify.com/branding-guidelines/> (Spotify, 2020). These guidelines are authored by Spotify, and although it isn't the set of guidelines for marketing, these guidelines are designed for developers who want to add Spotify integration within their site. So it's a good starting point, and the best public information I could find.

Colors: #1DB954 (Spotify Green), white, and black.



**User experience:** buttons (in Spotify Green) that direct users to the app. Follows branding guidelines mentioned above.

**Customer journey:** Mobile content is designed to 1) catch the user's attention, 2) direct the user directly to the Spotify app, 3) through a link to a specific playlist, artist, or album. It's not exactly about app downloads (a lot of people already have the app downloaded), it's about getting users to visit the app weekly or monthly, so that if they are more likely to retain their premium membership if they have one.

**Mobile Content:** A campaign that features obscure 'up-in-coming' artists, with pictures of them and links to their newest albums. This will be on Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, and maybe with short interview videos of the same content on YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, possibly crossing over on Facebook as well.

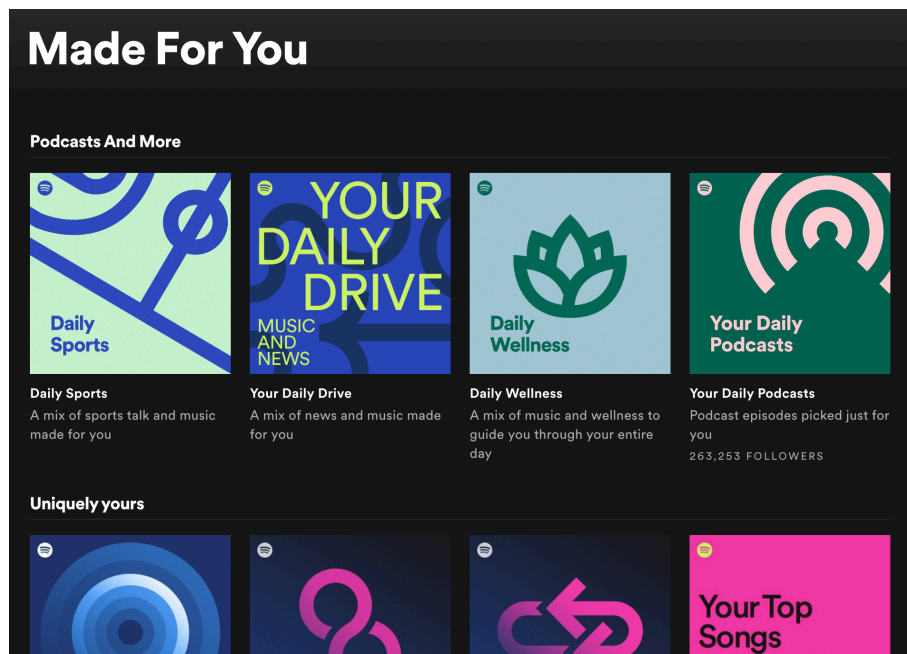
**Mobile Advertising:** Creatives will highlight a podcast related to fitness with the images & copy, linking to that podcast. Different tones of ads will be curated for different target segments: 1) Women 18-45 highly invested on social media (defined as those who follow fitness influencers and brands on social media), 2) Women 13-30 who are moderately invested on social media (following a few influencers or beginner fitness pages), 3) Men 18-45 highly invested on social media in fitness, 4) Men 13-30 who are moderately invested. These ads will be run on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, as well as some banner advertisements (especially on fitness sites, e-commerce hubs, tutorials, and blogs).

**Local Opportunities:** Sponsorships and advertising (of the same content topics and audiences in the Mobile Advertising section) can be promoted through the LA Marathon next year, because marathon runners would be drawn to podcasts since they keep the mind active while running for a long time (it gets boring, even with music). OOH advertising around the beach (where a lot of fitness activities occur) such as decals in the beach bathrooms, commissioned street art around the Santa Monica Promenade, professional chalk drawings around the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and maybe even some kind of birds-eye-view sand art on Zuma Beach and the Santa Monica Pier would enhance the message and frequency while potentially receiving WOM and PR.

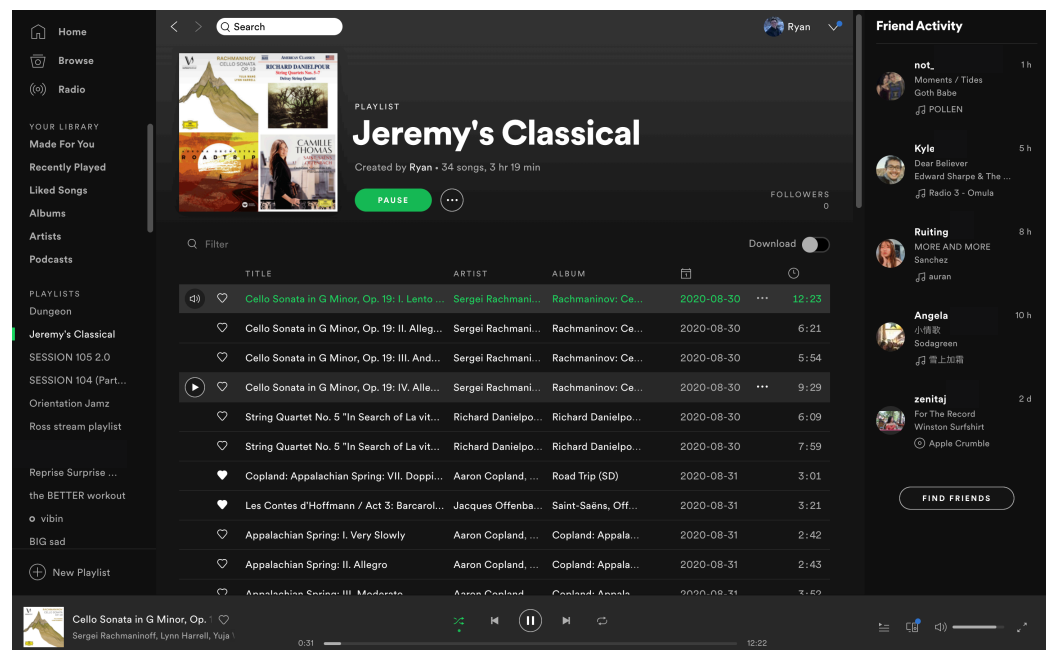
**Social:** Spotify could consider partnering with fitness influencers. Normally I am skeptical of using influencers for campaigns (most of the time it's probably a waste of money), but fitness influencers are more powerful (Dibiase, 2020) and have a different relationship with their followers: one that encourages them as well as shows them new techniques and products. The campaign is simple: influencers would be asked to share what podcasts or playlists they listen to while working out. The content should be authentic. If an influencer doesn't listen to a podcast/playlist on Spotify, they simply won't be included in the campaign.

# App Design

Here are a couple screenshots from the app:



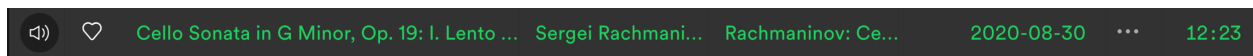
[above] (Spotify, 2020), [below] (Spotify, 2020)



**Design:** The first page shows what it looks like to play a song from a playlist on the app. The second page shows the ‘made for you’ page where podcasts, songs, and playlists are recommended to you by Spotify’s algorithm,

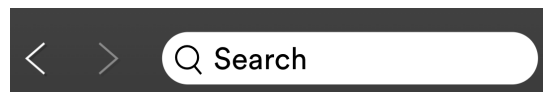
**Improve the design:** My biggest suggestion is to include more of Spotify’s brand color (1DB954) within the app, and to integrate the logo in the app more.

