

Emily Douglas

Interview Analysis

Abbey Chester

SI 422

Sonia Lee

Grace Yau

Interview Process

Our interview process began with deciding who to recruit to interview. Ideally, our interviewees would range in age and technical savviness, especially because our original survey we conducted was fairly limited to people that were in their early twenties. This was primarily due to all of us being in that age range and living on a college campus where most of the people in our environment also fall into that category. Due to this, it was important that we interviewed (or at least attempted to interview) some people that aren't in our typically age range and tech savviness level that we had previously surveyed. However, we were still generally limited to people that we know to interview due to time and monetary limitations. Because of this, many of our interviewees are still in a younger age range.

When we were recruiting, we mostly contacted possible participants through reaching out to friends and family. While we were successful in finding enough people to interview, we ran into some trouble when trying to find times that worked for both the interviewer and interviewee to meet. During this time of the semester, most students and family members are very busy and there were some potential participants that fell through because they didn't end up having time to meet. Luckily, we were each able to get three participants. Although we have some diversity within our participants, most are in their 20s and are female. They also mostly had high technology expertise and had been using Spotify for a reasonable amount of time. In the future, it would be ideal to get a more diverse group of interviewees.

After we were able to find our interviewees, each interviewer set up a time to meet with them. Several interviews happened over the phone, but the majority took place in person. Before conducting the interview, we made sure to describe the general nature of the interview and had the interviewees sign a consent form (all of which can be found in the linked folder). Our participants and their information is also summarized in the table below. While conducting the interview, we used the iPhone app Voice Memos to capture audio recordings of the interview. In order to get a clean recording with limited background noise, the interviews generally took place in a quiet area such as a conference room or study area.

Table 1. Participant Information

Interviewer	Interviewee (Pseudonym)	Gender	Technology expertise	Age	Label for interview
Emily Douglas	Missy O	Female	High	26	DouglasEmily _1
	Judy H	Female	High	23	DouglasEmily _2
	Scott D	Male	High	59	DouglasEmily _3
Sonia Lee	Harriet W	Female	Medium	21	LeeSonia_1
	Peggy Y	Female	High	21	LeeSonia_2
	Rachel I	Female	High	21	LeeSonia_3

Abbey Chester	Hannah R	Female	High	21	ChesterAbigail_1
	Katie R	Female	High	21	ChesterAbigail_2
	Michelle C	Female	High	24	ChesterAbigail_3
Grace Yau	Dave Z	Male	High	28	YauGrace_1
	Emily M	Female	High	21	YauGrace_2
	Connie Y	Female	High	24	YauGrace_3

Interview Results and Findings

After conducting the interviews, the audio was transcribed using Otter.ai and checked individually for corrections. To extract insights from the interviews collected, we had to code the data since it was all qualitative to ultimately represent the majority of user feedback. To begin the process of coding, our group first prepared the data by aggregating all the transcripts. Next, we individually utilized deductive coding to develop a pre-set codebook and applied it to the interview transcripts. This allowed for many words of the text to be classified into fewer content categories, and the ability to capture context within which a written text has meaning. After finishing line-by-line coding, we developed themes based on all of the coded interviews as a group. Overarching themes of ease of use, discovery, helping with concentration, and socialization resonated throughout the interviews.

We explored how certain features of Spotify impact the music streaming experience and developed several key insights along the way. People are listening to music when they are on the go, such as walking to work or class. Music acts as a form of company that keep people occupied while they are doing other activities at the same time. Furthermore, people value music for more than just its entertainment aspect - it is a part of culture that people feel strongly about. It is a way for people to express their emotions, as highlighted when an interviewee stated that "I make playlists to reflect my mood and music that matches that." Another theme that echoed throughout making playlists was that people usually have new playlists for each month or year. Generally, they either accumulate all songs into one playlist or sort songs by genre. Users also tended to like the pre-made Spotify playlists for different moods or genres, but did not usually use the customized playlists made for them by Spotify. Michelle C, who works in the music industry, mentioned the Release Radar and Discover Weekly as influential in finding new music and creating playlists. Many other interviewees noted Discover Weekly and how simple it made finding new music, illustrating to our team that this feature was a huge positive for Spotify and its ease of use.

Another finding that resonated throughout the interviews was that if people could take away one feature from spotify, it would be ads. People do not like their music experience to be interrupted with advertisements. It can be obtrusive and disrupt the mindset they may have previously been in. Especially for students who listen to music while studying, this poses as a major disruption in their experience. Although there is an option for Spotify Premium in which ads are removed, many college students use the free version of Spotify to save money. This was an interesting find regarding usability we had yet to consider - we were looking more at the layout of Spotify and specific music-listening features they had (offline listening, creating playlists) but ignored advertisements as being a part of usability. One interviewee, Peggy Y,

said when not using Premium, she was only able to swipe past advertisements if the Spotify application was running on her phone. When she had Spotify running while driving, she could swipe but this would be dangerous. At the same time, she would usually have a different application like Google Maps running instead, and she would not be able to open up Spotify while driving to get past the ads. Although ads are a part of non-premium users' experience, the high number of complaints raised our attention much more.

