



In the good old days, if you wished to identify a song you heard on the radio or at a disco, you had to wait for the deejay to announce it, or ask someone knowledgeable like the music shop owner or a ‘hip’ friend who has purchased the record or cassette tape with that song in it. These days, all you need is a mobile music identification (ID) app like SoundHound or Shazam to help you identify songs that piqued your interest. But is it as simple as pressing a button? Here’s how you can be S.U.R.E. :

## SOURCE:

Music ID apps match your search against their proprietary data bases containing millions of songs. Two of the most popular apps are:



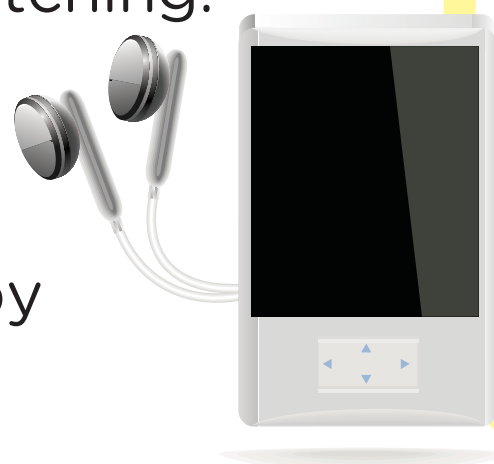
- **Shazam** with a database that contains over 11 million songs<sup>1</sup>.
- **SoundHound** which taps on its Midomi database of about 2 million songs<sup>2</sup>.

Both services allow artistes or their representatives to submit new songs<sup>3 4</sup>.

## UNDERSTAND

how the different music ID apps work. For instance:

- **Shazam** ‘listens’ to the music that is playing and matches its acoustic signature against its database by pattern matching.
- **SoundHound** allows users to search by listening to music, singing, humming, whistling, or a text search. However, whistling can be a little tricky, as advised by its support page<sup>6</sup>:



“SoundHound has been designed to work even when you whistle! But please note that the microphones on most mobile devices, including iPhones and Android phones, are very sensitive to whistling. To make sure your whistled search gets the best results, try not to whistle too loud or too close to the microphone: hold the phone at arm’s length while whistling, and whistle at only a moderate volume so that the SoundHound volume bar does not fill up all the way. On searches of music you sing, hum or hear playing, it’s OK to have higher volume, because the devices’ mics are not as sensitive to those sounds.”

## RESEARCH

Find the features most important to you, and see if a better alternative exists	Shazam	Shazam	Soundtracking	Songs	Pandora Radio	Soundhound	Shazam Encore	Discover - discover	Music Machine
Price	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	\$6.99	\$6.99	\$3.99	\$3.99
Rating	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
# Reviews	78,740	380,978	2,786	33,033	628,073	43,167	7,742	2,601	1,336
Popularity Trend									
Rating Trend									
Type									
social music									
streaming audio									
tagging app	✓✓✓	×				×	×		
Goal									
listening to the radio	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓
identify song	×	✓	✓✓			×	×	×	×
recording a song	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Audience									
for music fans	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Feature									
classical music	×	×		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	×	✓		
country music				✓✓✓	✓✓✓				
listening experience	✓			✓✓✓	✓✓✓				
mix of music				✓✓✓	✓✓✓				
play list				✓✓✓	✓✓✓				
song selection				✓✓✓	✓✓✓				
variety of stations				✓✓✓	✓✓✓				
ad radio				✓✓✓	✓✓✓				

–If **Shazam** or **SoundHound** somehow fails to identify your song, you could dig a little deeper, and try other apps: <http://www.techshout.com/alternatives/2013/28/soundhound-alternative/>

## EVALUATE

your results from the different apps. The popular apps tend to identify pop songs quickly, but what about old or obscure songs, songs sung in languages that are uncommon to your region or country? For instance, Baidu Music (available only in China) is likely to be able to identify more Chinese songs with ease.

### References

- <sup>1</sup><http://www.csmonitor.com/Innovation/2013/0708/Shazam-app-gets-40-million-from-Mexican-telecom>
- <sup>2</sup>[http://www.midomi.com/index.php?action=main.about\\_us](http://www.midomi.com/index.php?action=main.about_us)
- <sup>3</sup><https://support.shazam.com/hc/en-us/articles/202604156-Submitting-songs-or-albums-to-the-Shazam-database>
- <sup>4</sup><http://www.soundhound.com/index.php?action=s.faq>
- <sup>5</sup><http://www.lifehacker.com.au/2011/02/shazam-vs-soundhound-battle-of-the-mobile-song-id-services/>
- <sup>6</sup><http://support.soundhound.com/customer/portal/articles/1043588-can-i-whistle-a-song-into-soundhound->
- <sup>7</sup><https://www.techinasia.com/baidu-unveils-singaporedeveloped-music-search-tech-challenge-shazam-tencent/>