- 1) Anywhere that medium gray is used (535353), replace it with Spotify Green: such as turning the scrolling bars green, and highlighting the current song playing in green rather than medium gray. The reason for this is that there are 3 different grays and a white on the app (not including the background color). The darkest gray (282828) is used to gently highlight whatever song the mouse is hovering over, as well as the bottom song play bar. The middle gray mentioned (535353) is used for the scroll bars and to highlight the current song playing. The lightest gray is the most widely used (B2B2B2) because most of the text is in this color, as well as icons and navigation buttons. Finally, white is used for headings and important text. The use of 3 different grays is not necessary, instead the middle gray should be replaced by Spotify Green to enhance the brand image within the app.
- 2) I think the logo should be implemented more. Here’s a screenshot of the song playing:



(Spotify, 2020). Pay attention to the leftmost icon showing a speaker. This icon indicates that the song is playing within the playlist (different from the bottom song play bar, which has play/pause clickable controls). This icon could be replaced with an animated Spotify logo. I can imagine something like the logo dissolving and reforming to provide a little visual movement, or maybe the logo could have a fun animation where the logo turns into a decibel levels graph animation to show that sound is playing, or even the logo could do a simple spin. These animations would give it more life and emphasize the logo.

(Spotify, 2020)



- 3) The search bar at the top of the page is fine. I would suggest changing it to a dark theme (dark gray search button background with white ‘Search’ text and icon) to match the rest of the page. Nowhere else in the app has a light theme except for this isolated search bar. It might also be helpful to design it bigger, because this tiny bar is the most convenient way to search for songs, artists, and playlists in the app. If it was larger and had more negative space within the search bar, it would be easier to find.

(Spotify, 2020)

FOLLOWERS

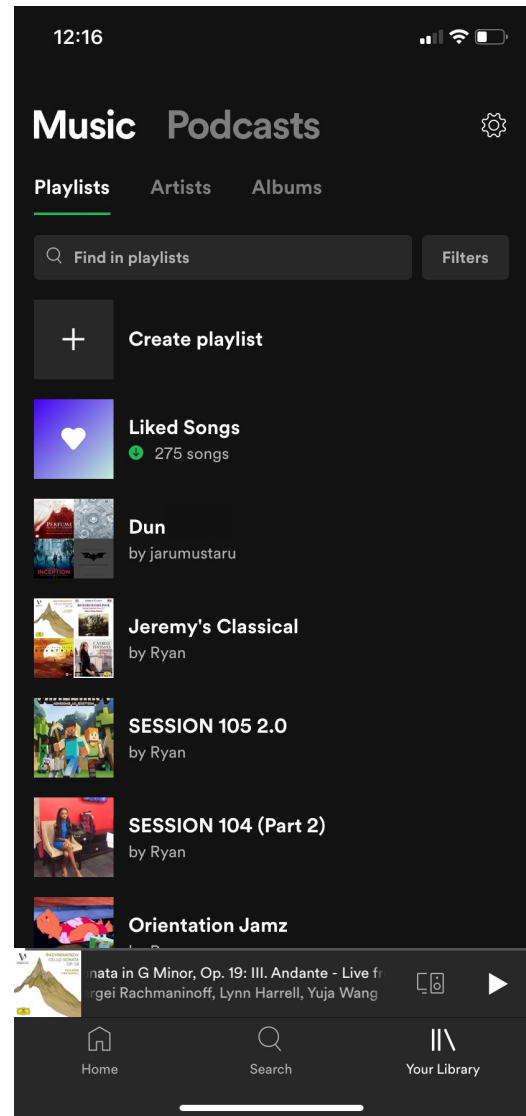
- 4) This follower tag above the playlist is one of the few places within the app where it is in all caps. It sticks out a little bit, but it does have a nice look.



# Mobile App Design

## Textbook Analysis:

- 1) **Content:** According to the textbook, content should be planned carefully to include enough content as appropriate for the limited space, and it should be organized so that users don't have to go back and forth too much between screens (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). The app does this effectively, with the three-tab layout at the top, and a scrollable playlist menu. I'm unsure as to whether or not putting Music / Podcast as the header is an effective use of space.
- 2) **Usability Elements:** Buttons, navigation, links should help users find their way around, but content should always be the priority (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). The navigation is well calculated, with a top navigation (Music, Podcasts, Playlists, Artists, Albums, settings) for content and a bottom navigation (Home, Search, Your Library). It's a good layout: I think the labels on the bottom navigation are overkill (just the icons would be clear enough and use less space). I like the search bar at the top. In the song play menu, there is a device icon to show which speaker the song is playing on. I would replace this with an ellipsis that pulls up a menu to share or change the speaker, to de-clutter the buttons and increase the sharing convenience.
- 3) **Scrolling:** The textbook recommends setting up 'tables of contents and avoiding long scrolling (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). The top and bottom navigations provide a pretty good structure, so there is no more that can be improved here.
- 4) **Lists:** The textbook criticizes "listicles", referring to a recommendation not to include details with content and to allow for secondary pages to meet those needs (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). This app does a satisfactory job: the point of Spotify is to provide a song library, so content lists are inherently unavoidable. One possible recommendation is to simplify the song play button near the bottom, which has a ticker-tape style list of the song title and contributing artists. In the screenshot above, I'm playing a classical piece of music, meaning that the song



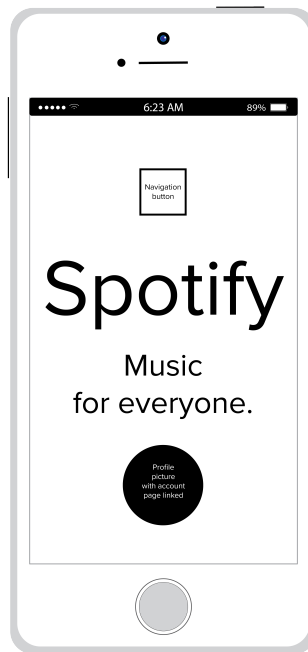
titles are notoriously long because they contain movement and opus information so it looks more cluttered than it might for other listeners. But the list of contributing artists could be simplified visually somehow. It's difficult because the artist is very important song information. Maybe the small album picture on this song play button could be redacted to allow more space for the song title and artist list: and it would decrease the visual complexity because the album thumbnail intersects with the content above it.

- 5) **Simple:** The app content is already very simplified, but if true simplicity is the goal, all navigation could be condensed into a single navigation item. Again, because Spotify is a music library, it is difficult to simplify song lists because that is the product: however navigation pages could be created for each type of content (like a podcast navigation page), with the actual song lists relegated to a sub page.
- 6) **GPS:** Spotify does not need a store locator, however there could be an integration with 'Maps' or 'Google Maps' within Spotify, to allow drivers or navigators to manage Spotify and directions inside the app, without having to switch windows. Integration already exists where the song can be skipped within 'Google Maps', but having users on the Spotify App itself allows for individual song choice and playlist switching, with the directions as an afterthought.
- 7) **CTAs:** Spotify already does this: if you try to do something that is a premium feature, such as download a song or skip an ad, the app will have the buttons available but remind you with a CTA to get a premium account.
- 8) **Click and collect payment:** Payments are handled on the website, I don't see a problem with this.

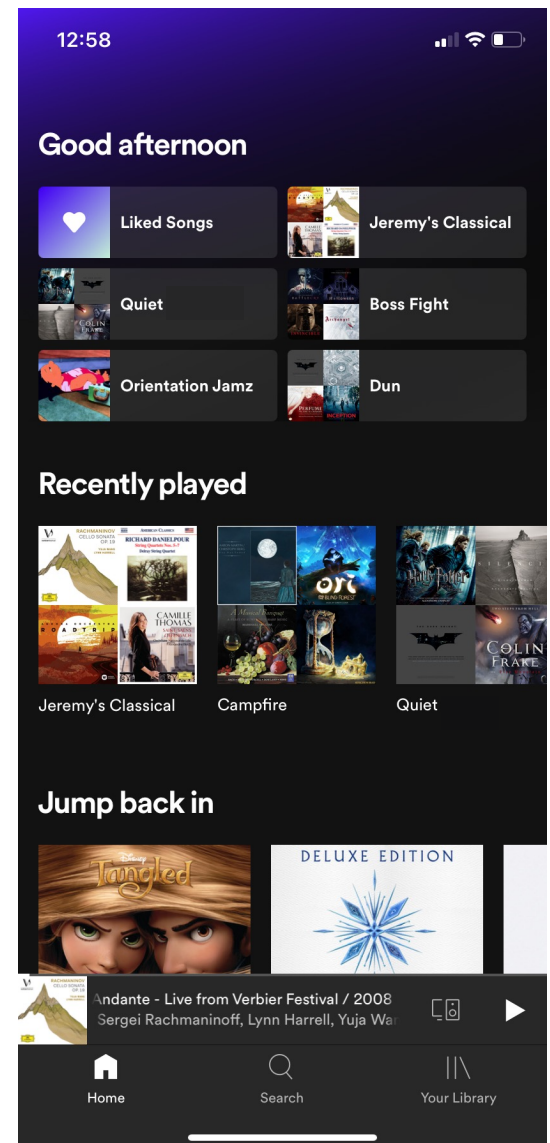
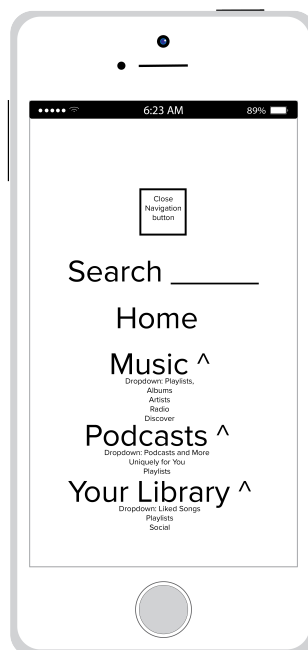
# Re-design Wireframe Homepage