We found that most users were still with Spotify out of loyalty and had little interest in using other music streaming services, even Apple Music which can be seen as the most similar/main competitor. Hannah R said, "Definitely not. I love Spotify and like all my playlists and music are all here. Since I've had it for so long, I feel like I have such a good collection...I just don't feel like Apple Music is really that different, but it would be like a whole new design to learn."

Similarly, Dave Z said switching costs would be too high to move to a different service, as all of his playlists and saved music were already on Spotify. He said, "I've already kind of accumulated so much like playlist, so many playlists on there that the switching costs would be pretty high."

Finally, many of the interviewees seemed to either not know how to turn off certain features, or if they did, say that turning those features off was like a "hidden part of Spotify". For example, Hannah R said, "I know this is an option you can turn off, which I did but I don't like that Genius lyric thing." Although she was able to find out how to turn off the lyrics, if she did not know how, it may have severely impacted her experience. Many other users mentioned turning certain features off - although Spotify is helping users customize their listening experience, it also appears it may have too many "extra" features that are not necessarily beneficial to users' goals.

Actions and Future Research

While overall users seemed happy with Spotify, there were small parts of usability which they sometimes mentioned. These do not seem to hinder the users' experience with the site/app and do not seem to push them to try other platforms, but they are still important to address.

First, Spotify can explore alternative ways to advertise. One of the key complaints users had were the constant advertisements and the difficulty in moving past them - are there other ways Spotify can place premium ads on the app? Perhaps as images rather than audio, or as shorter videos. This would be a good feature to use in a preference test.

Second, many users brought up small features like adding genre tags, monthly listening reports, and uploading non-Spotify music into Spotify playlists which they would like to see added. It is important to consider that adding too many features could crowd the app and actually take away from user experience/usability. Spotify could run a shorter survey to see if any of these features are something users would want, then test them with a smaller population. If they are successful while accompanying other features, Spotify could release the feature to some users.

If users are able to, follow-up interviews after the addition/removal of any features would be extremely beneficial. This would be helpful as part of the future research necessary to both develop new features within the site/app, and to see if the users notice any big differences, improvements, or losses when Spotify makes changes.

Interestingly, most users had difficulty coming up with something they disliked about Spotify besides ads, and a feature they would take away. Although on the surface this seems positive, we would want to delve deeper and develop questioning to dig into problems users have that they cannot immediately think of. These small problems could accumulate, and if a

competitor improves more than Spotify, they could steal customers even for these seemingly miniscule issues. Constant testing of new developments and current user preferences will be necessary to maintain Spotify's large share of the music streaming pie.

Personas and Scenarios

Persona 1:

Mike is a 31 year old male who lives in Chicago. He works as a freelance graphic designer and enjoys being able to work everyday with the purpose to create. When he is able to, he likes to listen to comedy sketches or music on Spotify while he works on projects because it helps him be more creative. He also appreciates that many of his clients have been with him now for at least several years and there is an open avenue of communication that both parties don't hesitate to use when there are questions and critiques of ideas. He likes this freedom that he's integrated into his business and works hard to maintain it, even if that means he needs to put extra effort into it.

When he can, Mike tries to keep a healthy balance of work and private life. In his free time, he likes to go to concerts with his girlfriend (Rose), cook, and teach his dog (Eddie) to do different tricks. However, since he is a freelancer, he is in charge of getting everything done himself and doesn't have time to frequently browse the internet or social media. He will frequently work on the weekends and late at night if he needs to finish a project before a deadline. Unfortunately, this sometimes interferes with Mike being able to see Rose and has become a source of tension between them since Rose sometimes feels like he chooses work over her too often. While Mike feels bad about this, he also knows that he made an agreement with his customers to finish the work he was contracted on time and therefore doesn't hesitate to continue working when needed. He views this as an important reason why he has been able

to retain clients throughout the years and is glad that he doesn't need to search for more at this point in time.

To show that he still loves and appreciates Rose, he tries to cook a more elaborate meal for her at least once a week. This also allows him to try out new recipes that he's found. Many times he will be listening to music on Spotify with Rose while he cooks and is a frequent source of them determining what artists they want to try and see at a concert.

Scenario 1:

Mike and Rose are sitting in the kitchen listening to Spotify while Mike is cooking up a new pasta dish he saw on the internet. They are currently listening to Mike's Discover Weekly playlist and have been enjoying the music that Spotify has curated onto it. While listening, a song that they really like is played and prompts Mike to look into the artist that is singing. After opening up the artist's page, he recognizes a few more of their songs. Rose, also, really enjoys the other songs by the artist and starts to dance while their songs are playing and briefly mentions that it would be fun to see them perform live and how much fun that could be.

Since Mike is already on the artist's page, he scrolls down to see if they are touring and having any concerts near Chicago soon. To Mike and Rose's delight, the artist is coming to Chicago to perform in two months. Mike clicks on the concert listed in Spotify which brings him to the artist's external webpage where he can buy tickets. After briefly checking with Rose and seeing that tickets are only thirty dollars, he buys two of them.

