



MOBILE VS. WEB

Along with the mobile app, Google Podcasts offers a browser version. Although the functionality of the browser version is similar to the app there are a few notable differences. For example, the browser version runs as a single-page application. This means that the webpage 'dynamically rewrites the current web page with new data from the web server', instead of loading entire new pages with each click (Lawson). This creates a fluid, responsive and fast user experience. In ways, this allows the browser version to function similarly to an application.

The most obvious differences between the mobile app and the browser version are that the default homepage is the explore page rather than the 'latest episodes' of your subscribed podcasts page. Along with this, the webpage offers more information including titles of podcasts while the app version solely features their icons. The webpage version also features a sidebar on the left of the page, allowing you to access settings, help and publisher guidelines from the one page. The web version also allows the user to add a new podcast to their feed via RSS. Interestingly, this is not a feature on the mobile application.

FUNCTIONS

1. Discover and subscribe to a new podcast.

Step One: Open Application
Step Two: Click Explore
Step Three: Scroll through page. (The page shows basic categorisations of podcasts and genres along with personalised recommendations.)
Step Four: Click new podcast
Step Five Read description, click for more.
Step Six: Subscribe Button.

Analysis: 3 Screens, 4 Clicks.

Overall, this process is quite user friendly. The use of one explore page works well as it allows a general overview of different genres on the one page.

2. Playing an episode of a podcast that you are subscribed to

Step one: Open Application
Step Two: Scroll to find a recent episode of a podcast you're subscribed to
Step Three: Click Play

Analysis: Two Screens, One Click

Overall, this process is made very easy and user friendly. The layout of the home screen makes it easy to access a list of recent episodes of podcasts that you are subscribed to.

3. Going to your listening history

Step One: Open application
Step Two: Go to library
Step Three: Click history

Analysis: Two Screens, Two Clicks.

This process is also made very easy for the user. There are a limited number of actions that can be carried out on this app due to its minimalist design. This makes it very easy to find what you're looking for. This process will also bring you to your subscriptions, queue, and downloads.

4. Search for a specific podcast using the search bar function.

Step One: Open application
Step Two: Go to the explore section
Step Three: Type podcast name into the search bar
Step Four: Click the search icon
Step Five: Locate and click on podcast

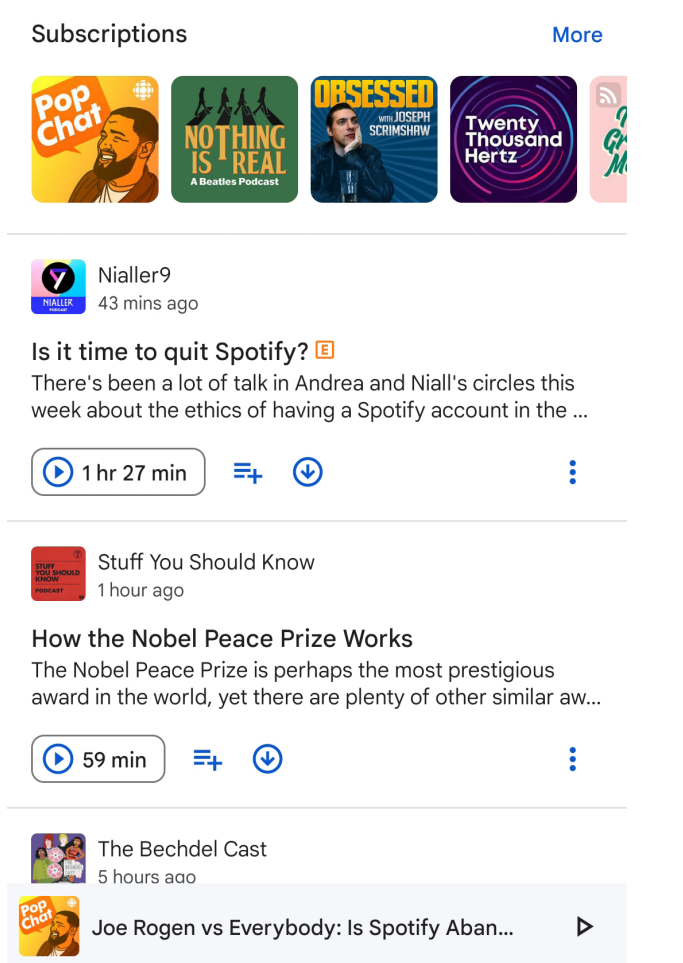
Analysis: Four Clicks, Three screens.

