

# POVs and Experience Prototypes

## 1. Team members' names:

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## 2. Problem Domain: Music Sharing

With two of us being musicians ourselves and all of us being music enthusiasts, it was a natural choice for us to want to engage with the topic of **music discovery, dissemination, and sharing**. Our research delves into the dual perspective of the **consumer**, who to varying degrees enjoys discovering new music, and of the **artist**, who creates new music which he/she attempts to disseminate to the world. We are exploring the channels by which consumers discover and artists disseminate new music, with the intention of improving the experience of the users on both sides of this equation.

## 3. Initial Point of View

Coming out of last week's studio, our POV was that *Artists need a way to push music to their target audience without getting lost in the online clutter.*

## 4. Additional Needfinding Results



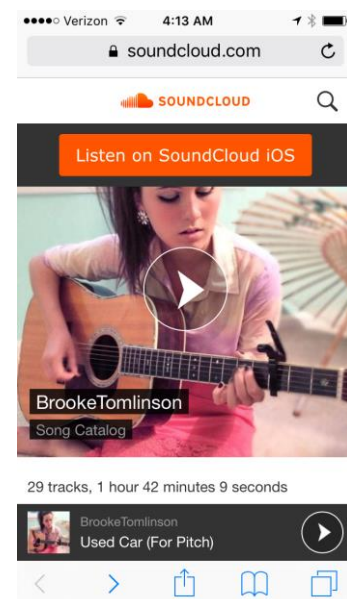
We interviewed **Christina Dong**, who is a junior studying Journalism & Public Relations at Colby College in Maine. Christina was an appropriate choice as a music consumer since she is on the extreme end of those actively searching for new music.

Christina describes a vivid need for novelty in her music experience: "I need to find new music. I get really bored hearing the same thing over and over again--it's like 'not this again.'" This weariness with existing music drives her to actively seek new tracks: "A lot of people just listen to the same songs--I can't do that."

Christina employs a variety of tools, including Spotify's Future Hits playlist, certain mood playlists, Soundcloud for finding remixes, and Spotify Discover weekly, which updates each week with a custom playlist. Interestingly, these tools are all accessible to a wider audience, and yet few of the users we spoke to last week had engaged with them, despite professing that they wish they were more active in seeking new music. This leads us to several hunches. First, that users are

overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of songs out there (not to mention the multitude of tools for seeking them out). Second, that diligently listening through playlists of many songs one might not like is somewhat of a chore, even when those playlists are “curated.” This could imply a need for a better matching algorithm, and perhaps also for a more rapid exposure to new songs.

Christina added that *“I have FOMO if I don’t follow my favorite artists [on social media], but I don’t really do anything with that,* implying that there might be more opportunities for fans like her to more meaningfully engage with artists through digital platforms.



We interviewed **Brooke Tomlinson**, who is a professional singer/songwriter trying to make it in Los Angeles. She epitomizes the type of artist we would like to create a platform for: talented and perseverant, but daunted by the myriad hurdles of breaking into the music industry. She shared the practical and emotional challenges of someone in her shoes, and walked us through examples of her digital presence (above). Below are more detailed notes from our interview.

- Three types of projects:
  - Collaboration with other artists
  - Writing for pitch (“Who’s looking list”)
    - Singers who don’t write their own songs: “it’s ridiculous but it gets me work!”
    - If a label likes one of her songs they’ll put it on hold, but it usually doesn’t make the album
    - On hold: “I’m proud of myself and it’s still a big deal, but each time I kind of get less excited. You can’t really count on it.”
  - Writing own songs (“feature project”)

- Writes a song almost every day, but self-censors: "My standards are really high. I won't release anything that's less than amazing."
- Networking
  - "None of the people from the first few months stuck. It's taken a really long time for me to find my "camp.""
  - "Everyone I meet is through this person, through that person. It's like dominos."
  - "Even supporting some other artists, if that's how I can get introduced/noticed by people." ... but "She was not grateful. It was honestly like a terrible experience."
- Major Label requirements
  - Music industry in 2015: "They don't really sign you unless you have a major internet following already."
  - "Labels don't develop us--that's now the job of managers, producers, yourself."
  - "As an artist, I wish I didn't have to think about "oh my Instagram," because that feels very superficial. But that's like really important now, unlike 5 years ago."
- Finances
  - "Money talks." One girl's parents put millions of dollars behind her music career, and Kiss agreed to play the singles when they come out.
  - A major-label cut from co-writing a single would be around \$20,000. She said that's a really big deal.
  - "Can raise funds with GoFundMe, Kickstarter, to fund a couple thousand dollars" for an EP or feature project
- Functions of current music-sharing platforms
  - "Pandora doesn't play up-and-coming music."
  - "SoundCloud could do a better job with the browse function. You're there to listen to something you've seen somewhere else."
  - "Spotify does an incredible job with its Browse section, Related Artists, and Spotify playlists."
    - *Q: How is a Pandora for Indie artists different than Spotify curated playlists?*

