showMe

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VALUE PROPOSITION

showMe is a ubiquitous music sharing service that fosters exploration and connectivity by providing easy access and interpersonal incentives to encourage individuals to exchange music preferences.

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION OVERVIEW

Accessing music has become increasingly convenient, thanks to vast libraries made available through music streaming applications such as Spotify and Grooveshark. Sharing music recommendations, however, remains nonspontaneous. As we learned through customer interviews, listeners tend to use archaic methods such as word of mouth recommendations rather than music client share features. To share songs, mobile music services send bland hyperlinks through SMS or email, which are easily lost or obscured among other texts and messages. Conversational recommendations also possess the limitations of being disjointed and potentially forgotten. Our proposed solution to these shortcomings is to build a new GUI that will gather all shared music links in one place, and present them in an aesthetic format that encourages people to share and click on shares. Not only will our application allow users to search, rate and filter through their recommendation histories, but it will also provide engaging features such as event-association tags.

CONTEXTUAL INQUIRY CUSTOMERS

Our goal is to create a sharing application that people can use at any time, in any setting, whether they are on the go or at their desks—much like the ubiquitous experience of listening to music itself. For this reason, we interviewed our customers in various settings: a biology lab,

outside at a picnic bench, and in a dorm room. As an incentive, we offered each participant a free song and shared a cool music website (http://jazzandrain.com).

Figure 1. An incentive for participants: introducing them to the Jazz and Rain site

E.P. 30-40 years old, biologist at Stanford. E frequently writes critiques and reviews on music sites and is an avid music sharer. Her insights are especially valuable because not only is she passionate about listening to music, but she also enjoys actively reaching out to people with her music recommendations. Like the other two customers we interviewed, she incorporates music into every aspect of her life outside of the lab. Sometimes, she will suggest songs to her friends by either posting them to their Facebook walls or privately messaging them. To rate music shared by friends, E will like links that are shared by her friends on Facebook. E uses either SoundCloud, Songza or Itunes to stream her music.

Figure 2. Lab station where Jared interviewed E.

C.A. 18-25 years old, Product Design student at Stanford. C is both a DJ and music blogger who listens to music for multiple hours each day. Since he is from a multicultural background, he enjoys being exposed to music from international sources. C offers valuable insights,

because as a DJ he has connections to numerous other fellow music aficionados. He listens to music through HypeMachine, SoundCloud, YouTube and iTunes.

Figure 3. Picnic table on the Row; C often listens to music when he's hanging outside.

Z.Z.   18-25 years old, Mechanical Engineering student at Stanford. Z is known throughout his dorm for playing guitar and filling the halls with the sound of his playlists. He is constantly listening to music, both at his desk and on the go. Z is a good representative of our target customer because he has diverse tastes in music and uses a myriad of platforms, including Spotify, Pandora, Last.fm, and YouTube.
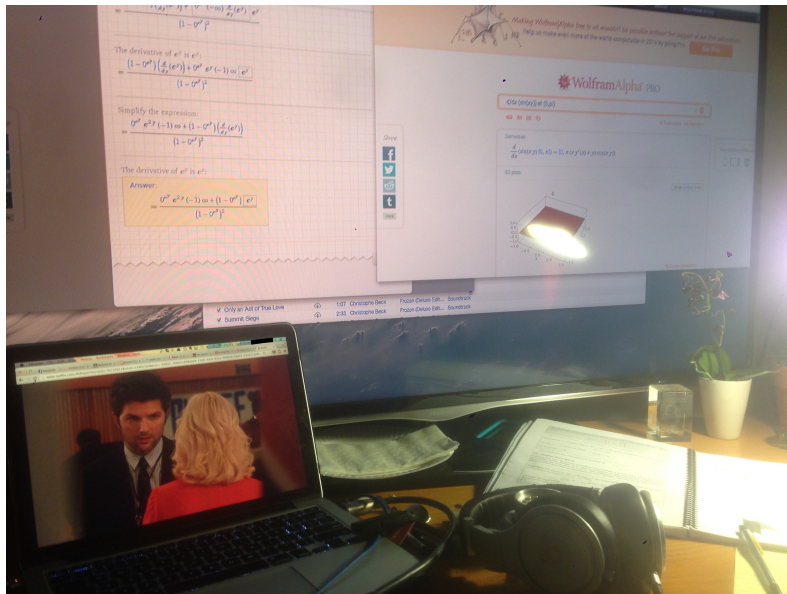
Figure 4. Z's command station, with large speakers under his desk (too dark to show).