This is also a simple process. However, it may be easier to include a search bar on the home page. Generally, the app prioritises ease of listening to previously subscribed podcasts over searching for new podcasts.

FUNCTIONALITY AND CONTROL TOOLS

The Google Podcasts app allows the user to control their user experience. There are no leading messages or explanations of how the app should be used. This decision works well for a podcast app as the steps involved in listening to a podcast are not difficult. Most users will already be aware of the app's basic functions by exposure to other similar apps. For example, the app's search bar functions similarly to the Google search bar. Baer notes how '84 Percent of Podcast Listeners Are Under Age 55 (Baer)'. This statistic also indicates that podcast app users would

be familiar with basic media player functions such as the play/pause button and the 'now playing bar' often used in apps like Spotify, Netflix, YouTube etc. The app functions well as it understands that providing obvious instructions may deter or frustrate the user. Instead, the help function can easily be found under the Google Account icon in the top right corner. This means that the help options are not taking up space on the default home page but can easily be found if necessary.



Find, play & manage podcasts on Google Podcasts

[Listen to podcasts with Google Podcasts](#)

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[Manage your Google Podcasts settings](#)

[Listen to podcasts with CarPlay](#)

[Listen to podcasts with Android Auto](#)

[Get better recommendations in Google Podcasts](#)

[Fix problems with Google Podcasts](#)




CUSTOMIZATION OPTIONS

In Google Podcasts, the user can make a limited number of changes in the interface. For example, in the settings the user can choose between light or dark display modes, toggle to turn on and off filtering mature content and change the language and region. However, the app generally allows for ample personalisation by displaying the users podcast subscriptions on the homepage and displaying personalised podcast recommendations. The interface is deductive for the most part as it relies on visual symbols such

as the play button, the search icon, and the cast icon. This deductive interface works well as the app is generally easy to deduce. Although the app is mostly deductive, there are some inductive features in the app. For example, the settings page offers a small explanation of what the option entails below each option. For example, under 'Audio Playback' you can find small light text that notes 'Enable notifications to control playback outside of the app'.

For youNewsCultureEducationBusiness

Switched on Pop listeners like this


Song Exploder
26 Jan

Franz Ferdinand - Take Me Out

The band Franz Ferdinand formed in 2002, in Glasgow, Scotland. They've won the Mercury Prize and two BRIT A...

23 min

The Bechdel Cast listeners like this


Maintenance Phase
2 days ago


"Illness Influencer" Belle Gibson


In 2015, Belle Gibson was an Australian "eco-preneur" with a vegetarian cookbook, a blockbuster wellness app and a ...


1 hr 7 min

Top podcasts in Society & Culture

DOC ON ONE
RTÉ

The Blindboy Podcast

STUFF YOU SHOULD KNOW
PODCAST


THE PAT KENNY SHOW

Documentary on One Pod...

The Blindboy Podcast

Stuff You Should Know

The Pat Kennv Show.


Nialler
Is it time to quit Spotify?

Appearance


Theme

System default


Fun: The Cir...


Endless Thread

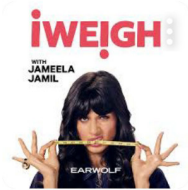
Documentary on One Pod...


Gastropod


Sony Paton's America


Grazing Hell


Hooked On...


I Weigh with Jameela Ja...