**Re-designed Homepage:** A simple navigation button pulls up a navigation interface (pictured on the second screen). Spotify is title-sized positioned in the upper 3rd proportioned with the golden ratio. Below is some kind of tagline such as “Music for everyone” like their website title. Below that is a profile picture which links to account and subscription information. This design keeps it sleek and simple, with very limited text and a focus on the brand and the user.

**Current Homepage:** This homepage focuses way too much on content over structure. For example, how is ‘Good afternoon’ a helpful heading, the first thing that is read on the home page. The color gradient at the top is blue: why is it not the brand green color? There is way too much text, and way too many playlists to click on: it looks more like a spreadsheet than a homepage. The advantage of this layout is that the music play button is already at the bottom, so the user does not have to navigate before throwing the most recently played song on. Image comes from the app: (Spotify, 2020).



Navigation menu:





# Online & Offline Funnel Strategies

## Online channels:

1) Implement an **in-app Spotify song player on Zoom**, so that songs can be played for the entire zoom room with high-quality stereo sound. That way, Spotify can become an interactive component for online work and learning, and it may expand exposure. This campaign all depends on negotiations with Zoom. If Zoom is open to the idea in the first place, the cost shouldn't be overly expensive because it enriches the Zoom experience in the first place.

2) Challenge Redditors (through advertising on the site and content creation) to compile a **list of the most bizarre and obscure Spotify podcasts**. Redditors represent a very specific demographic of educated white young men who are less active on other social channels, and react very negatively to advertising (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). By focusing on compiling a list of this demographic's favorite content, it will increase the amount of sharing and exposure to podcasts among this hard to reach but highly involved community. All of this content would be connected to a /rSpotifyPodcast entry. I also have a suspicion that Redditors are highly resistant to purchasing a premium subscription because although they seem to hate ads, I predict that they also hate spending money on memberships. By showing that Spotify isn't just a mainstream platform and has highly unique and niche content through this campaign, it might increase Premium memberships in this difficult demographic. This campaign would be relatively inexpensive, because 1) posting content on Reddit is free, 2) advertising on Reddit is avoided by many brands (Zahay, Roberts, 2018), and 3) Large amounts of content are generated not through ads but through Redditors commenting on these ads, making it an eWOM type of campaign.

3) I mentioned above that partnering with **fitness influencers** on social media to share they playlists and song choices authentically would be a great way to build discussion and funnel listeners to Spotify, especially in combination with fitness activity. Read about the details above.

4) What about designing capabilities within the Spotify app for an academic environment? For example, Google has a separate Google Scholar browser which is designed for research in academic institutions and careers. Similarly, Spotify could show an academic side that teachers and students could use for classroom work and homework: mainly I'm thinking of the classical music or music production environment. Although classical musicians and enthusiasts are a small segment of the population, they are a fiercely loyal group to music and have high professional standards. Spotify could present a more professional side with a different version of the Spotify app called **Spotify Academia**. This sub-app would be customized for the interest and learning of the user: for example, someone could specify that they play cello, and Spotify would curate playlists of the most essential cello music (with program information and maybe score links), cello songs by the age, podcasts about innovation in cello technique and orchestration, and maybe even podcast series which teach music theory step-by-step with song examples. Or, if a user was interested in electronic music production, playlists that teach song layering, explore

innovation and trends in pop music, podcasts on DJing or music business, or listening examples to figure out different mixing styles by genre would help unlock specific information for the user. Teachers could use Spotify Academia to assign work, and the highly professional streaming platform feel designed for education is something that does not exist. This app design would be fairly cheap: the costs include 1) promotions through SEO and awareness advertising, and 2) a lot of work generating enough content for Spotify Academia, and 3) some work coding and designing the functions of this sub-app.

### Offline channels:

1) I mentioned above some kind of sponsorship with the **LA marathon** next year to promote podcasts for runners already, read about the details above.

2) A street art and sidewalk art challenge to ‘**illustrate**’ **how a song would look visually** would be beautifully captivating in outdoor spaces and create great PR. Spotify could sponsor visual artists in urban spaces to create colorful and innovative depictions of sound with physical art. This would function somewhat like innovative OOH advertising through artist sponsorship, with the goal of generating PR, social media attention on the images, and creating brand awareness within urban spaces. Because Spotify is an exclusively digital product, I think that physical manifestations of the brand like this are hugely important. And besides, I want to see how a chalk artist would depict my favorite songs on my walk to the grocery store. This method would be fairly cheap: money would have to go into 1) some promotional advertising, but mostly free social media content and relying on WOM and eWOM of others, 2) sponsorship dollars to pay artists, and 3) potentially having to pay for wall space or sidewalk space, although free locations can be found.

3) Spotify already does some concerts, but there need to be more sponsored events. Think about the many festivals that radio stations pull together, and how wildly popular they are. Spotify should make this a priority: once again, to give physical ties to a non-physical product. Ticket sales would pay for the event and make a profit, and because Spotify is a titan music consumption brand, many people would be interested in events. **Sponsoring obscure local artists to perform in smaller settings** like coffee shops and outdoor spaces could be a great low-cost grassroots campaign that would increase reach to potentially unreached market segments. **Large-scale concert festivals** would be able to charge very expensive ticket prices, and create a lot of buzz about the event. All this would increase the connection of Spotify’s brand image to the physical world, and drive traffic to the app. One major issue that Spotify has been facing recently is the retention of Subscriptions long-term. The conversion rate is fine, but getting people to listen weekly or monthly and keep paying for Premium routinely is a challenge (Perez, 2020). By having enough concerts around certain areas (at least 2 a year), it should help remind people to maintain their memberships by 1) presenting innovative artists during the event, and encouraging users to look them up after the concert, 2) reminding people that Spotify’s brand is relevant to their lives and is actively changing and acquiring new music, and 3) requiring users to have a premium account in order to go to these concerts. The cost is highly scalable: sponsoring obscure local artists in smaller settings would be very cheap, but it would

have a low exposure: it would be a great way to test out the idea more cheaply. A large-scale event would almost definitely generate a profit through ticket sales. Costs would be venue, equipment, and talent: but if budgeted right there should be a large chunk of income to compensate for it: with some risk.