CONTEXTUAL INQUIRY RESULTS

We noticed a lot of common themes when asking our customers about their music sharing experiences. First, each user uses multiple different music clients. Among the three people we interviewed, their aggregate music platforms included Spotify, SoundCloud, Last.fm, Pandora, HypeMachine, YouTube, Songza, and iTunes. The reason there was such a large range of services is because each caters to slightly different audiences and features. Z mentioned that Spotify and Pandora had great radios, but poor international music offerings. E and C like to use SoundCloud for certain genres, but for less conventional music they would turn to YouTube. In order for our application to be truly ubiquitous, it will need to connect and appeal to listeners from all different spheres.

When we asked our users how they liked to share song suggestions, Z responded that he likes to tell his friends verbally, and E and C like to share song links either as Facebook statuses or through private Facebook messages. We thought this was interesting, because none of the three customers used actual music clients to share their music. When we asked them why this was the case, all three cited privacy concerns as the foremost reason they were unwilling to authorize sharing via music platforms. Many streaming sites, such as Spotify, automatically render shares public on social networking sites. Because each of them has diverse music tastes, they were wary of being judged for publishing more unconventional songs (e.g. hard rock or metal) on their profiles. Z always blocks public sharing on each of his music clients. All preferred having control over when and who would be able to see shares.
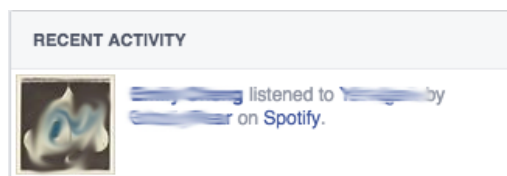

Figure 5. All three customers dislike automatic public sharing.

C brought up an interesting point, which is that people like to share songs with him because they know he's a DJ. E and Z receive fewer song suggestions, even though they are also passionate about music. We thought that perhaps people don't usually think about sharing songs they like with their friends, even though it might encompass a large part of all of their lives. Z mentioned that he doesn't always hear back from friends regarding his song suggestions, which decreases his likelihood of conveying suggestions to them again. E says that copying and pasting links to Facebook is slightly cumbersome, and that she only makes the effort when she feels extremely strongly about a certain song. Their experiences all suggest that there are some barriers that users currently feel toward the experience of sharing music. No prominent incentives yet exist that would encourage them to share often and actively.

E mentioned that she always appreciates nice visuals; for example, SoundCloud incorporates album art as a background, and other descriptions such as genres are also prominently featured. Z agrees that having quick comprehensive backgrounds on the music artists prevents him from having to take a break from listening to look them up beforehand. These little interface details made a big difference in their experiences with the apps.

TASK ANALYSIS

Text here yay

TASK ANALYSIS B

Text here yay

BEST APPLICATION IDEAS

	Artificial intelligence program analyzes the music preferences of the user and a friend to generate a shared playlist – no sharing required.	Google Glass app that lets you see what other people are listening to through their headphones when they pass by.	Aesthetic collage of songs that friends can contribute to, enables user to search and filter, and presents the sharing option like a game.
Significance	Y – Cool use of CS	Y – Anonymous crowdsourcing for inspiration.	Y – Promotes active sharing among friends
Feasibility	N – Needs algorithm	N – We don't have access to Glass; potential privacy issues to navigate	Y – Program a phone application
Interest	N – No interaction	Y – Ultimate people watching	Y – Interactive, fun, visually appealing

We decided to pursue the third application idea, which encompasses an aesthetic collage of friends' music suggestions, because it ranks well in all three areas. The idea is interesting because it is visually appealing and offers fun features that encourage users to participate in offering song suggestions to friends. These incentives encourage active sharing, which is significant because music sharing is currently not as spontaneous or automatic. While designing and implementing the features in a way that will achieve our goals is a challenging prospect, it is certainly more feasible than writing a music-analyzing algorithm or Google Glass application.