I'm Grand Mam


I'm Grand Mam

Irish History Podcast

Juvenalia







Filter mature content

More info



MOBILE VS. WEB

Although Stitcher appears to be primarily focused on the mobile application, there is a web application option available. In contrast to Google Podcasts, the stitcher website heavily promotes downloading the mobile app. For example, the navbar features an option to move to a page entitled 'Download App'. The last option on the navbar brings you to the web application titled 'Listen'. The listen page functions very similarly to the Google Podcasts web application. The app allows you to access the discover page, shows and liked

podcasts. The website also functions as a single-page application, attempting to replicate the functionality of the stitcher app. Generally, the application is very basic and fails to offer many of the mobile features. For example, there is no settings, help or customization available. Along with this, the web app doesn't provide an option to add a new podcast through an RSS feed like Google Podcasts.

FUNCTIONS

1. Discover and subscribe to a new podcast.

Step One: Open Application
Step Two: Click Discover
Step Three: Scroll through genre recommendations page.
Step Four: Click new podcast
Step Five: Click about to read description
Step Six: Follow Button.

Analysis: 3 Screens, 4 Clicks.

Overall, this process works very similarly to Google Podcasts. The only difference is that part of the podcast description appears on the podcast page on Google Podcasts, while you must click on a separate about button on Stitcher.

2. Playing an episode of a podcast that you are subscribed to

Step one: Open Application
Step Two: Click my podcasts
Step Three: Scroll to find a recent episode of a podcast you're subscribed to
Step Four: Click Play

Analysis: Three Screens, Two Clicks

Overall, this process is very accessible. However, there is one extra step involved as the 'My Podcasts' screen isn't default on Stitcher.

3. Going to your listening history

Step One: Open application
Step Two: Go to the 'My Podcasts' Screen.
Step Three: Click 'Continue listening' (features a preview of two episodes)

Analysis: Two Screens, Two Clicks.

I liked how the continue listening feature was accessible through the 'my podcasts page'. While there are the same amount of clicks involved as Google Podcasts, you can see a preview of your two most recently listened podcasts before opening the entire 'continue listening page'. However, to do this the page sacrifices the shows from the page, and they now fall under a different tab.

4. Search for a specific podcast using the search bar function.

Step One: Open application
Step Two: Click on search icon and type in podcast name
Step Three: Click on the podcast
Step Four: Click Play