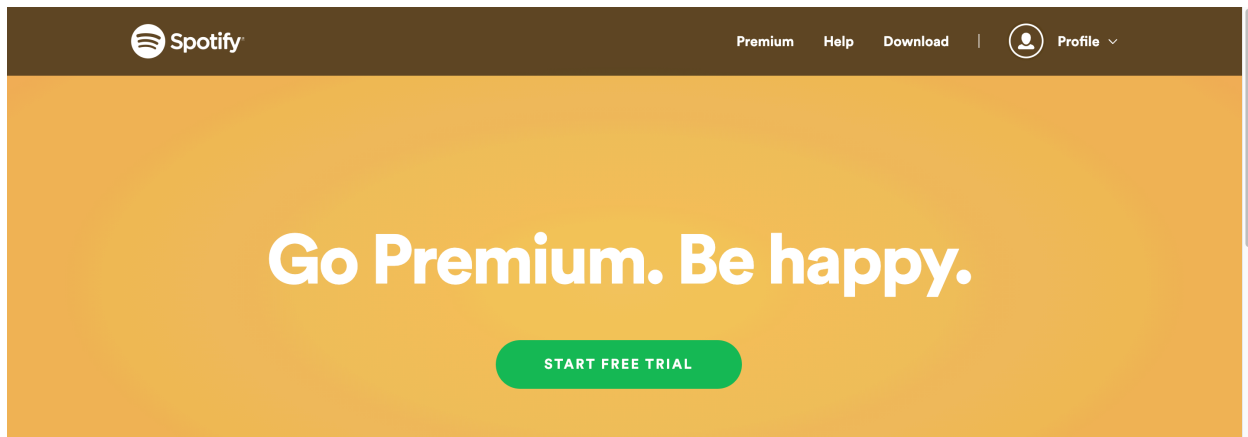




# Relationship, Usability, Service, & Privacy

# ch. 14 - 17

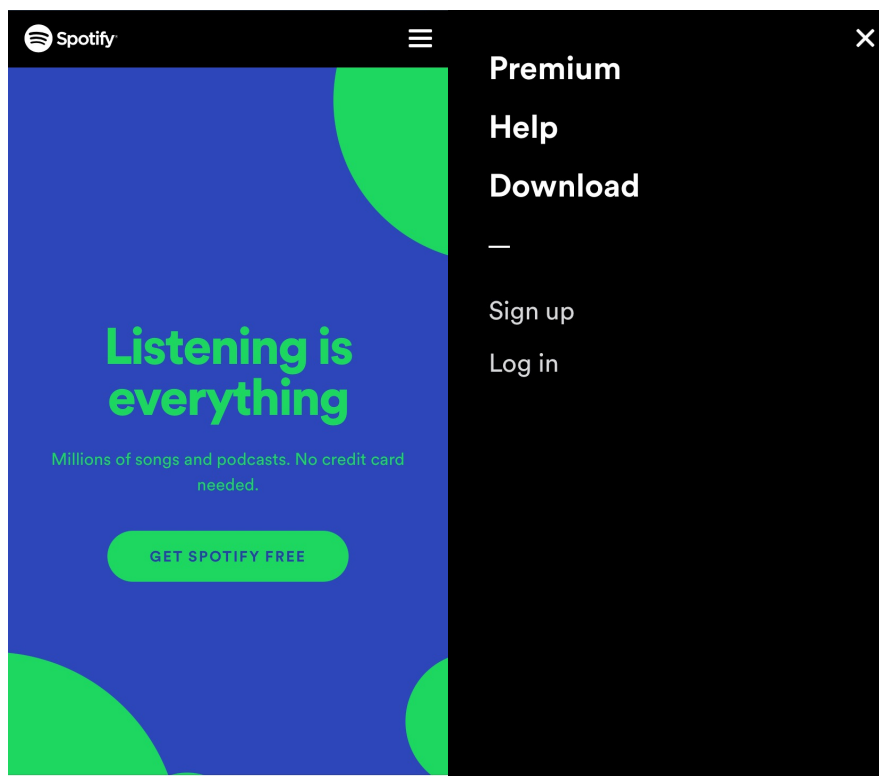
## Relationships



Desktop Website above (Spotify, 2020)

Mobile Website (Spotify, 2020)

Mobile navigation below (Spotify, 2020)



Spotify's website is dedicated to relationships: and by that, I mean a premium account funnel. Spotify Premium accounts for 90% of revenues (Shelly, 2018) and 45% of monthly users are Premium members (Business of Apps, 2020). If the vast majority of Spotify's income comes from Premium memberships, but less than half of monthly listeners are premium users, this implies that getting people to go Premium is vital for Spotify's growth and possibly even survival. That's why the website is Premium-driven: if users create a premium relationship with Spotify, the streaming service makes a lot more money than if they were a free version user.

**Desktop Premium Headline:** The Desktop version immediately pitches Premium to the user as its homepage headline. That's the first relationship building technique: it is assumed that the visitor understands what Spotify is already, and therefore the CTA is designed to further that relationship so that Spotify can make a profit.

**Desktop Minimalist Navigation:** The second technique is the 'minimalist' navigation above, which has only the options "Premium, Help, Download, and Account". Half of these navigation items will directly or indirectly encourage the user to get premium: the 'Premium' button is obvious, the 'Help' button is unrelated, the 'Download' button gets the app on the user's computer, and the 'Account' button has many options for the user to upgrade their account to Premium to get many benefits. That minimal navigation bar with many premium relationship traps is the second relationship building technique.

**Desktop Bottom Navigation:** At the bottom of the homepage is a much more extensive navigation with technical pages such as 'hiring' information or 'Spotify for Artists, Developers, Advertisers, Investors, and Vendors'. Only 5 of the 11 bottom navigation items are not about relationships, and partnering with Spotify in different ways. These links are perhaps the most overtly relationship-oriented pages on the website. Each link takes the user to a side page with plenty of useful and relevant information for the type of relationship with Spotify that they are pursuing. Well done!

**Desktop Conclusion:** The website is extremely relationship-building focused. In fact the only element on the homepage that is not about relationship building is the 'pick up where you left off' section that has links to recent music plays.

**Mobile Homepage:** Surprisingly, the Mobile homepage is completely different. There is no premium CTA, rather the subheading encourages the user to download the free version of the app. Even the design has different colors and shapes.

**Mobile Navigation:** There are fewer elements on the Mobile homepage, so the only way to see more content is to touch the navigation button, which reveals 'Premium, Help, Download, Sign Up / Log In' options. Of these navigation options, two of the four elements are based on relationship building.

**Mobile Bottom Navigation:** Scrolling down reveals the same bottom navigation as the desktop version, which is well suited for relationship building.



**Mobile Conclusion & Comparison:** The mobile app has most of the same actual relationship building content, however the homepage header and subheading as well as visual design and layout are completely different. The result of this is that the Mobile headline does not pitch a Premium subscription to the user as the first thing they see, focusing instead on driving app downloads. I do not like how the design has different colors and shapes from the desktop version, because I feel that it dilutes the strength of branding content. I prefer the Mobile version's headline because it is less overtly promotional and funnels people to actual downloads, but the tradeoff is that it does not drive premium subscriptions as directly: which is Spotify's main source of income as already explored.

## Relationship Building Strategies

- 1) **Dialogic:** relationships, mutuality (meaning changes to the website) and intimacy (meaning close contact and working with the company) are built through communication between the website company and the user, according to a study by Park and Reber (Park, Reber, 2008). Communication, and therefore relationships, are pursued through both the website providing relevant information, and the consumer providing information in return (BusinessTown, 2016). This dialogue builds trust and relationships.
- 2) **Forms & Registration:** This dialogue can happen through having the user fill out forms, or register for more information or the mailing list: and part of this feedback should try to give insight into the unique wants and needs of the user, in order to improve the website and product (BusinessTown, 2016). Relationships happen when the website and visitor understand each other, and forms can provide information on the visitor's goals and person.
- 3) **Homepage about product / service:** The homepage builds relationships best if it immediately is centered around an offering (BusinessTown, 2016). This information could be updatable to encourage repeat visits (BusinessTown, 2016) perhaps with a timestamp included (Park, Reber, 2008). The goal is to help users find what they are looking for, and take the next step in collaboration with the website's product or service quickly.
- 4) **Quality Links:** Park & Reber's study examined a random sample of 100 of the *fortune 500* companies' websites, and used two corders to find a list that the majority of these websites had in common. Among this list, navigation and redirection elements like a well-planned site map, exterior links, connected media, and in-site links were very common (Park, Reber, 2008). To sum up: quality links that are relevant to the user are key: the homepage should have peripheral links which lead different types of users to content which is appropriate for them (BusinessTown, 2016), customizing the website to build relationships with different types of users

- 5) **Plentiful but Well-Packaged:** Information should be plentiful but condensed and presented to the user with good structure. It is fine if the website has a small amount of content, as long as it is sufficient for the website topic (BusinessTown, 2016). This builds relationships by presenting ‘packages’ of information that different types of users can peruse, while ignoring ‘packages’ of irrelevant information.
- 6) **Possibly focused on investors, not customers:** Park & Reber’s study found that many of the *fortune 500* websites featured content for investors over customers (Park, Reber, 2008). This might not be applicable for any company’s website however: one of the main aspects of being a *fortune 500* company is that the stocks are valuable and frequently traded, as well as the fact that these companies are already known by customers if they are B2C, so the website does not need to focus on brand awareness or explaining what the product / service is. Another interpretation of this finding could be that companies who focus on investment such as stocks and partnerships grow to be bigger: but I think that an investor over customer website focus should only happen after a company reaches the worth magnitude of a *fortune 500* company, not before.

