

A Competitive Analysis of the Indieflow Music Management Platform

Competitive Critical User Journey

Team k.ai - A7 - Nov 9th, 2025

CSC491 - Victoria Bukta

Our Team:

James Chen xijames.chen@mail.utoronto.ca

Kevin Hu q.hu@mail.utoronto.ca

Ali Eren Kaya alieren.kaya@mail.utoronto.ca

Monique Mattia (454) monique.mattia@mail.utoronto.ca

Yvonne Zhang yvonnezy.zhang@mail.utoronto.ca

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TL;DR

Indieflow is a release management platform for independent musicians offering task tracking and collaboration features. We evaluated Indieflow's core features and compared them against our product. While Indieflow provides useful templates and organization tools, critical features are broken or unusable, creating disruptions to user productivity. Our product will differentiate ourselves by providing a more customized release plan for every single customer.

User Goal

As an independent musician, I want to be able to keep track of every task that needs to be done so that I can stay organized on the path to a successful release.

Detailed Summary of Findings

User Persona

Jennifer is a 23-year-old independent musician preparing for her first release in November 2025. She's tech-savvy and comfortable using digital platforms. She also has grown up with social media and stream services. However, she's new to the professional side of the music industry and lacks experience with release management and promotion strategies.

Experience Level

- First time making a release (no release before)
- Comfortable with technology and social media platforms
- Use tools such as gmail, google calendar, and note-taking apps

Goals & Motivations

- Create a successful release that reaches audience
- Build a foundation for future release
- Establish herself as a credible independent musician

Pain Points

- Feels overwhelmed by the number of platforms and tools needed to manage a release
- Lacks clear guidance on what steps to take and when
- Uncertain about promotion strategies and whether they're effective
- Struggles with productivity when multi-tasking (finishing recordings, planning release, creating promotional content)

Current Workflow

Jennifer currently uses a fragmented set of tools: she has Google Docs for planning notes, her phone's calendar for deadlines, and Instagram for promotion. She has a loose plan for her release but wishes she had more structure and concrete step-by-step guidance to ensure she doesn't miss important tasks or opportunities.

Tools Used

- Indieflow¹
 - Release plan creation and task management
 - Collaboration and team member management
- Gmail
 - Receive:
 - email verification code during registration
 - collaborator invitation emails
 - notifications for task assignments
- Google Calendar
 - Calendar integration with IndieFlow
 - Test synchronization of events between platforms

Highlights and Lowlights Table

Task	Severity	Notes
Personalized Onboarding & Release Template	Great	The onboarding process gives recommendations that suit the goal and situation of each user. For release templates, It is great to have different options for users that have different preferences on how soon they want to release and the amount of preparation they want to do.
Attempting to use the recommended Distribution feature	Severe	The feature (Distribution) we were recommended to use in onboarding is broken/unavailable, despite being the first thing we were pointed to. The buttons do nothing or show an error/unavailable prompt when clicked on. Unacceptable for first impressions.

¹ IndieFlow. "Homepage." <https://www.indieflow.me/>.

Navigating the interface of the release planner	Moderate	There are multiple instances where the functionality of a button or switch is unclear because their labels are ambiguous or do not exist. They seemingly do nothing when toggled or clicked on, which is confusing to the end user.
Creating and sharing share a draft playlist link	Great	Users can export a link that contains a “mock playlist” to be shared with others. No login is required to view it, which significantly lowers the friction to use such a feature.
Using the Release planner to plan future tasks	Severe	We experienced many bugs that affect the user experience: Due dates not being saved correctly, duplicated empty tasks were incorrectly added to the first section when trying to set due dates, etc.
Invite collaborators to release plan	Great	Being able to send an invite to another user to work on a release plan together is a great feature to have, something to consider for our long-term plan.
Connecting to 3rd party platforms	Severe	The “connect to Instagram” button leads to a Meta Error page, preventing us from logging in. The “join discord server” link is invalid/expired when we attempted to join.