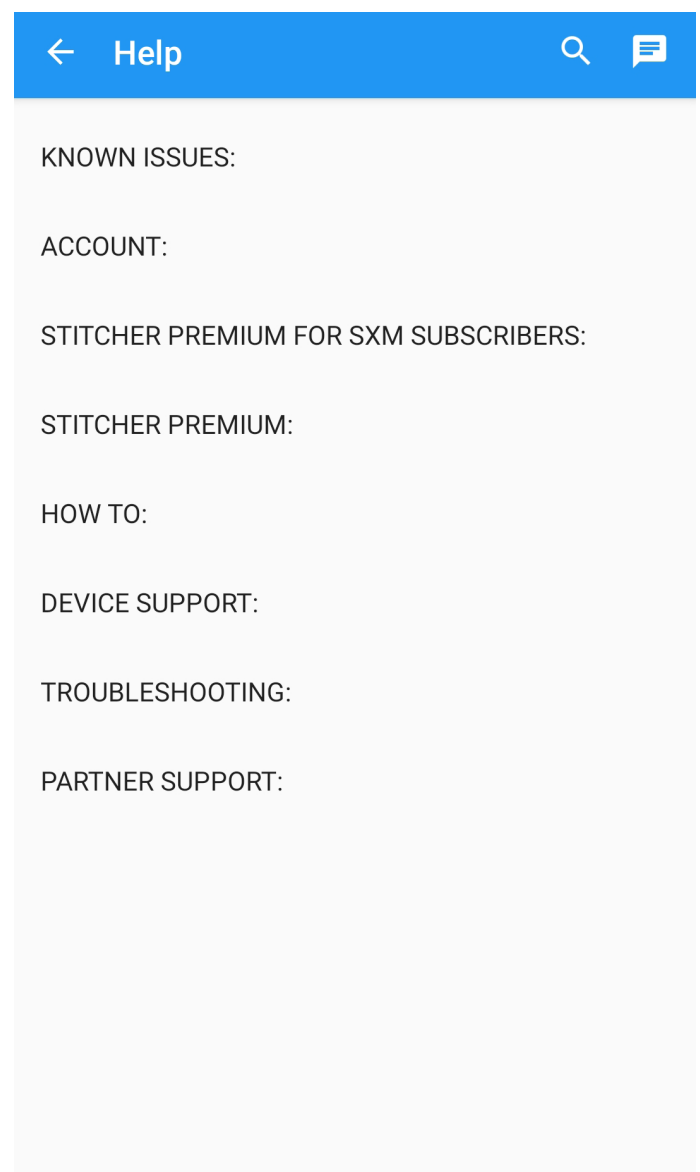
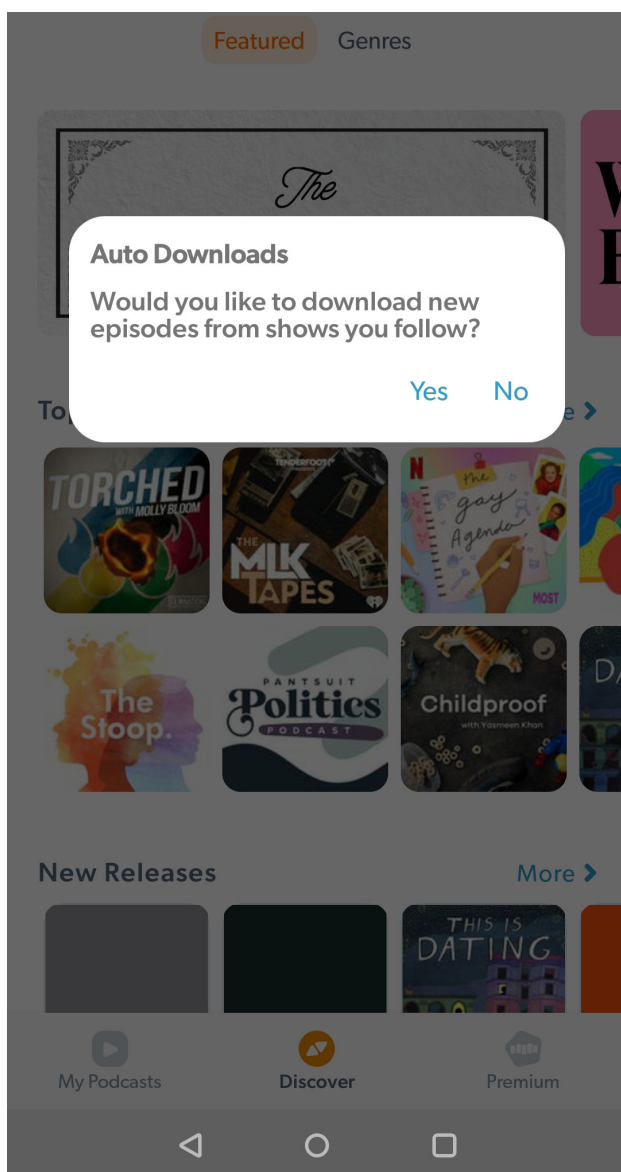
Analysis: Four Clicks, Three screens.

Interestingly, the search icon can be located on both the discover and my podcasts page. However, when you click on an episode it brings you to the show page and then you click play on an episode. As a result, both apps end up with the same number of screens and clicks for this process.

FUNCTIONALITY AND CONTROL TOOLS

Like the Google Podcasts app, Stitcher allows the user control over decisions rather than leading them. For the most part, there are no Wizards or explanation screens when you first install the app. From my research, this seems to be standard among most podcast applications. As an exception, when you initially install the app, there is a pop-up screen that asks, 'Would you like to download new episodes from shows you follow?'. Here the user must choose be-

