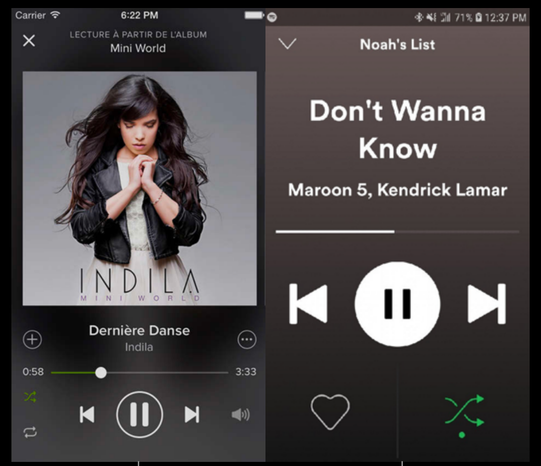
Spotify

Spotify is a music streaming application for desktop and mobile. Recently, Spotify released a “car mode” for their mobile app that detects the bluetooth connection established between a mobile device and a vehicle.

Car mode reformats the basic functions of the app in an attempt to reduce the cognitive load placed on the user to promote safety during operation of the vehicle.

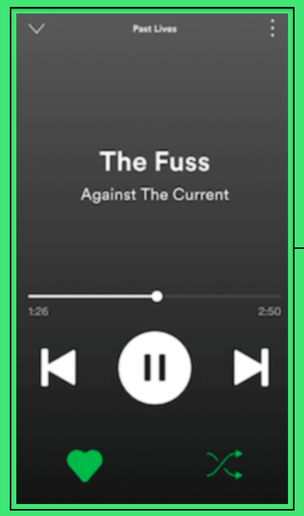
The changes in car mode include:
- Removal of album art
- Enlarged text
- Limited to Play, Pause, Last, Skip, Shuffle, and Favorite functions

* All other standard functions are accessible through minimize



Standard

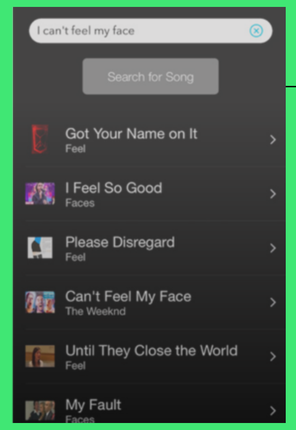
Car Mode



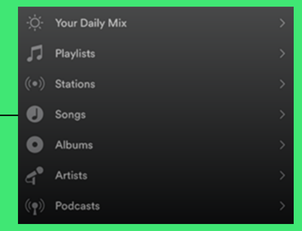
- Play/Pause
- Next Song
- Last Song
- Shuffle
- Favorite
- Vertical Elipses and Minimize

When the user connects Spotify to their vehicle via bluetooth, the user is presented with an additional screen intended to simplify the process of navigating the app.

These controls only apply to the current playlist. In order to transition away, the user must minimize the screen.



Minimizing the screen moves the user out of “car mode.” As a result, the user is prompted with a smaller list based interface with interactions located at the top of the screen.



Context

Spotify’s care mode is designed to simplify the experience of controlling your music while driving. The increased size of the controls reduces the cognitive effort required to take action, thus allowing the user to focus more effort on driving safely.

Framing

However, the lack of advanced features included in the redesign leads users to transition out of car mode for access. Unfortunately for the user, the interactions outside of car mode were not redesigned.

Without a visual hierarchy that allows users to quickly identify relevancy and accomplish their goal, the user is overloaded with stimuli (Johnson, 2013). Additionally, Ritter (2014) states that “the system should be consistent across all subsystems.”

Nature

Recommendations

Approach 1:

- Build a better understanding of the user’s trip and allow them to plan for it.
  - Allow the user to create an automated plan for their trip that is activated. This would reduce the need for interaction with the screen.
  - Methods: Text-to-speech, dashboard integration, or gestures.

Approach 2:

- Redesign advanced features with consistency in mind.
  - Keep the visual hierarchy associated with the rest of the application and design the car mode to follow the same guidelines with modifications to the size, position, and display of interactions and information.