Product Recommendations

Usability of Essential Features

Many essential functions, including the Distribution feature, calendar integration, and track uploads, were either non-functional or highly unstable. We experienced severe bugs, such as due dates not saving, empty task duplication, and broken uploads, which significantly disrupt the productivity of users. These issues plus the fact that the onboarding throws us straight into a disabled feature suggest a need for more thorough QA testing and real-world user scenario validation. And there should be more consideration into the impact before disabling an existing feature (like broken links, dead-end onboarding, etc.)

UI and UX

The unlabelled and ambiguous buttons show a lack of attention to details. This in our experience makes the service more confusing to the user, and decreases user confidence when using the app, as mysterious buttons with no explanations makes it seem like it's the user's fault for not understanding how to use the platform. Adding visual cues, tooltips, and explanations for elements on the page would help users understand system behavior and reduce frustration. Similarly, small usability features like multi-select and customizable buttons can make managing tasks much easier for the end user.

3rd-Party Platform and Community Integration

Connections and integrations with platforms like Instagram and Discord do not work well, and both have issues that the user cannot resolve themselves. Experiences like this (broken links and blocked login page) can make the platform feel unprofessional and unreliable, reducing user confidence in the service. We recommend IndiFlow to conduct more frequent and extensive integration and end-to-end testing to ensure features that rely on outside services continue to work over time, and get notified about new problems created by a 3rd-party change, so that issues can be addressed quickly.

Competitor Product Analysis

- Where our product excels
 - Understanding our user using multiple tailored questions during onboarding
 - Our product allows the user to start with a goal-based custom todo list that increases the chance of a successful release compared to Indieflow's generic template
- Areas for inspiration from competitor's offerings
 - Like Indieflow, we can recommend features based on the musician's needs and explain why and how the features can help them
 - Collaboration capabilities is a good long-term goal to allow band members to stay in sync

Broad Competitive CUJ Step	Competitor Strengths	Competitor Weaknesses
Onboarding	Indieflow recommended features based on the user's goals at the end of onboarding	User is unable to enter their custom goal if it is not on the preset list (e.g. "growing an audience" was not an option) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recommendations are less

		<p>useful when they don't fully reflect the artist's goals</p> <p>No explanations are given for feature recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can be confusing why features are recommended
Creating and editing todos	<p>Todos in the Goal Planner are visible on a monthly calendar, allowing the user to see the distribution of tasks over time</p> <p>Other Indieflow users can collaborate on a todo list, allowing band members to stay in sync</p>	<p>Todo list and calendar features have severe issues that limits the musician's ability to plan a release (e.g. setting a todo due date does not save correctly)</p>

Broad Competitive CUJ Step	How Our Product Compares
Onboarding	<p><i>Understanding user:</i></p> <p>While Indieflow asked one question about the user's goals, we will ask multiple questions to understand the user, including dynamic follow-up questions (See sketch below).</p> <p><i>Welcome Jennifer! Let's get to know you to better serve you.</i></p> <p><i>What is your long-term goal as a musician?</i></p> <p><i>(Monetization) (Reaching an audience)</i></p> <p><i>Enter custom goal</i></p> <p><i>How many releases have you completed?</i></p> <p><i>0 0</i></p> <p><i>0 1-2</i></p> <p><i>0 3-5</i></p> <p><i>0 6+</i></p> <p><i>Recommending features:</i></p>

	Previously we did not think about recommending features. We can also do this, learning from Indieflow, while doing a better job explaining the rationale behind our recommendations.
Creating and editing todos	Indieflow uses templates that are not meaningfully tailored to the user's specific goals. Our product differentiates by generating a custom todo list, increasing the chance of a successful release. This tailoring is possible using the rich information collected during onboarding and by asking users the goal they want to focus on before generating a todo list.