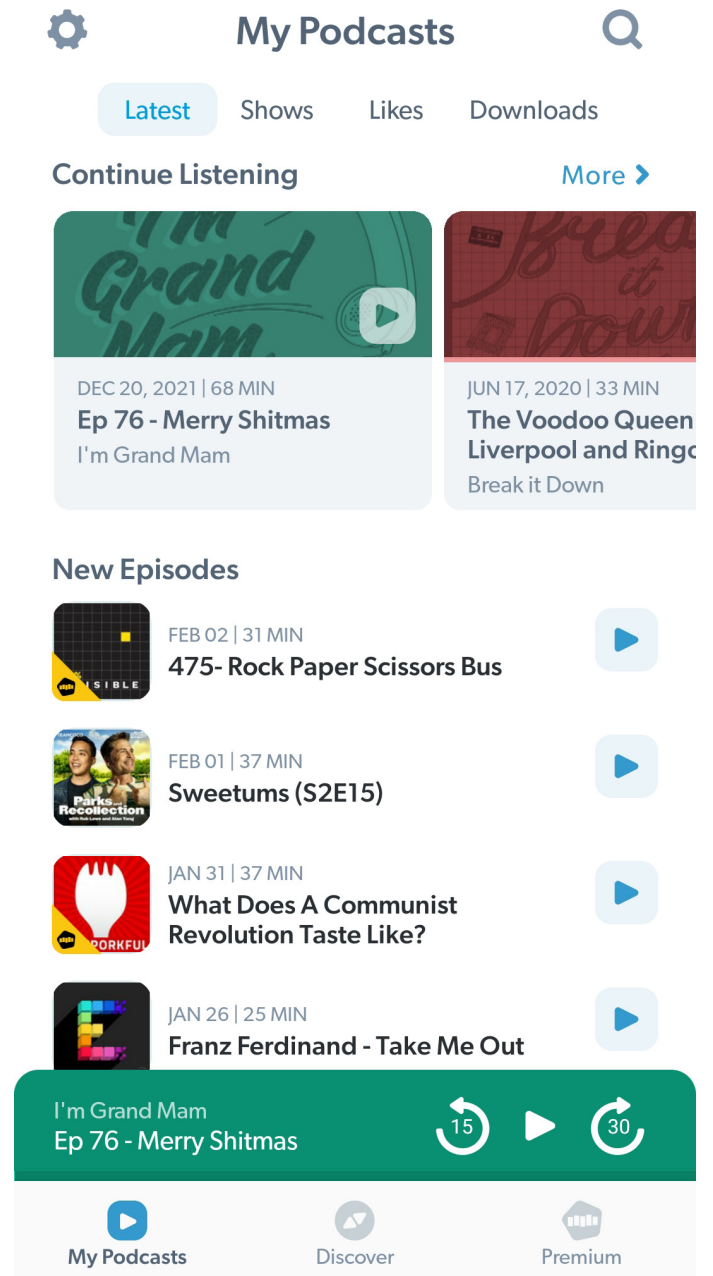
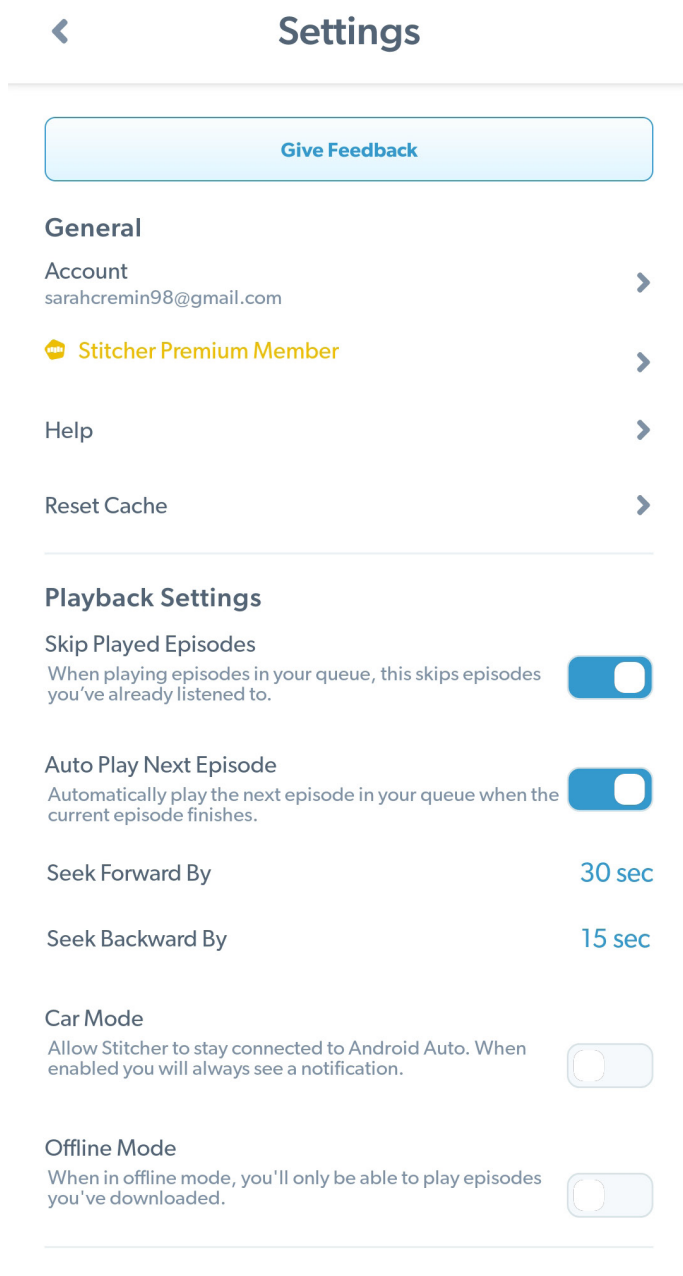
tween the yes or no buttons. The user can easily find assistance in the settings where you can locate the help button. The help section offers comprehensive steps and 'how to' advise if necessary. Both Stitcher and Google podcasts offer a help page, however this doesn't take up any unnecessary space on the default home page.



