

Interview Synthesis

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Introduction

Six user interviews were conducted and six corresponding personas were constructed thereafter in order to gain an understanding of different individuals' musical experiences and processes. Commonalities, differences, as well as ideas to research further have been aggregated for these interviews and personas in the following sections.

Commonalities

One commonality that is shared across all of the personas and interviewees is the challenge of balancing music with other things in life. All of the personas and individuals from the interviews are relatively busy. Whether it is school, extra-curricular activities, or other hobbies - everyone has expressed a dissatisfaction with the amount of time remaining to allocate towards playing music. This commonality is important as it showcases that although all of the individuals have ambitions to play music, they cannot act on these ambitions all the time due to the constraints of their schedules. Due to these individuals' busy schedules, it is apparent that a desire to play the instrument does not translate to actual time allocated to playing that instrument.

Another commonality between the personas and interviewees is that although they are all very passionate about music, they treat music as a hobby rather than their main priority. They all enjoy playing or composing music, and they get emotional gratification from immersing themselves in it. As such, it serves as a release from everyday life, just as sports and video games might for somebody else. The main priority of these personas and interviewees is their occupation or education, which introduces many obstacles to their ability to enjoy music as noted in the preceding paragraph.

There were also some commonalities shared between a few interviewees, but not all. The biggest commonality was between musicians whose primary music interest is playing instruments or recording music, rather than singing. Specifically, the cost and physical logistics of playing an instrument was an obstacles to practicing and playing instruments. This is important because, for example, the cost of equipment to do things like record a guitar song into a computer and the cost of bringing large instruments on airplanes limit financially strapped users from playing their instrument in different environments and methods.

Differences

There are several key differences between the different interviewees and personas. One main difference was with regards to the most important aspect of music to each individual, whether it be performance, production, or the enjoyment of playing music. Individuals each had their own interests and to different extents. This translated further to having different career goals. Certain

interviewees wanted to pursue music as a career, while others wanted to keep it as a very high-priority hobby. There is a slight correlation between the two, but it is difficult to tell since everyone was very passionate about music, but did not have the time to pursue it as much as they wanted, as further explained in the Commonalities section.

It was also found that although the individuals have many years of musical experience, the level of formal music training is not necessarily indicative of the extent the interviewee and persona want to pursue music. Several interviewees and personas have had formal instruction in their respective instrument(s), while others were self-taught and have less experience with music theory. Whether the individual had formal instruction or not, the likelihood of wanting to pursue music as a career is not correlated, but instead is more influenced by their internal motivations and most important aspects of music. However, individuals with no formal instruction sometimes found it as a blocker in their musical pursuits.

Further Research

All the interviewees and personas covered very experienced student musicians. This gives a lot of insight on musical problems faced in this specific demographic, but not others. Further interviews and persona construction should be conducted with musicians who operate in a professional space, and inexperienced beginner musicians. These interviews would give insight into different communities of musicians, along with their commonalities, pain points, and differences. Comparing and contrasting across more varied types of musicians would also provide more universal frustrations and needs.

The current pain points gathered from this process are mostly related to time management, music-related expenses, and the transportation of large equipment. Research could be done on digital instruments that already provide cost effective solutions to musicians needs, without sacrificing too much in terms of sound quality or expressiveness. Research should also be conducted on time inefficiencies musicians face. These could be physical problems like transport and maintenance of an instrument being too time consuming, or more abstract problems like not utilizing practice time as efficiently as possible.

Furthermore, further research could be done on the pain points associated with the ergonomics of playing an instrument or when singing. Only one interviewee provided a response in regards to ergonomics, specifically the weight of the guitar, which leaves room for more exploration. Areas to explore could be the repetitive strain on the wrist, fingers and vocal chords from an instrument or from singing, and improper technique and posture that could lead to injury.