CUJ Overview Table

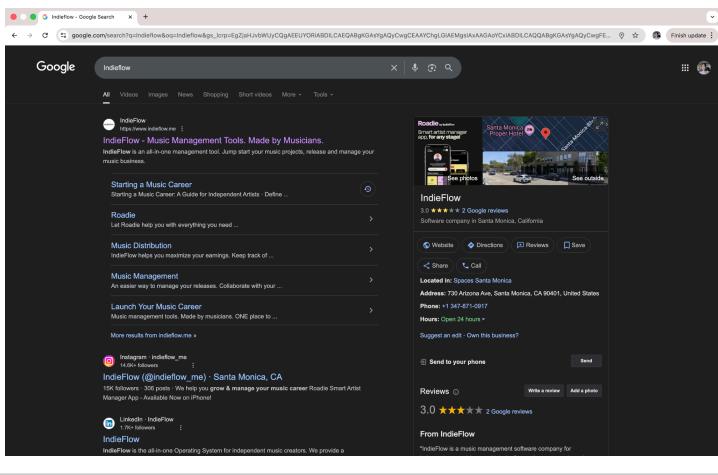
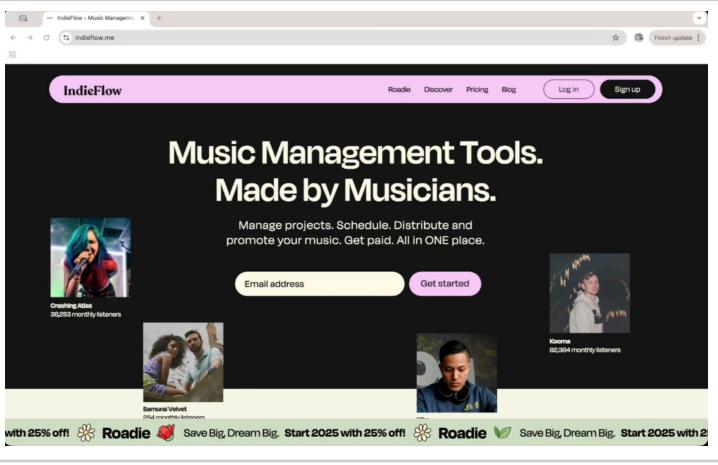
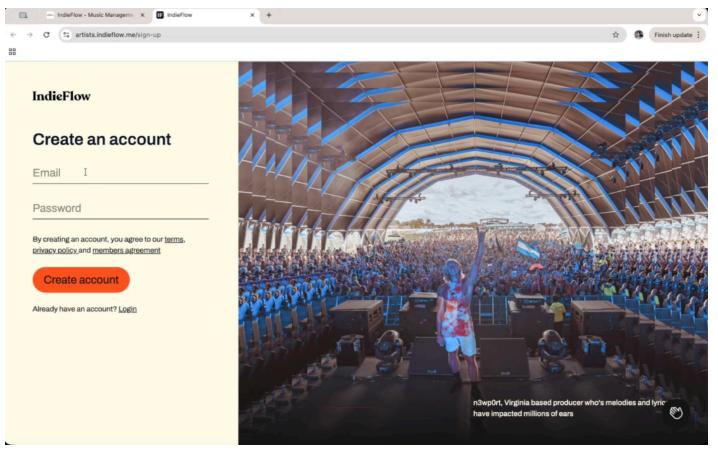
Task	Time	Switches
Onboarding & Account Creation	4 min	3
Release Schedule Setup	1 min	-
Creation of the Initial Release Plan	3 min	-
Release Plan Customization	8 mins	-
Debugging	15 mins	-
Testing Out Core Features Outside of Onboarding Scope (Not included in the End-to-End Journey)	30 mins	5