## 5. Revised Points of View

*Consumers need an easy way to find quality music from new artists that matches their taste, in a way that feels like an adventure instead of a chore.*

Sample "How Might We" statements:

- HMW enable users to take control of the balance between major-label and independent artists featured on a platform?
- HMW influence consumers to learn more about a little-known artist who performs a song that they like?
- HMW encourage a consumer to explore new musical genres?
- HMW define what makes a "good" artist, or at least a good fit for someone's musical tastes?

*Independent artists need an alternative career path to the time spent networking, cultivating their image, and raising capital, so they can focus on creating quality music.*

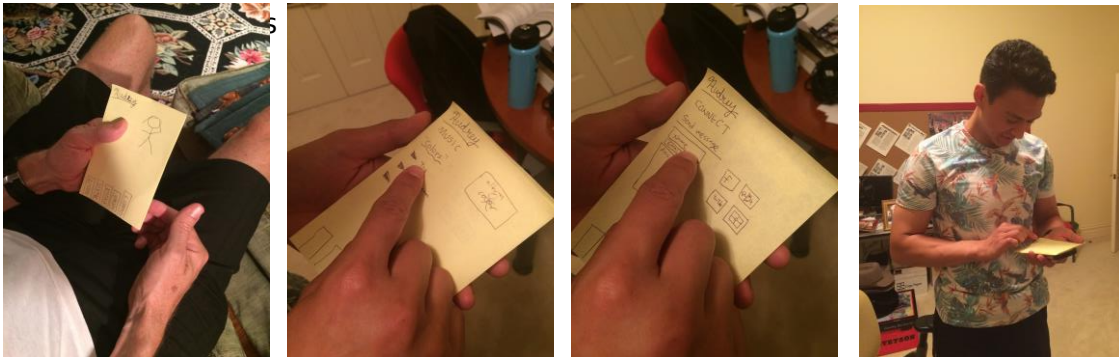
Sample "How Might We" statements:

- HMW help up and coming artists develop their brand in alignment with their music?
- HMW create a system of music dissemination that avoids traditional M&E companies while still having enough barriers to entry to prevent an overcrowding of the space?
- HMW help music producers avoid the painful experience of networking and all the associated (non-music related) activities required to break into the music industry?

## 6. Final "How Might We" Statements

1. HMW help up-and-coming artists share music content in multiple forms beyond a studio album?
2. HMW help new artists with limited resources develop high quality and personalized means of connecting with potential target audiences?
3. HMW make music discovery feel more like a game than a chore?

## 7. Three Experience Prototypes



### 7.1: Template app-building for musicians

*The concept is to provide artists with an easy-to-use template for creating web presence through an app that will allow them to better communicate with their fans, including automatic updating of their social media channels. This will ease their distracting burden of creating a social media presence, while allowing fans to learn more about them and discover more of their music.*

#### a) Assumptions:

- Artists need and might pay for a service to streamline their digital publicity.
- Fans want to engage with artists through such a digital app or interface.

#### b) Fabrication:

This prototype was made by drawing basic functionality onto paper.

c) Test:

This prototype was tested by simulating the functionality with users.

Things that worked:

- The interface is simple and easy to use.
- The service is accessible to non-technical people.

Things that didn't work:

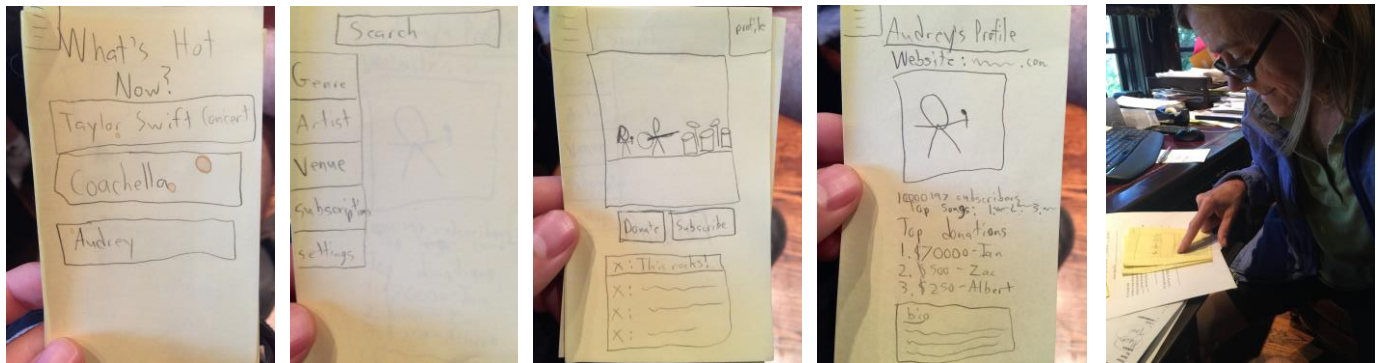
- It is still unclear whether artists would be receptive to a service like this.

