Vertical Music Discovery

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Problem & Solution

- How do we make music discovery easier?
- How can less well known artists enter the public sphere?
- Solution: create a mobile app that allows users to explore the music field / connect to lesser known artists—vertical discovery.

Inquiry: Joe

- Stanford undergrad
- Uses Pandora
- Wants more accurate recommendations. Says it's possible to have too much variety
- Dislikes overcomplicated UI

Inquiry: Isabel

- Radio DJ at KZSU for a Spanish language show
- Uses multiple apps and programs for music discovery. Wishes the features were condensed
- Wishes there were more specific genres for apps and internet radio

Inquiry: Lishka and Warren

- Trainees at KZSU, future DJs
- Frustrated with over complicated UI designs
- Looking for atypical ways of finding music, ex: search based on musical instrument and style

Inquiry: Results

Our interview subjects:

1. use many tools and sources
2. think friend recommendations are important
3. don't do heavy research
4. want more ease, diversity,

   and precision

Task Analysis I

- Users: people with at least a little interest in music discovery.
- Tasks users perform now: searching music on the Internet, making playlists
- Tasks users desire: finding more new music, searching for music in specific subgenres

Task Analysis II

- **How tasks are learned**: simple tutorials
- **Where tasks are performed**: while working or on-the-go
- **Relationship between customer and data**: app remembers customer preferences
- **Other existing tools**: iTunes, radio, streaming services, social media, word of mouth

Task Analysis III

- **How users communicate**: recommendations via social media sharing
- **How often tasks are performed**: for finding music, very frequently
- **Time constraints**: distractions in daily life
- **What happens when things go wrong**: get the problem fixed or find another service

Task I: Encounter, find new music

- Randomness can be beneficial to music discovery but it can also cause problems
- Solution: randomness within a tight scope
  - User defined scope reduces unwanted suggestions
  - Giving users more options: lets the user decide which direction to go

Task II: Share and communicate

- #1 way users find music: recommendations
- Let users share to social media
- Also let users ping each other, send playlists, song recommendations, or new genres

Task III: Rate music, participate

- Some artists have low listener counts because they are genuinely and universally considered bad
- Let users boost music visibility with good ratings or remove bad music with low ratings
- Also let users make connections between songs and song similarity. Crowdsource the music spectrum

Music Journey

- Provide visual and creative experience for music listeners
- Have a theme or some "journey" visualization for background
- At the end of song, let users pick between 2-5 options to continue; each option corresponds to a different path down a network of music themes
- Journey progresses through a "music topography"

Music Journey Sketches
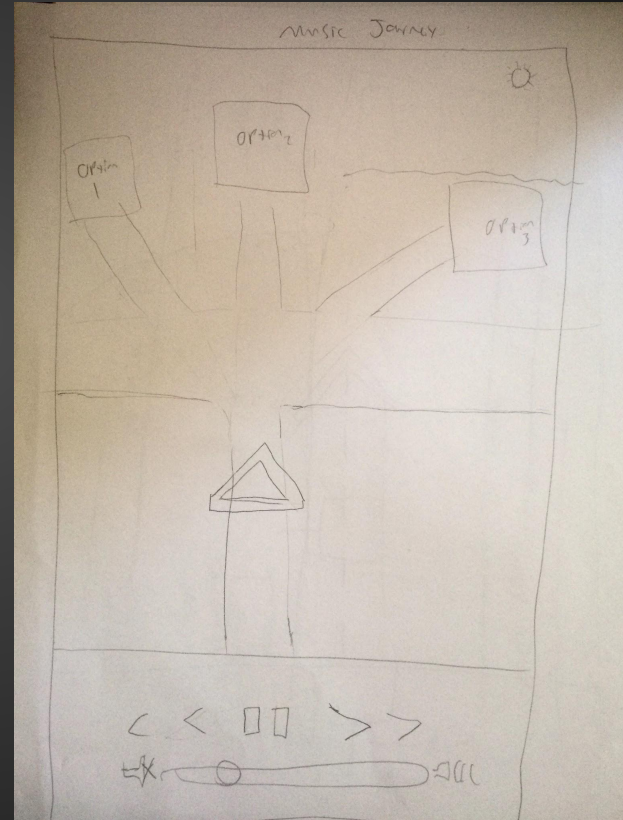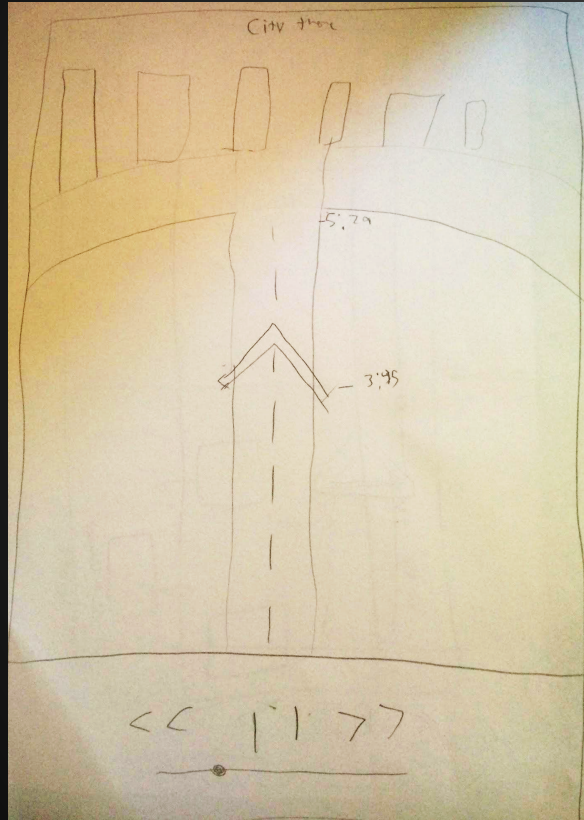
Music Web