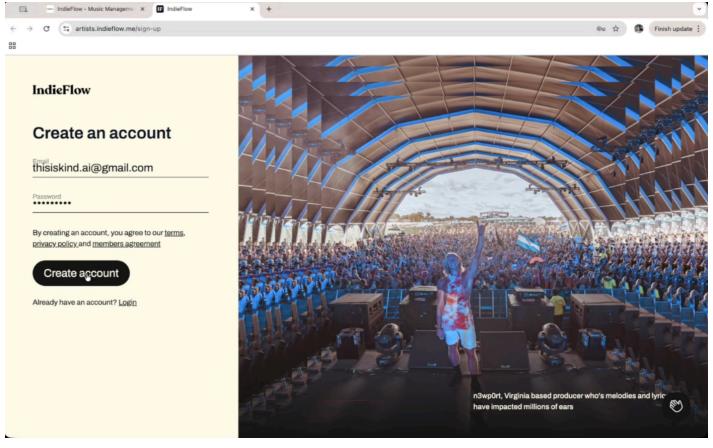
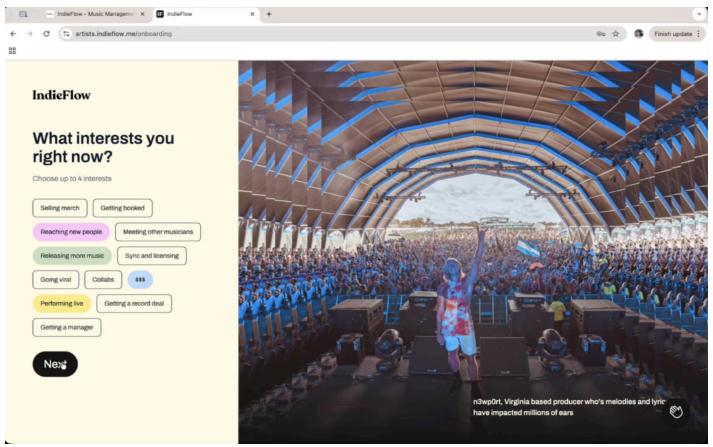
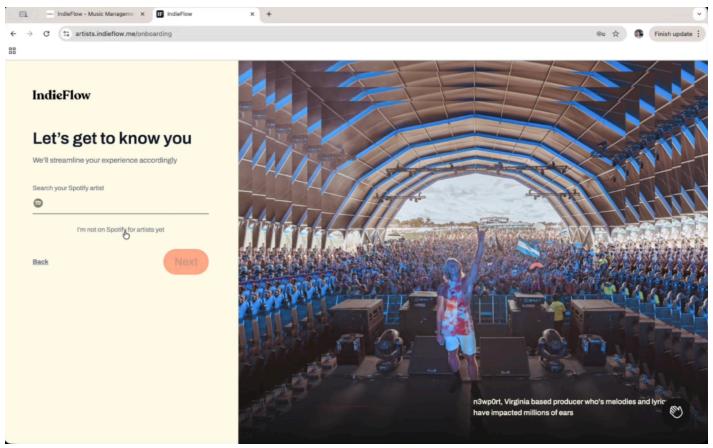
Total Time: 1 hour 1 minute