Spotify’s websites follow these tips very well. One possible improvement is that instead of breaking the navigation bar between the top (information on account and app downloads) and bottom (information for jobs, collaboration, and different types of customers), the website could try including many of those bottom links on the top navigation. The reason for this advice comes from two conclusions, 1) the top navigation is more immediately visible, because it can be seen before scrolling down, therefore making it more likely to have traffic than the bottom navigation, and 2) a successful relationship building website is focused on catering to different types of customers seeking information, with the headline focusing on the product or service. Spotify’s headline does focus on the product or service, however there is a divide between what the mobile website advertises (free version app download) and what the desktop version offers (premium trial).

## Hubspot Website Grader

**Performance 13/30:** Performance is all about speed and clean code. Spotify’s website needs the greatest amount of improvement in this area, agreeing with previous website tests. A few technical tips are: 1) condense Javascript, 2) condense CSS, the descriptive elements that help crawlers understand what pictures and fonts are ([W3C.com](http://W3C.com), 2016)), 3) condense files: there is an overload of HTTP requests for different files, which slows down the site.

**Mobile 20/30:** Mobile reviews how navigable and adaptable the website is for a mobile device. 1) try making bigger and/or more spaced-out buttons, 2) increase page speed: current speed is 12.6, recommended is >5.3.

**SEO:** This category is important for discoverability. 1) include more descriptive text for links like buttons, avoiding 'click here' text.

**Security:** 1) The outdated Javascript is a liability for hackers and evil bots!

Analysis from (HubSpot, 2020) : <https://website.grader.com/>

## DesignQuote.com Estimate

**Minimal features website quote:** for a student researching looking for a total website revamp, with the bare-bones features of supplying my own graphics + own copy + member registration capabilities + responsive design for mobile + credit card and PayPal functions = \$1,870.

**Ideal features website quote:** for a student researching looking for a total website revamp, with the ideal included features of all the same for the minimal features version but with traffic statistics + metatag keyword optimization + search engine submission + Facebook app integration and Twitter integration, the total is \$3,080.

Quote from ([DesignQuote.com](https://www.designquote.net/html/dq_estimate_wizard.cfm), 2020) : [https://www.designquote.net/html/dq\\_estimate\\_wizard.cfm](https://www.designquote.net/html/dq_estimate_wizard.cfm)

The increased quote essentially added SEO and metrics, as well as social media integration. Both of these are really important features. I think that these costs are more expensive than they should be in the first place: even a free website builder could do all this. A good square space would be cheaper and have better functions in my opinion: but if we are assuming that this website quote designer is the only option for the website creation, the increased cost for extra features is worth the money.

## Recommendations

**Homepage and site navigation:** 1) consider having the same Premium CTA on the mobile site as the desktop, because Premium subscriptions compose 90% of Spotify's income (Perez, 2020), 2) For a less overtly promotional approach, the homepage headline could avoid being a 'download premium' CTA, and instead say something about Spotify's mission or differentiation over competitors. Although research does show that having a product / service centered home page headline is effective for relationship building and consumer funneling (BusinessTown,



2016) (Park, Reber, 2008), it feels overtly promotional. 3) Unify the colors and shapes between the desktop and mobile homepages. I see no reason to have them be different designs: it dilutes the brand image. 4) There is a minimalist top navigation, and a bottom navigation which delivers different types of specific customers to relevant landing pages for them. Spotify could experiment with putting the unique customer landing pages at the top navigation instead.

**Site search:** There is no site search button. This would be a good idea, because there are many different pages and topics which would require many links to reach, especially because many users are likely to miss the bottom navigation which directs to the majority of the website content. A site search could be added to the mobile site's navigation menu.

**Commerce and conversions:** This was the priority for Spotify's websites: account information and a premium (or free version download) CTA is present on the homepage in the most visible spots. This part was done well. More information on why premium is better than the free version would be helpful if it was in an easy visible spot, in order to improve Spotify's premium to non-premium monthly listener ratio (45% free version (Business of Apps, 2020)).

**Form Entry:** Spotify put the account login page in a very visible spot (the top right corner), so this is done well. Each subpage such as 'Spotify for Advertisers' or 'Spotify for Developers' has their own mailing list. When I signed up for the 'Spotify for Advertisers' mailing list, I did not get an immediate email notification of my subscription, which made me question whether or not it worked: I would add this so that new users know what the email subscription is about and how it benefits them as soon as they sign up.

**Usability and form factor:** Because Spotify has a different color scheme / shapes / design for its mobile site compared to desktop, I believe that it is a responsive design to a point: at some screen dimension, the site must switch from the yellow desktop color and headline to the mobile blue and green colors with a different headline. I would be curious to see what that switching point is like. Generally, I prefer totally responsive designs that retain the same brand colors and headlines (maybe shortened with reduced or nonexistent copy). I would make it more homogenous across devices to decrease brand perception dilution.

**Mobile adaptive design:** As mentioned above, the design must certainly be adaptive because the desktop and mobile colors & headlines are completely different.

**App strategy:** Spotify's product is its app, so having an app is an obvious imperative. The strategy of the app is well laid out: a freemium model lets users 'try out' and build Spotify into their lifestyle for free, before annoying them with ads and feature limitations which will drive them to a Premium subscription, where Spotify makes more of a profit. Spotify needs to work on its customer retention (Perez, 2020) because people abandon the app at a higher rate than is ideal.

**App vs. Web capabilities:** Having an app is better for containing Spotify's streaming capabilities and algorithms: having that much data potential would slow down the website detrimentally.

**App developers:** Spotify has the best algorithms in the industry: their app developers are superior.

**Target audience is heavily mobile:** Yes, read the 'Mobile versus Desktop' topic for more information.

**Functionality built into app:** Yes, the product is the app. Subscribing to premium will re-direct the user from the App to the website subscription page.

**Wireless or wifi connection:** For the free version, the Spotify app is next to useless: but with a premium subscription, favorite songs and playlists can be downloaded for offline capabilities. This is a good business model! It especially appeals to people who commute or fly frequently and might not want to use data for their music while they drive (or being on airplane mode), instead downloading favorite playlists.

# Customer Service

Customer service is an important aspect of professionalism. Some industries require flawless customer service. Others lose profit on customer service. Spotify, as a tech company with a freemium model, has a customer service geared more towards Q&A about either accounts or products. There are no agents, clerks, or service people that the customer comes in contact with by necessity. Spotify users can use the app without thinking about customer service. So the purpose of customer service for Spotify is geared towards professionalism in tech support and account questions.

An easy to see 'help' button on the top navigation of the homepage will take the user to the 'help' section, which has customer service options. It is very easy to see, and the top navigation is de-cluttered, so the 'help' button is very salient. The 'help' page is screen shot below (Spotify, 2020).

Account & Payment	Using Spotify	Listen Everywhere
<a href="#">Account Help</a>	<a href="#">Video Tutorials</a>	<a href="#">Speakers</a>
<a href="#">Payment Help</a>	<a href="#">Getting Started</a>	<a href="#">TVs</a>
<a href="#">Subscription Options</a>	<a href="#">Playlists</a>	<a href="#">Cars</a>
<a href="#">Premium Family</a>	<a href="#">Features</a>	<a href="#">Gaming</a>
<a href="#">Premium Duo</a>	<a href="#">System &amp; Settings</a>	<a href="#">Smart Watches</a>
<a href="#">Premium Student</a>	<a href="#">Troubleshooting</a>	<a href="#">Smart Displays</a>
<a href="#">Privacy &amp; Security</a>		<a href="#">Voice Assistants</a>

## Visit the Community

Have questions? Find answers from our worldwide  
Community of expert fans!