- Visualize and connect music influences, genre similarities, and music qualities in one large network
- Let customers explore network in 3D space.
- Intelligent search features can narrow down web, reduce clutter.
- App uses crowdsourced recommendations for network arrangement, song connections, and genre names

Music Web
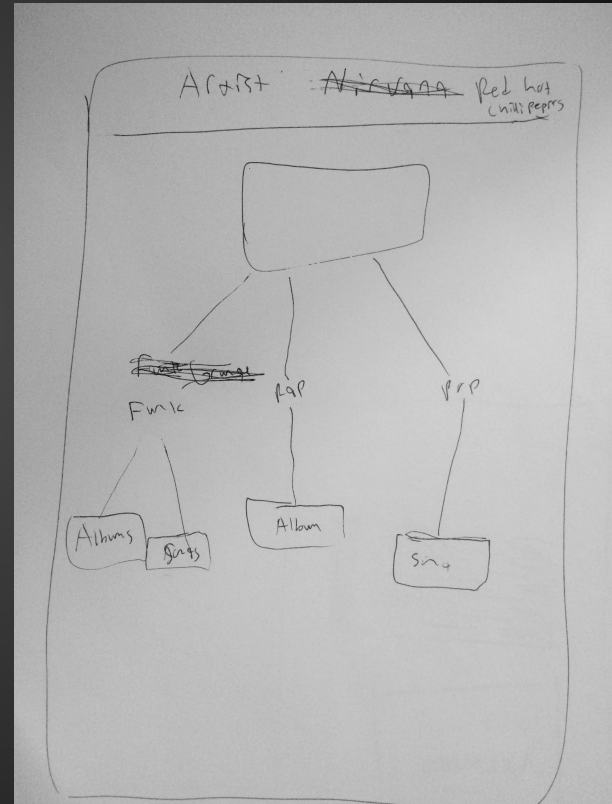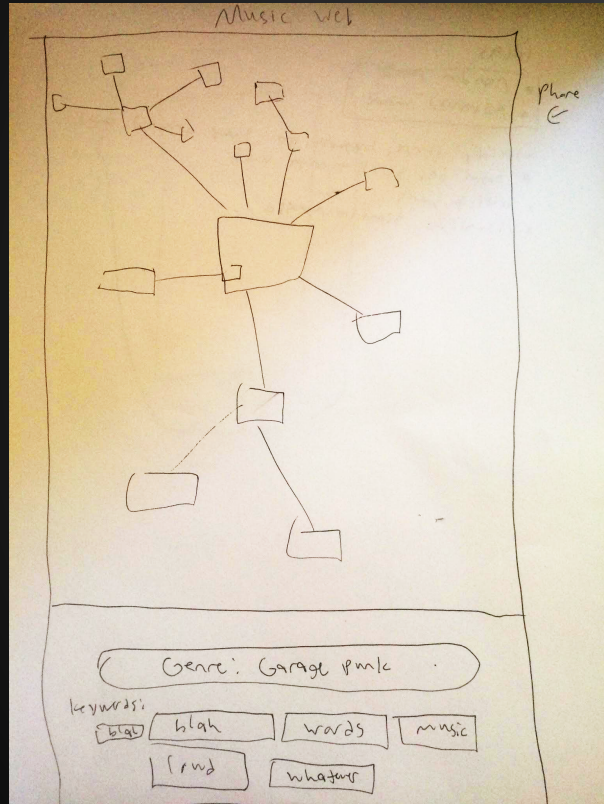
Music Grid

- Display a 3x3 grid of randomized, but interconnected albums.
- Customers can explore grid or move in different directions corresponding to different genres or qualities.
- Off-screen grid always randomized, impossible to return to same grid (although customers can save albums that they liked).
- Can create new grid X and Y parameters by inputting current mood or a list of desired genres.

Music Grid