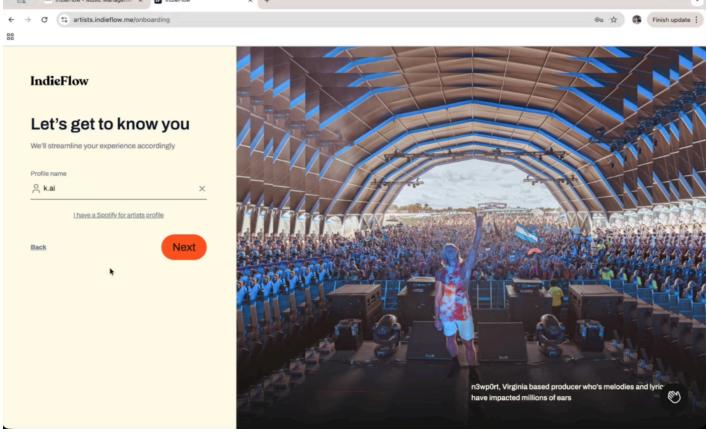
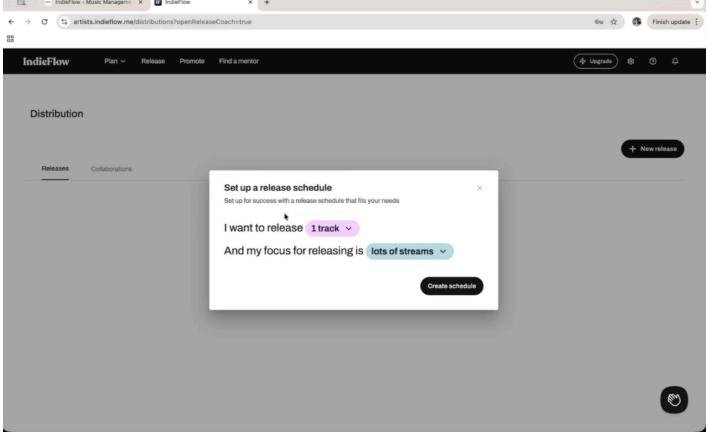
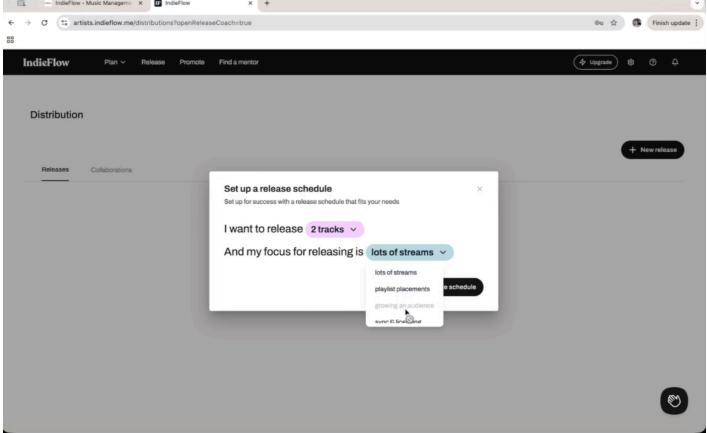
Total Context Switches: 8

End-to-End User Journey Documentation

Step and Context Switch	Note	Screenshot

<p>1</p> <p>Search IndieFlow on browser</p>	
<p>2(Switch)</p> <p>Click the link with www.indieflow.me</p>	
<p>3(Switch)</p> <p>At the right top of the screen, click "Sign up." This redirects the user to https://artists.indieflow.me/sign-up</p>	

4	<p>Fill in email and password fields and click "Create account"</p>	
5	<p>Choose up to 4 options from the given interests list and click "Next"</p>	
6	<p>Input the Spotify artist profile if it exists, otherwise click the hyperlink with the text "I'm not on Spotify for artists yet" below the field</p>	

7(Switch)	<p>Fill in a profile name and click "Next"</p>	
8	<p>IndieFlow profile is now created. The flow asks the user to set up a release schedule: Specify the number of tracks to release</p>	
9	<p>Specify your focus within the same dialogue</p>	