[FIND ANSWERS](#)

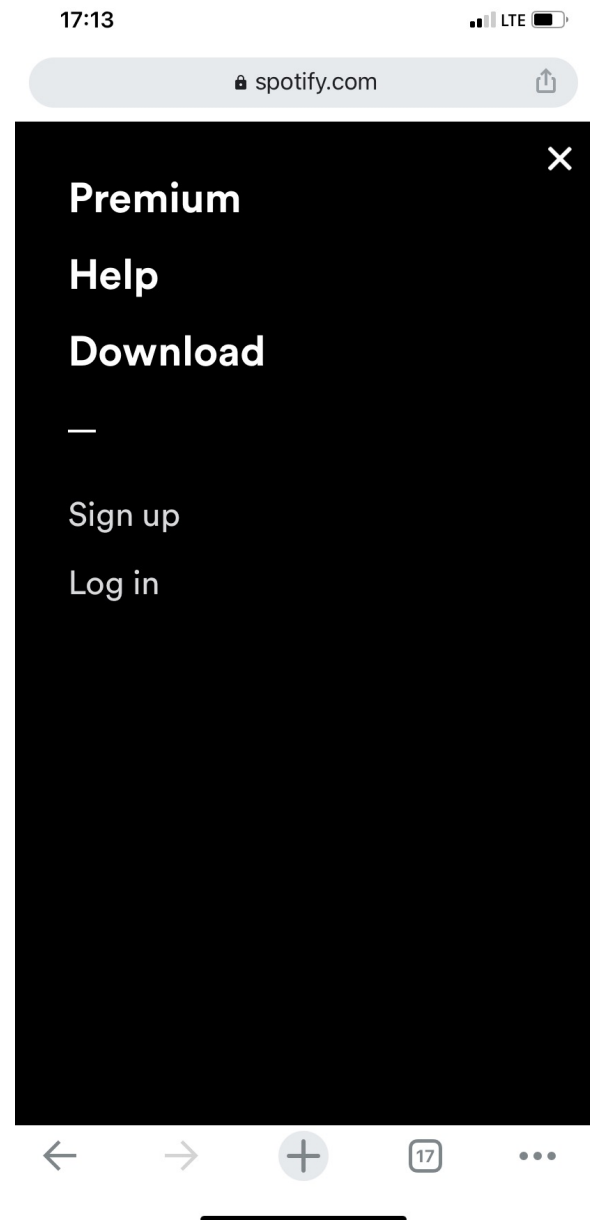
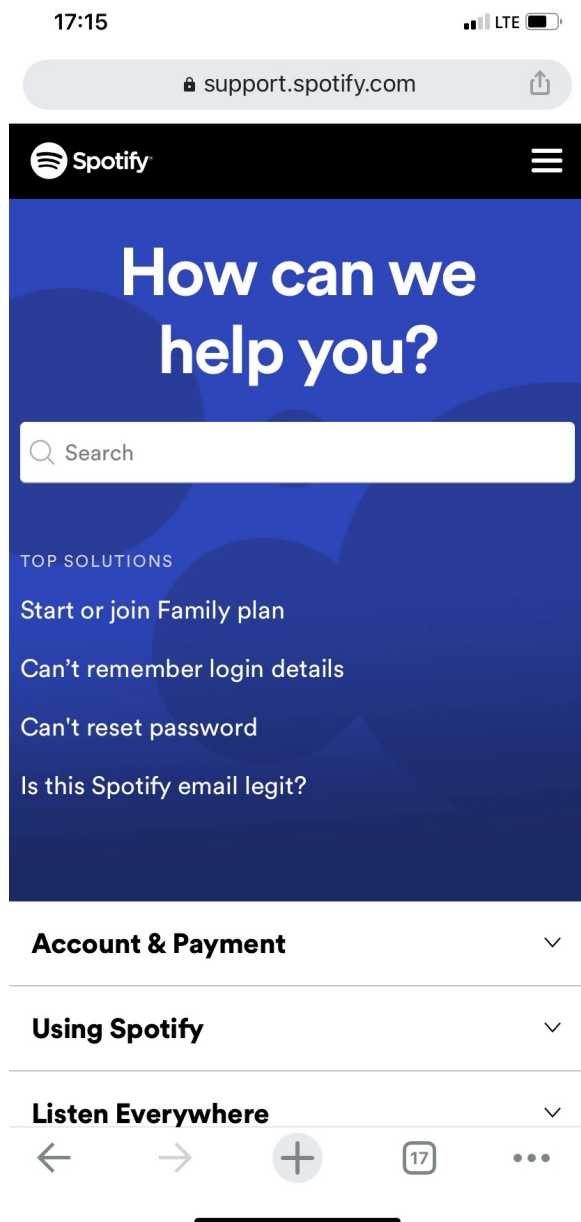
(Spotify, 2020)

What a well-laid out help page! It was designed with the anticipation of what a website user might be looking for, broken up into Account, App, and Devices. The three categories even are worded in a way so that they have a verb which functions almost like a CTA, grabbing the attention of the user through playing to what they might have come to the 'help' page to do in the first place. Everything the user might need is there. A user would be likely to be search for a



‘cancel account’ button, but obviously Spotify’s goal is do make it harder to find the account cancellation option to decrease churn.

Here’s a front row seat of the navigation menu on mobile: Just like desktop, it is very ‘decluttered’, making it simple to find the help button. Pressing the help button reveals the screen below:



Above: (Spotify, 2020)

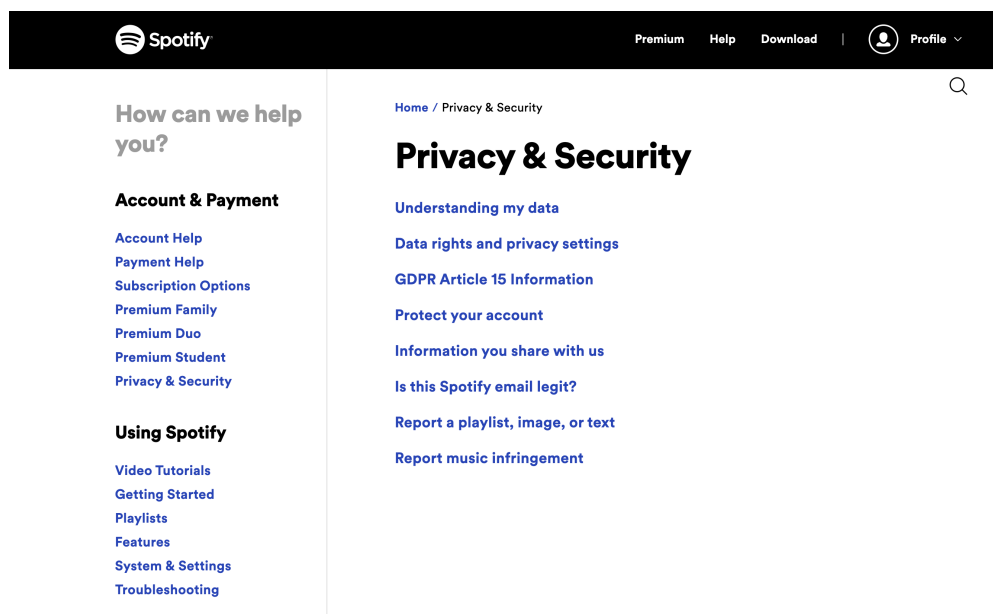
Left: (Spotify, 2020)

The help menu has a different setup on mobile: 1) The search bar is larger and more prominent, and the headline is added for the search bar in big letters, “How can we help you?” (Spotify, 2020). 2) Instead of having clearly listed purposes as headings, the mobile app instead just includes a smattering of frequently asked questions below the search bar. No beautiful headings are given to direct the user’s attention, replaced with common questions. However, the material for Account, App, and Devices are still present: but as a dropdown menu.