CUSTOMIZATION OPTIONS

Interestingly, the Stitcher app offers different customization options to the Google Podcasts app. For example, in the settings you can find options to skip played episodes in the queue, auto play next episode and switch to the car mode. Unlike Google Podcasts, Stitcher does not offer the option to switch the display mode between light and dark. Like the Google Podcasts app, Stitcher has a mostly deductive inter-

face that allows the user control over the app without interference. However, the settings page does feature more in-depth explanations of functions than Google Podcasts.



COMPARISON

AUTHORIZATION

Both applications require an authorization process. Google Podcasts is directly linked with your Google account and prompts you to login upon installation. Stitcher allows you the option to login with Google or Facebook, other options include creating a new account and logging in. To log out of Google Podcasts, you are redirected to your Google account through a 'manage your google account' button. This makes the process lengthier for the user. However, it



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Manage your Google Account

is a little easier to logout of Stitcher. You can do this by going to settings, account and log out. It is interesting to note that the logout button is at the bottom of the account page as this is a common standard seen in application design. It is possible to use the website version of both Google Podcasts and Stitcher without an account, but many of the features are not available. With an account you can view your podcast history, subscriptions, and queue.

Password

Password Recovery

Logout

PROGRESSIVE DISCLOSURE

There are many examples of progressive disclosure in both the Google Podcasts and Stitcher applications. For example, in the Google Podcasts app the options to share, marked as played and show more like this can be found in a grouping indicated by three dots at the bottom of the player. This avoids a cluttered interface by hiding away unessential information. On the Google Podcasts default interface, the podcast lists features shortened versions of the podcast

description to save space. If the user wishes to view the full description, they can then click the episode to view the full description. A similar approach can be found in the Stitcher interface design. While most users will not need help or assistance the help screen isn't taking up space on the main interface. Instead, if the user chooses to access the help screen it can be found within the settings.

CONCLUSION

- Many similarities present in Google Podcasts and Stitches app design.
- Both apps have a web alternative, however the Google Podcasts one runs slightly better than stitcher.
- Both apps allow the user control over their experience rather than leading.
- Both apps utilise progressive disclosure

Works Cited

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