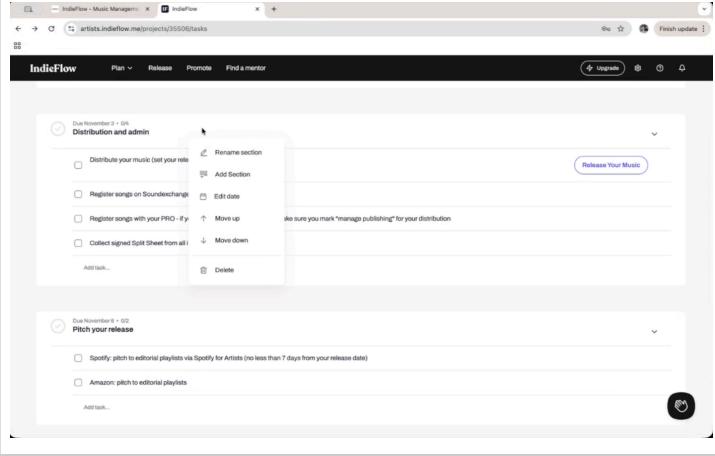
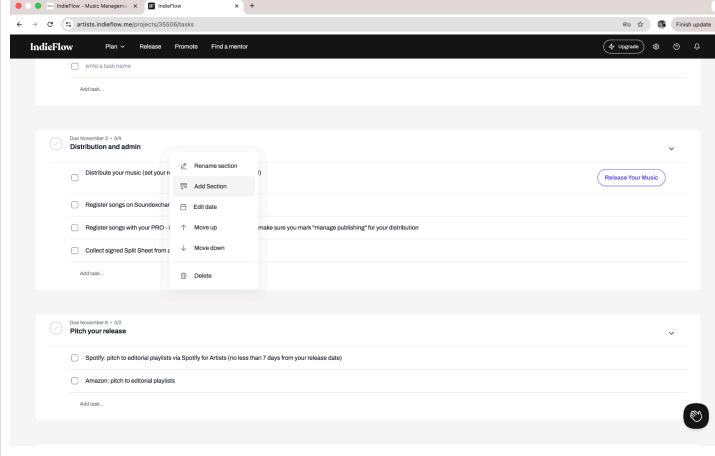
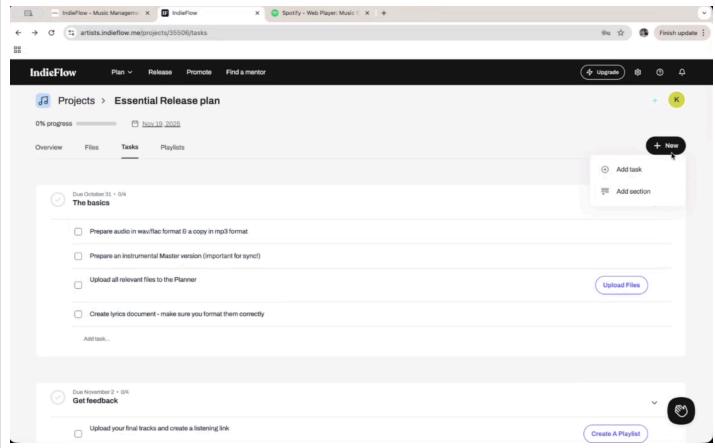
10	<p>The user is presented a warning that reads "The distribution feature is currently not available," close the tab</p>	<p>The distribution feature is currently unavailable.</p> <p>We are discussing a different approach managing distribution operations more efficiently. Our goal is always to provide our users with the highest standards of service. We assume this will be a matter of a few weeks and will do our best to find the best solution. Apologies for the inconvenience in the meantime.</p> <p>For any questions don't hesitate to email us at team@indieflow.me</p>
11	<p>At the top navigation tab, click "Plan" and choose "Project," this will open a new dialogue</p>	<p>Projects</p> <p>+ Create project</p>
12	<p>Choose the type of project you'll be creating: "Releases"</p>	<p>STEP 1/2 What project are you creating?</p> <p>Releases</p> <p>Marketing</p> <p>Tour</p> <p>Video Shoot</p>