After Mike completes the purchase, he mentions to Rose how they really should use this functionality of Spotify to find more concerts to go to and wonders if there is a way to get alerts for when his favorite artists are performing concerts near Chicago. Rose is unsure and Mike turns back to cooking their meal, quickly forgetting about the thought.

Persona 2:

Rebecca is a 21-year old senior in college in the United States studying Biology on a pre-medicine track. She studies hard every day and can often be found at one of her school's libraries studying for many midterm and final exams at once.

To destress, she likes to listen to music while she studies and when she walks to and from classes and her dorm. There are multiple ways she listens to music - she uses Spotify, the music she has on the free version of Apple Music through her iPhone and sometimes Youtube if she is studying. Recently, Rebecca decided to subscribe to the student premium plan on Spotify after hearing her friends rave about it. She was more willing to get the plan because she hated the advertisements and wanted the extra perks of a free subscription to Hulu and Showtime that come with the student plan.

Outside of school, Rebecca is a member of a professional pre-med fraternity, a volunteering organization and works a part-time job as a lab assistant. Since she also needs to make time to hang out with friends, study, and take care of herself mentally and physically, Rebecca has found music helps her destress in between tasks or while studying. She also loves to play music on her speaker while with her friends because it improves her mood and gets everyone more excited if they are going out to a party or bar.

Scenario 2:

Rebecca usually studies at the library, but for a change of scenery sometimes goes to a cafe near her dorm. She enjoys when cafes, restaurants and parties have music playing because it lets her discover more music.

For her upcoming Biology exam, Rebecca decided to study at the Starbucks near her dorm. Whenever she hears a song she likes but does not know, she pulls up the app Shazam on her phone to find out what it is. After that, she will go on Spotify to find the song and add it to

her “Studying Music” playlist. She loves that she can create as many playlists as she wants while also using the Spotify-created playlists.

While waiting for her drink at the cafe, Rebecca heard a new song playing. As usual, she pulled up Shazam to find out the name and artist of the song. Before she could pull up Spotify to then search for the song and add it to her playlist, she bumped into her classmate Cassie. As they got talking, Rebecca closed Shazam and put away her phone, soon forgetting the song playing in the background as well as the name and artist.

Persona 3:

Lexi is a 24 year old working at the Warner Music Group in Los Angeles, California. She loves music, which is why she is pursuing a career in the music industry. She is passionate about connecting with others through music interests, and likes it when she’s easily able to share music with friends, and discover new music. Sometimes she is frustrated by people who don’t understand all the work and creativity that goes into making music, as she does this for her job. Often she’s annoyed by the radio playing the same five songs over and over, as it does not reflect the amount of music out in the world for people to listen to. Her interests include going to concerts, comedy shows, TV & entertainment, and cats. Overall, she’s introverted, creative, funny, and intelligent. Her goal is to center music around the culture, rather than just the entertainment factor.

Scenario 3:

Lexi just recently moved to Los Angeles to start her new job at Warner Music Group. She is really excited, as she loves music and the culture and community it brings to listeners. She is hoping that her time working at Warner Music will help her to expand her music library, meet new people with similar music interests, and learn about all different music platforms and what each of them do. Lexi goes to concerts often, but usually with the same group of friends

and wants to expand her circle and bond with others over their love for music. She also makes playlists for her friends to play when they're hanging out or partying, but wants an easier way to share her music taste with others.

Most recently, Lexi was hanging out with three of her friends who are all Spotify users. One of her friends, Carrie, created a new playlist she wanted to play for the group, so Lexi found Carrie on Spotify (they were friends on the app already) and started the playlist. Soon enough, the group decided to make a collaborative playlist for the future. Since they were all members of Spotify, Lexi was able to share a playlist with them which they could all add their favorite songs to. Hopefully, Lexi thought, this playlist would continue growing and updating for years.

Lexi's friend Diane showed her that she could see the recent songs Lexi had listened to on the Spotify app. Lexi knew this was a feature on Spotify, but thought she had been listening in private mode - although she liked to share her music with friends, she did not always want them to see what she was listening to. With Diane's help, Lexi found the button to switch off "sharing music with feed" on Spotify. She hoped this would stay switched on as long as she was using Spotify, but knew in the past the button would sometimes be switched back on without her permission.

Appendix

Audio Recordings:

Please follow the [link to this folder](#), which contains all audio recordings of interviews (labelling is in the folder).

Transcripts:

Please follow the [link to this folder](#), which contains all transcriptions of interviews (labelling is in the folder).

Interview Guiding Research Questions:

- How do certain features of Spotify impact the music streaming experience?
 - What features do users most frequently use and enjoy with music streaming platforms?
 - What level of satisfaction do users have with the features Spotify offers?
 - Who are Spotify's frequent users?
 - Why have Spotify users chosen Spotify over other music streaming platforms?