To improve the mobile ‘help’ menu and therefore improving efficiency in Customer Service, the following steps could be taken: 1) Don’t make a search bar the most salient feature with a special headline status, and placement on the most important part of the screen. Remember, people on mobile are typing with their thumbs. I find mobile digital keyboards very uncomfortable, so I would never type out an entire question on a help search bar, unless it was the only method. 2) Instead, the three dropdown labeled “Account & Payment, Using Spotify, and Listen Everywhere” should be moved to a more prominent spot on the top, and given a larger font. Maybe they could even be in the white heading font against blue background, and displayed as buttons instead of a dropdown to modernize the look. 3) At least, the bottom three dropdown menu elements should be scooched up so that the “Listen Everywhere” option isn’t cut off by the bar at the bottom. 4) Also, Spotify should consider monochromizing their brand colors to include only green when a web background like this is called for. A green background would strengthen the brand connection, because the logo is green.

# Privacy Policy

Privacy is a major issue. Most consumers believe that there needs to be better laws regarding internet privacy (Zahay, Roberts, 2018). Whether or not Spotify is a trusted company is a subjective question, however we can use a few sets of criterion to look at how Spotify handles data. In general, Spotify had a lot more information about data collection and usage available than I was expecting on their website. An image below shows the subheads on Privacy and Security.



(Spotify, 2020)



**PII:** Personally Identifiable Information (Zahay, Roberts, 2018) is required by the user when they make an account. Spotify collects PII data on a person's location, Facebook ID (if they created an account with Facebook) and Facebook Account (if they allowed this). Spotify also takes record of which ads are clicked on, and which genres of music or artists are listened to, as well as demographics like age and gender: and this data is used to create 'inferences' on which market segments the user should be put into for the sake of advertising. Targeted ads must be opted-in for (Spotify, 2020).

**Intellectual Property:** It could be argued that the playlists that a person creates on Spotify are IP. In this case, Spotify would have control over the content in these playlists. Another way to tackle the idea of IP is to look at artists who release content on Spotify. This is a more complicated legal issue: but essentially the way to get music on Spotify is to release it to a record label: including digital record labels like TuneCore and CDBaby which I have used. Another instance of IP is the capability of Spotify to draw from songs on the memory disk of a local device: which is an integration of the App with a local device, and not actually under Spotify's IP domain.

**Dimensions of trust:** 1) Security: Spotify has a guarantee of security. 2) Data control: You can see how Spotify uses your data. You can also see the legislation titled "GDPR Article 15" which provides the required information on how third-parties access data. 3) Accountability: Spotify has easy to find contact information. 4) Benefit: Spotify allows people to 'opt in' to target advertising. The idea is that having relevant ads is a benefit to the user, therefore the data collected on their 'inferences' of what market segment they belong to is a benefit. Furthermore, data collected on the user's Facebook account is a benefit because it provides a quicker account creation option.





A close-up, low-angle shot of a violin in a dimly lit room. The violin is the central focus, with its body and f-hole clearly visible. It is positioned vertically, with the neck pointing upwards. The lighting is warm and focused on the instrument, creating a sense of depth and highlighting the wood grain. In the background, other violins are visible, but they are out of focus, creating a sense of a collection or a museum. The overall mood is artistic and contemplative.

# Site Objective



# ch. 18

## Site Objectives

**Mobile:** The headline states “Listening is everything”: With a button saying “Get Spotify Free” and body copy explaining that no credit card is needed to get access to a huge number of songs. Screenshots of this are available ~10 pages above. All these combined factors make it clear that the Mobile app is trying to drive Spotify free version app downloads. Using this product-oriented direction for a site is effective for relationship building and consumer funneling (BusinessTown, 2016) (Park, Reber, 2008), even if I personally think it feels impersonal and greedy.

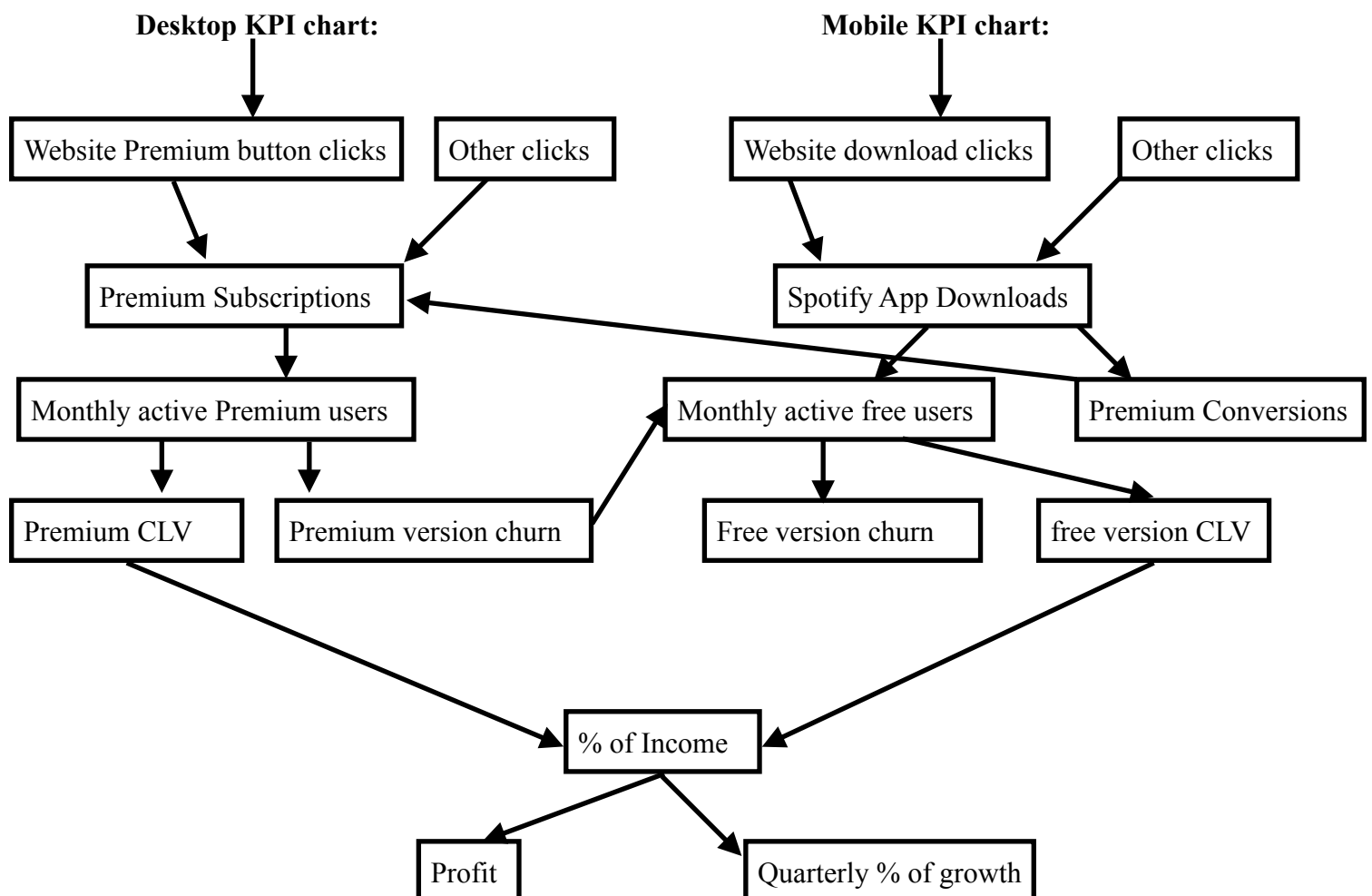
The creative brief goal was likely “increase Spotify app downloads”. The reason that free version is focused on is because the ads on the free version are supposed to incentivize the user to upgrade to premium over time. I suspect that the app download is supposed only the beginning of the CLM growth, which is why they put it on their mobile site. Furthermore, they may have not wanted to advertise Premium on the mobile version, because people might be less comfortable spending money on their phones compared to desktop.

**Desktop:** The headline on desktop is “Go premium, be happy”, with a “start free trial” button. Screenshots of this are available ~10 pages above. This evidence shows that the goal of the desktop page is to generate premium subscriptions, which is different from mobile. This follows the same recommendations from (BusinessTown, 2016) and (Park, Reber, 2008) for an effective funneling strategy, especially because Premium subscriptions constitute 90% of Spotify’s income (Perez, 2020) so it should be the priority. My personal take is that the tone of the homepage is too overtly promotional, and the homepage could be about educating consumers as to what Spotify is and what it offers instead.