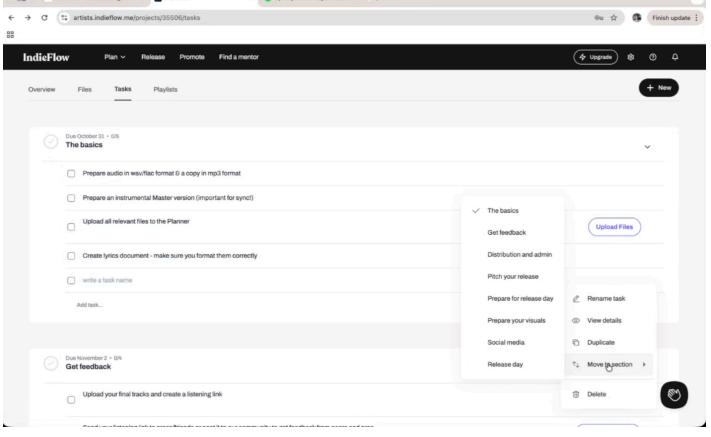
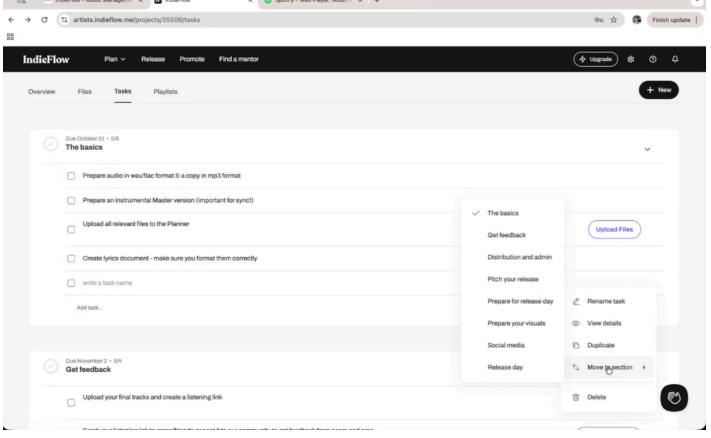
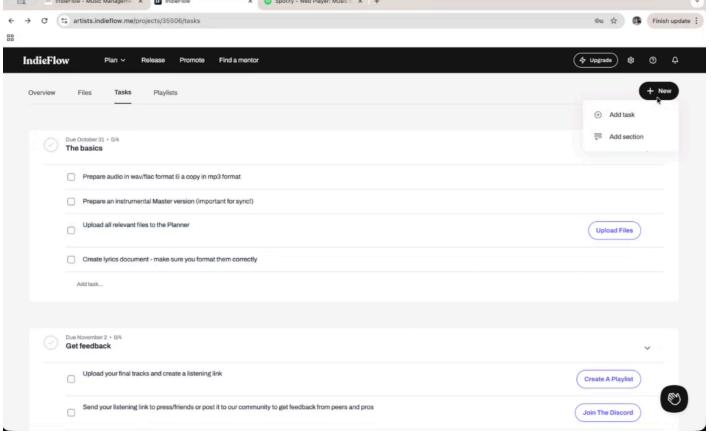
13	<p>Specify a template or choose a blank project: "Essential Release Plan"</p>	
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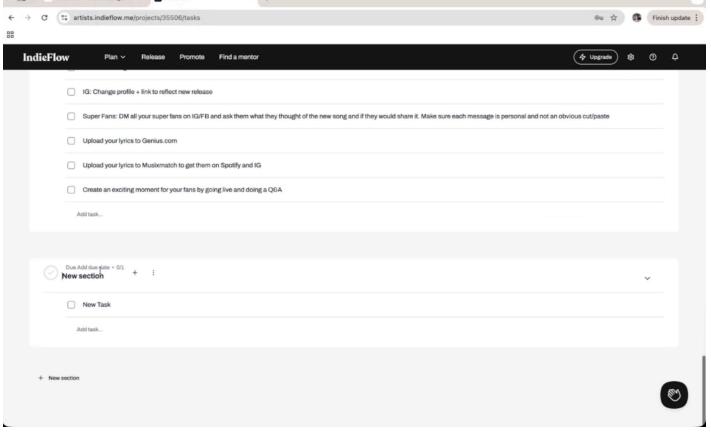
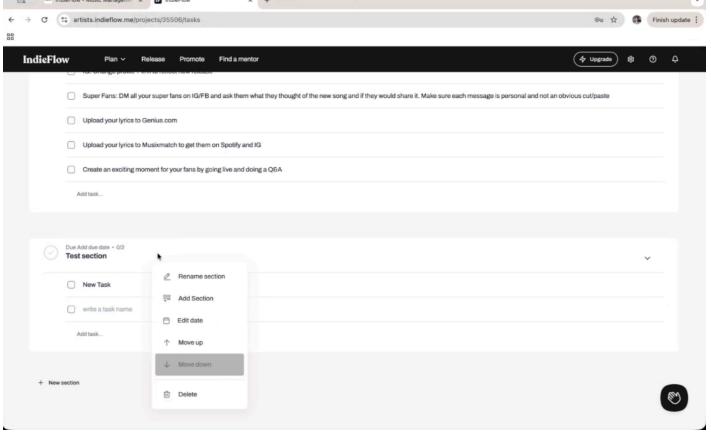
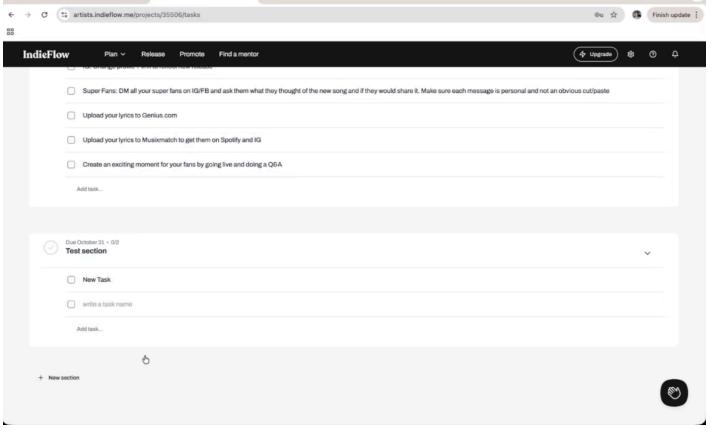
14	<p>Now user has a release plan that consists of chunks of tasks that correspond to milestones of the release</p>	
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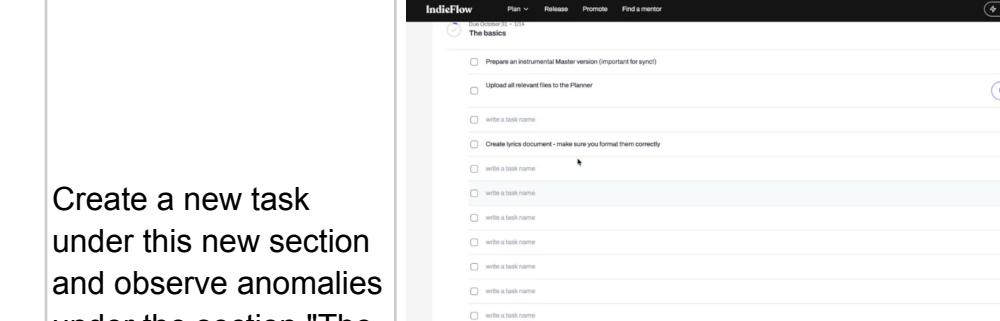
15	<p>Click "Tasks" to see the full release plan</p>	
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16	<p>Hover over to a random pre-populated task and choose to see details</p>	
17	<p>A details tab will open on the right</p>	
18	<p>Try to assign a status by clicking to the corresponding field: "In Progress"</p>	