SKETCHES

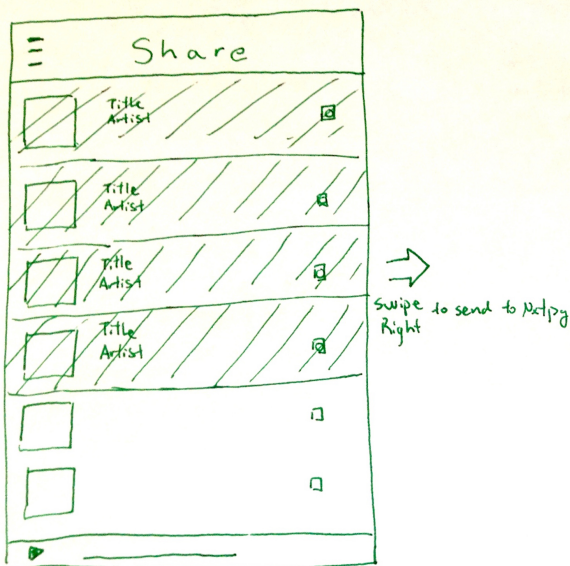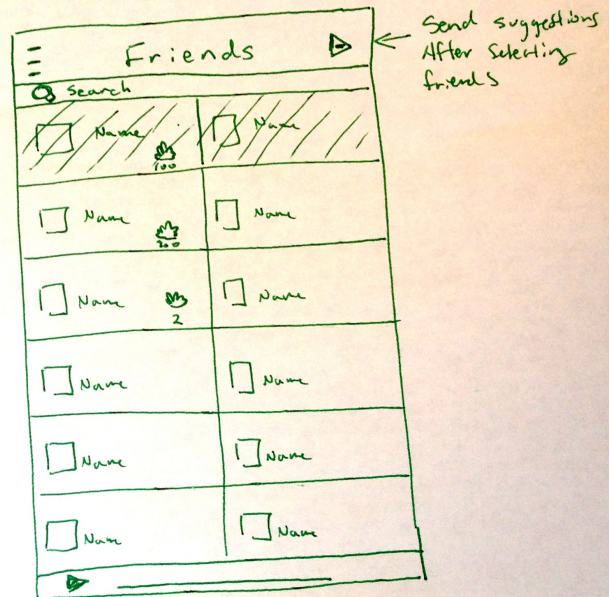<u>Feature:</u> Sharing with a friend
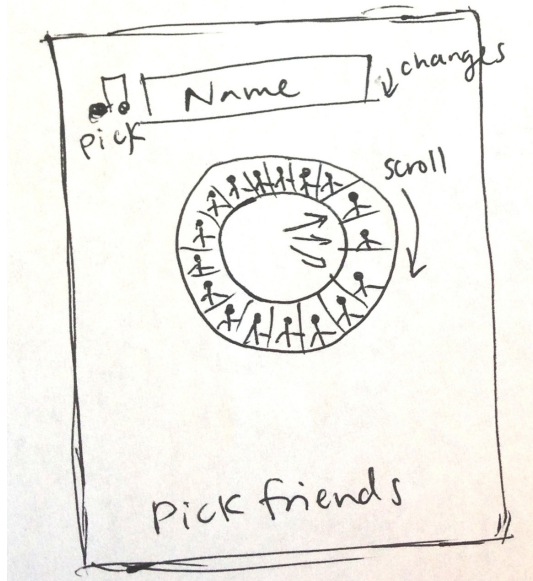
Frances Guo
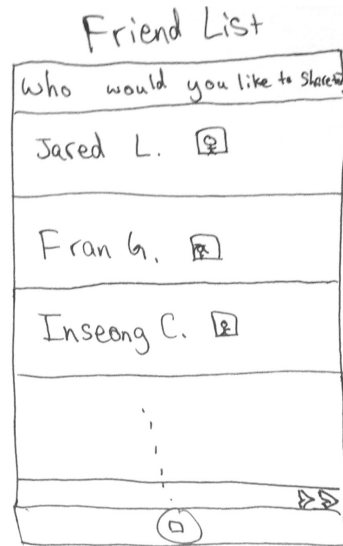
Clifford Huang

