A Swedish music streaming start-up launched in 2008, Spotify began as an ethical answer to controversial file sharing sites like Napster and LimeWire by offering users a free service with advertisements or an optional monthly ad-free subscription for a nominal fee, using some of the revenue generated to compensate artists for their music. Today, Spotify is the most used streaming platform with 456 million monthly users in 183 regions, accounting for roughly one third of all music streaming listeners worldwide. European users account for the largest percentage of active monthly users at 32%, but North American listeners account for Spotify’s highest amount of active daily usage at 23%.

Now, more than ever before, stakeholders in the music industry have immediate and detailed information on how individual artists are being received by music lovers around the globe. Previously only trackable through direct purchases such as concert tickets and album sales, now stakeholders can see not only the popularity of these artists, but where in the world they are most popular, even down to which songs of theirs have the highest number of streams. Thanks to playlists and individual track selection being prioritized over comprehensive albums, single songs hold far more weight than in the past. Record labels, in particular, have become increasingly dependent on these datasets, often reviewing Spotify statistics to make informed decisions on whom to promote, and where. In fact, labels as large as Sony use Spotify as the main indicator for chart successes. Not only is Sony a major rightsholder on the Spotify platform, it is also a significant shareholder.

The implications are clear: Spotify users have a direct and quantifiable impact on the decisions made in the music industry. What becomes popular on Spotify will be promoted by major record labels, which will in turn have a renewed effect on their popularity on streaming services. With this in mind, we hypothesize that the top streaming market will have the greatest effect on global trends.

Using a kaggle dataset called Spotify Charts, a resource of all daily hit charts from 2017 – 2022, we looked at the difference between global listener trends and that of the US, Spotify’s largest active daily user base.

*As US listeners account for such a large percentage of monthly and daily active users, we further suggest that their usage will have the greatest influence on the top artists and top songs represented in this Spotify database.*

We first took time to organize it by eliminating values not relevant to our study, consolidating the findings by year, and cleaning the text to increase legibility and reduce potential problems caused by non-alphanumerical characters.