19	<p>Hover over to a random section and choose three-dot menu, choose "Rename section", observe non-response</p>	
20	<p>Retrace the previous step and choose "Add Section," observe non-response</p>	
21	<p>To create a new task, navigate to the top of the release plan and click "+ New" and choose "Add task"</p>	

22	<p>After a long wait time, see an empty task populated for the top section since user was not asked to specify a section</p>	
23	<p>Hover over the new task and three-dot menu, choose "Move to section" and specify a section, after the load period, observe the empty task populated on another section</p>	
24	<p>To create a new section, navigate to the top of the release plan and click "+ New" and choose "Add section"</p>	

25	<p>See at the bottom of the page named, "New Section"</p>	
26	<p>Rename the section to "Test section, observe the changes</p>	
27	<p>Change the due date to October 31st, after waiting a while hit a refresh and observe the non-change</p>	



The screenshot shows a web-based application window titled "IndieFlow - Music Manager". The URL in the address bar is "artists.indieflow.me/projects/35506/tasks". The main content area is titled "IndieFlow" and has tabs for "Plan", "Release", "Promote", and "Find a mentor". Below these tabs is a section titled "The basics" with a sub-section header "Preparation". A list of tasks is displayed as checkboxes:

- Prepare an instrumental Master version (important for sync!)
- Upload all relevant files to the Planner
- write a task name
- Create lyrics document - make sure you format them correctly
- write a task name

On the right side of the task list, there is a blue button labeled "Upload Files". At the bottom right of the page, there is a small "..." icon.

Create a new task under this new section and observe anomalies under the section "The basics"

Bibliography

IndieFlow. "Homepage." <https://www.indieflow.me/>.