Inseong Cho

Feature: Seeing which songs are popular where
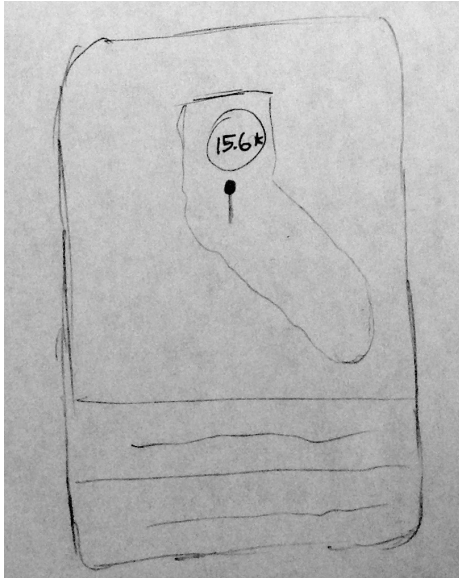
Jared Wolens
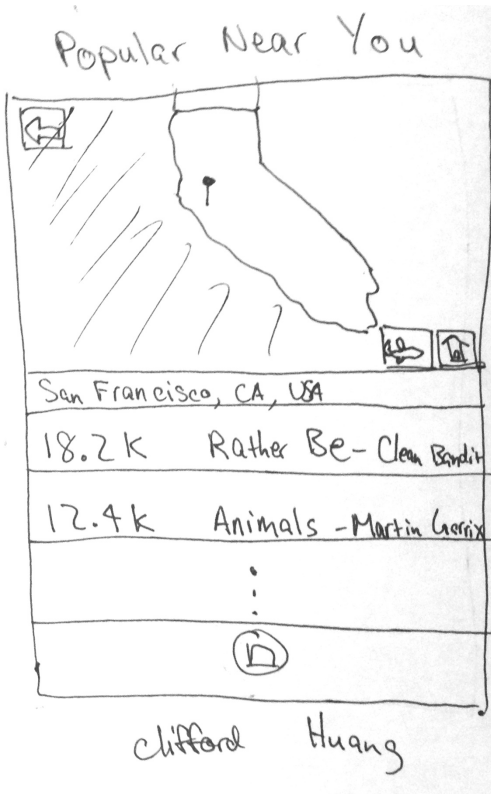
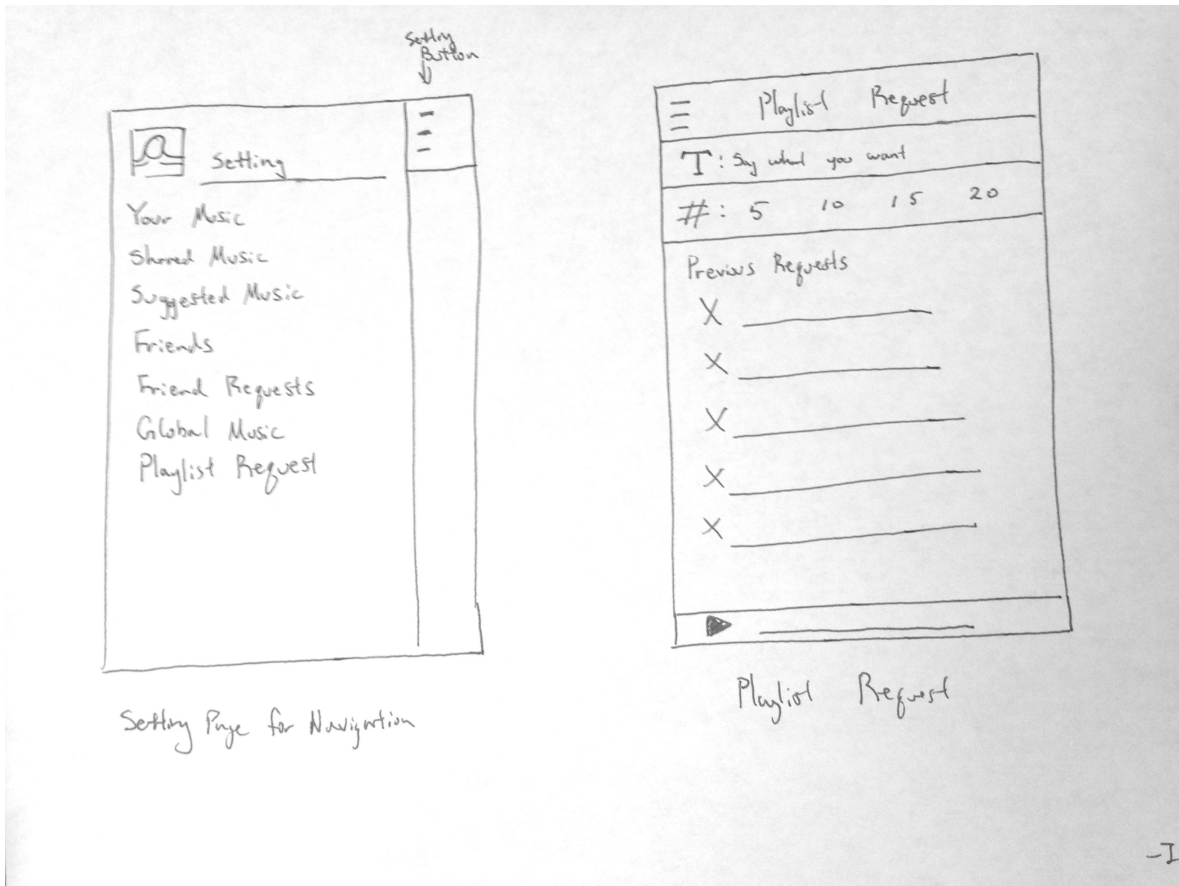
Frances Guo