The creative brief goal for the desktop homepage was likely “increase Premium subscriptions”. The real question is, why is Mobile not focused on desktop if Premium is so much more important for Spotify’s income. Desktop likely helps people feel safer making online purchases, and maybe it is assumed that people with more money are on Desktop (maybe they are older, or maybe they are business people, or maybe they use their desktop for stocks. Who knows).

## Key Performance Indicators

**KPI:** The KPI, or Key Performance Indicator for the mobile site of “increase Spotify app downloads” would likely be app downloads: an easy statistic to measure growth with. But beyond that, app downloads need to be paired with a strong conversion campaign to get users to upgrade to Premium, since Premium is more important for Spotify’s income. The KPI for the desktop site’s goal of “increase Premium subscription” is probably Premium subscription growth. But equally important to evaluate is churn rate, to see how long people keep their Premium subscription before churning out. Decreasing churn rate is one of Spotify’s top goals and challenges right now: despite a recent burst of 43 million new users in the past couple years, Spotify has still managed to keep their churn rate under 10%. But even greater user retention would increase Spotify’s income. One possible objective of the Desktop and Mobile websites could be to encourage Premium users to keep their subscription going: this could be accomplished with information about new artist releases on Spotify, or news about new features to show consumers that the App is constantly evolving and growing.





**Scenario of User Website Experience:** A possible narrative to describe how users might experience the mobile app is as follows:

**Desktop Scenario (Jeremy):** 1) The user, named Jeremy (21), a college student who studies marketing and classical music, is on the free Spotify App, and the same O’Riley Auto Parts ad plays on their desktop for the 17th time, while they are trying to listen to music to write a paper due the next day (true story). 2) The frustrated and angry user opens a Google tab and searches for Spotify, to check out Premium prices. 3) Jeremy enters the Desktop website. 4) The user immediately sees the “Free Premium Trial” button, which is probably what he was looking for. However, the user is a forgetful person and knows that if he got a free trial, he would forget to cancel this. Afraid of this happening and instead wanting to be educated on the price, the user avoids the free trial button at all costs. 5) Navigation/Premium takes the user to the Premium information page: which offers Premium free for 1 month and \$9.99 every month after. “Cancel anytime” is encouraging to the user. 6) The “View Plans” button takes them to the Individual plan, where they can commit to Premium for the mentioned price. Will the user commit or not? This user did not because he is making half as much for his part-time job than usual because COVID closed the museum where he works.

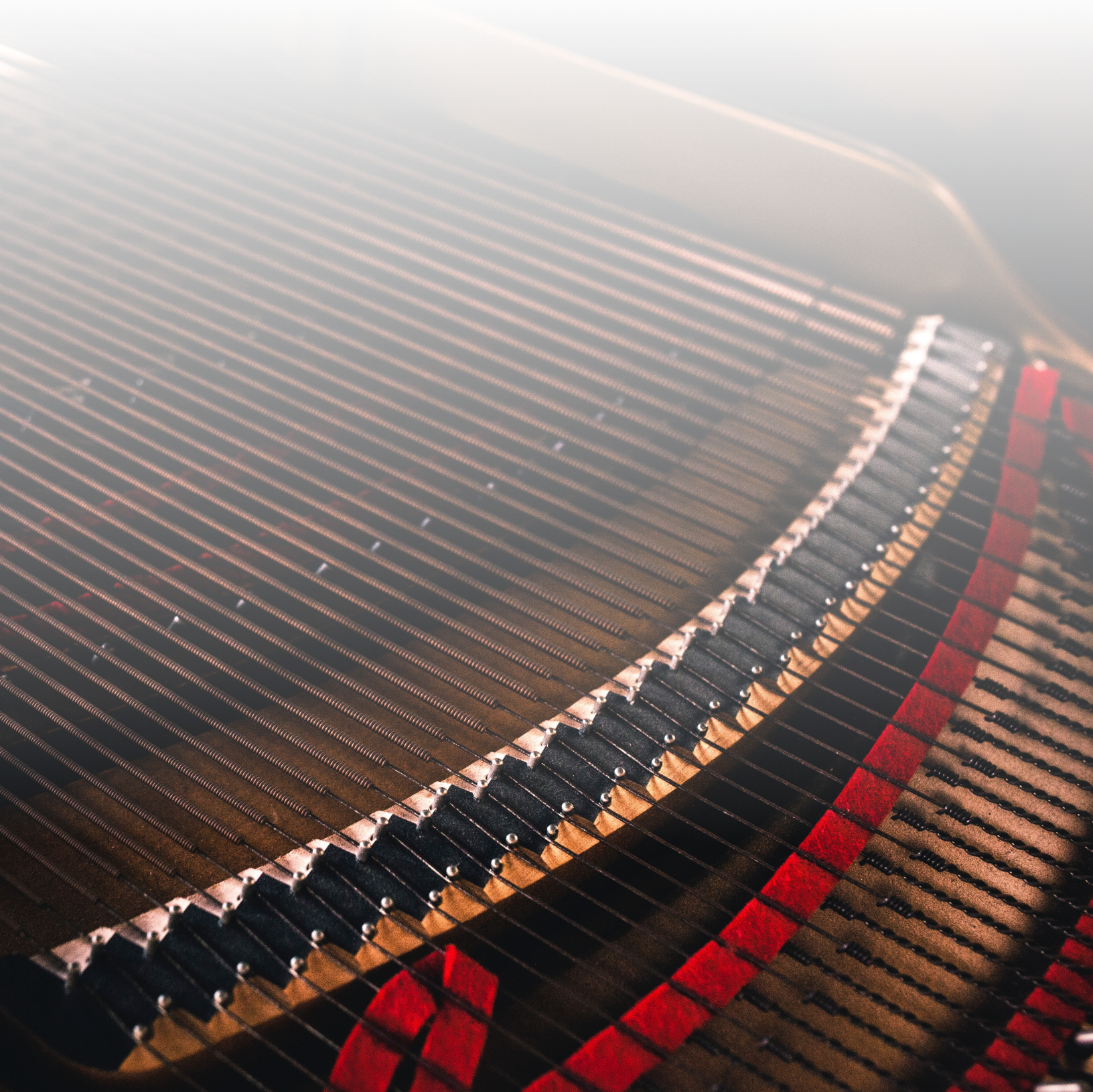
**Mobile Scenario (Bethany):** 1) The user, named Bethany (54), just upgraded to a Google Home in her kitchen, after using a CD stereo system for many years: she is an avid Classical and Country music lover. Her hands are often covered in flower or dishwater, and the Google Home makes it easier to find songs while cooking. 2) Her son recommends that she listen to an artist’s album, with a Spotify link. 3) Bethany google searches ‘Spotify’ on her phone, and finds the mobile website. 3) the “Get Spotify Free” button looks very safe to click on, so she uses it. 4) The sign-up page has an overwhelming amount of information to fill out, so she chooses to use the “sign up with Facebook” button on the top. 5) She fills out her information and downloads the app with her new account. 6) Bethany plays her son’s album recommendation by pairing her Spotify on the phone with Google Home, while making homemade pretzels.

**Analysis:** The users needs are met very well on the Mobile app. The Desktop app could have a different strategy for the Premium CTA button: instead of encouraging a free trial, a more information button would funnel users better because it has no risk of accidentally forgetting to cancel the description. Website visitors are not sheep: although it would make Spotify money for someone to sign up for a free trial but forget about it, many people will be resistant to this because they understand the risk that a ‘free trial’ button poses. Furthermore, Spotify’s freemium model means that it is likely users have already been using the free version of Spotify for a while: meaning that a free Premium trial is not that helpful. Free version users already understand that Premium will give them a break from annoying ads (one of Premium’s main features), they don’t need a free trial to understand this.

**Metrics for Consumer Experience:** To test whether or not Desktop users are ‘scared off’ by the free trial button or not, looking at clicks on the “Free Trial” button compared to number of site visitors would show how ‘relevant’ the button is to the goals of the site visitors. Furthermore,



comparing “Premium” page navigation and “View Plans” clicks to “Free Trial” button clicks would help ascertain whether or not the free trial is useful. On the mobile site, clicks on the “Get Spotify Free” button compared to the “Premium” navigation button would show what portion of users came to the mobile site looking to upgrade to Premium; and if it was the majority, then the homepage button should be related to Premium just like the Desktop site.





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