Surprises:

- One user suggested that **users** could recommend new features or customization of the app.

New Learnings:

- The app could be useful for agents as well in scouting new artists.  
Need to assess this further.



## 7.2: Twitch for Musicians

*The concept is modeled after the popular video-game platform Twitch by providing live streaming of artists to fans, who in turn can communicate with and donate to the artists. These could be both live performances and fireside-style performances and talk-backs.*

a) Assumptions:

- Fans have a need for an authentic, two-way relationship with artists
- A model of unprecedented success in the gaming world could translate to an even broader audience in the music world

b) Fabrication:

This prototype was made by drawing basic functionality onto sticky notes.

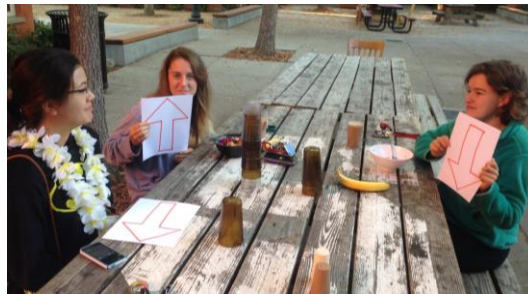
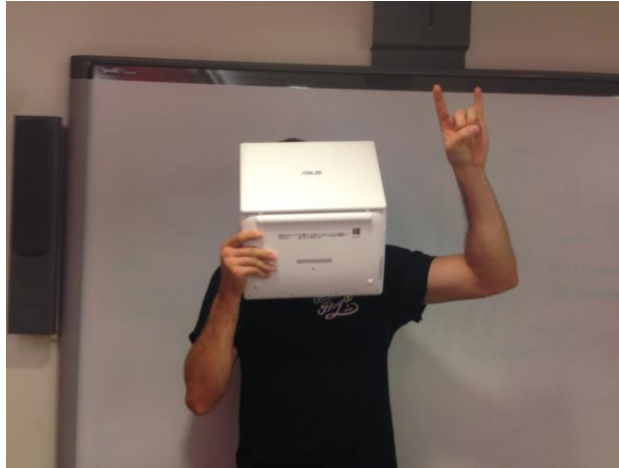
c) Test:

This prototype was tested by simulating the functionality with users.

Things that worked:

- Ability to add comments, communicate directly with the artist in realtime
  - Ability to participate in experiences that would otherwise be missed
- Things that didn't work:
- Need more options for searching
- Surprises:
- The word "Donate" had negative connotations of charity, whereas "Support" was preferred
- New Learnings:
- Fans have a need for an **authentic, two-way relationship** with artists

This gave us the spin-off idea of partnering with Oculus Rift to embed camera technology into a live concert, giving remote users the virtual experience of being right on stage.



7.3: Music with Friends

*The concept is to create a game of sharing music with friends. Friends can upvote or downvote the music you share. Points are acquired for any songs upvoted, with more points accruing the more obscure the song or artist is.*

d) Assumptions:

- Music sharing is a social activity
- Gamification could be a successful incentive

e) Fabrication:

This prototype was made by drawing basic functionality onto paper.

f) Test:

This prototype was tested by simulating the functionality with users.

Things that worked:

- Social aspect was **fun**
- Participants shared a variety of songs

Things that didn't work:

- Unclear how compelling it would be without the face-to-face interaction
- Points system was hard to keep track of

Surprises:

- Some participants struggled to find obscure/novel music to share

New Learnings:

- Gamification is promising but needs to be further developed

## 8. Prototype Reflection

All three of our prototypes were promising, and all probably require more testing and iteration before landing on a final solution. We are actually quite stoked about the Oculus Rift for concerts, given its exciting interface, its obvious delight for fans, and its clear meeting of the need for a greater connection between artists and their audience.