Clifford Huang

<u>Feature:</u> Playlist quotas (how many slots remaining on friend's suggestion list)
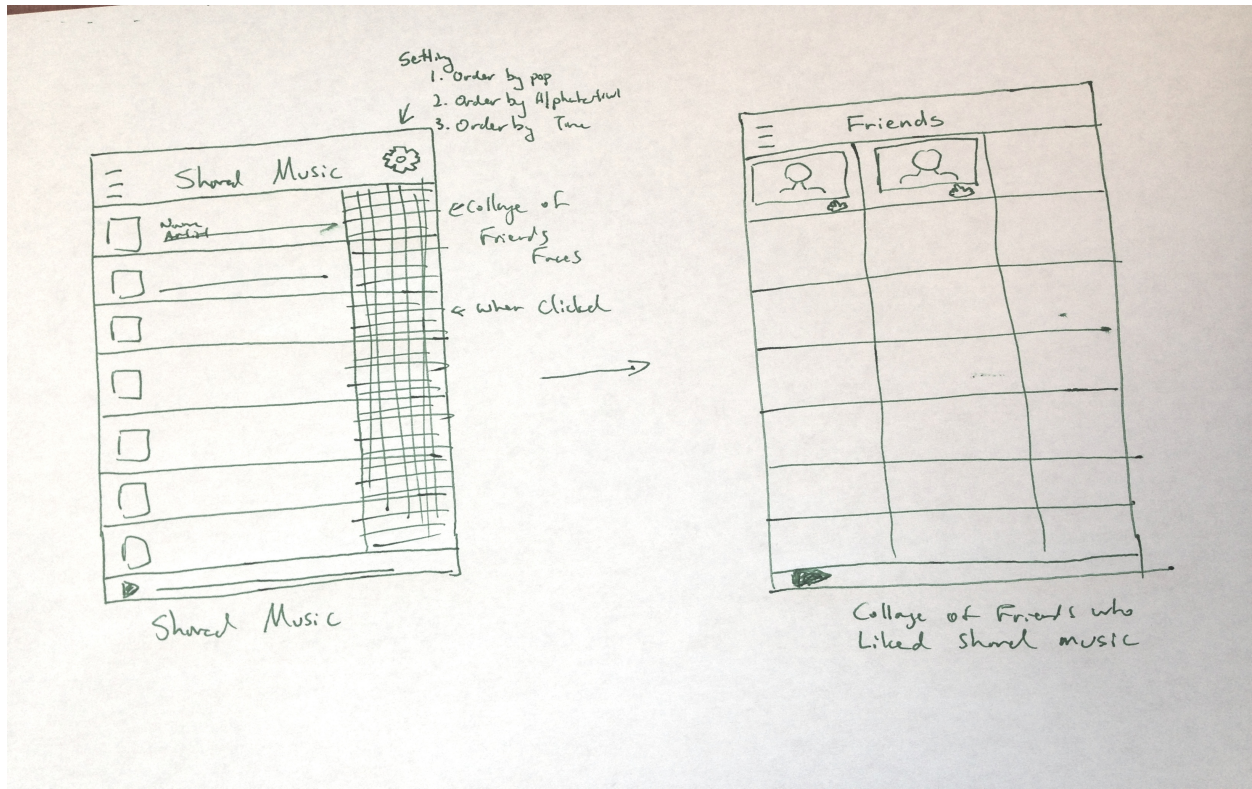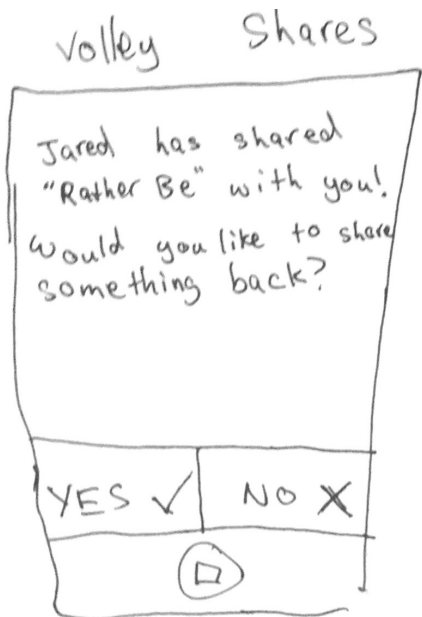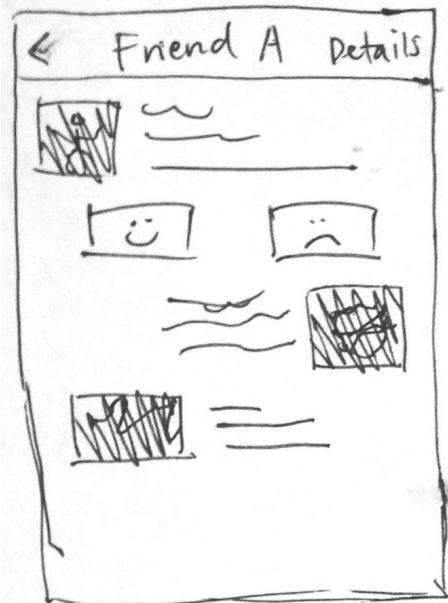

Inseong Cho
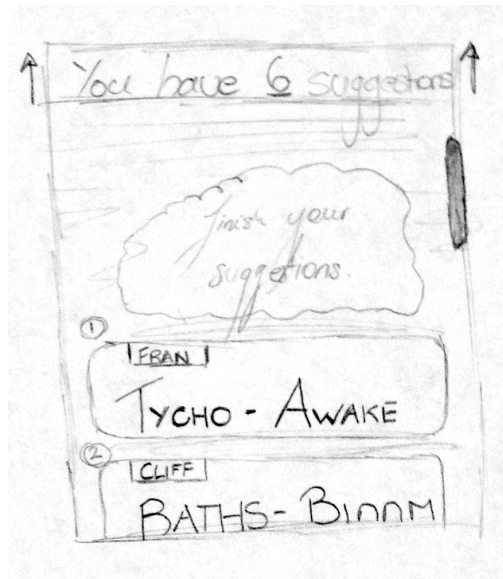
Frances Guo

Jared Wolens

<u>Feature:</u> Volley shares to create a continuous song dialogue with your friend

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