

Filthy Casuals

2 Stanford, 1 Brown students

1 German High school student

Why?

analogous to target user

different goals from experts

music discovery ends after

college

"Experts"

Why?

cares more than average user
definite actions/analyzable motives

Self-described audiophile

cancelled due to personal tragedy

Local audio engineer

built surround sound speaker
system from the ground up

full-stack developer of audio

Getting them to talk

Casual settings (our/their residence)

Ben (expert), Colette, Arianna

Virtual (Skype/Facetime)

Alex (Brown), Luke (Germany)

Topics:

emotion, listening habits, discovery, social contexts

Ambiguous questions

open interpretation leads to MORE biased feedback

what traits define responses?

Targeted questions

one right answer gives unbiased empirical data

how is music practically utilized?

Empathy Map

Say

- "If I feel pressured to listen to something, I won't enjoy it as much"
- "If I hear a song at a frat party I don't worry about figuring out what it is because I'll probably hear it again"
- Frat party music is "never good"
- "At frat parties I'm too drunk to care about the music, I just dance"
- About putting his own music on Ben said: "Obviously I would like to have mine on but no one else would want that"
- Listen to music "when I'm bored or in a contemplative mood"
- "Uhhh music makes me feel better? Like when I'm sad I listen to sad music and when I'm getting hype I listen to hypey music and it heightens whatever mood I was in does that make sense I listen to music when I study, when I go to sleep, and when I have people in my room"
- "A lot of people like bad music"
- "Well, music doesn't mean much to me, but it is a system for some to express themselves or relate. I guess to me, it's more of a tool for social progression. Music is used to move society forward, whether it's individually or on a large scale. Songs already like key points in a narrative, the moment the plot shifts."
- "I Don't feel like very many people depart from the norm"
- People felt a strong connection between parties and music but mentioned it was shitty
- People referred to an audiophile in their life that has shaped their taste in music

Do

- Ben got to know people through shared music tastes
- Get new music recommendations from friends or Pandora
- Listens to music "usually through Spotify on my phone or laptop or on the radio if I'm in the car"
- Sleep -> earbuds, Study in public -> headphones, My room -> speaker, People in room -> speaker
- Brush teeth in the morning with a friend with music playing through phone speakers
- People got somewhat defensive when asked where they found their music - they seemed to struggle with this question
- Each person we interviewed mentioned or recommended specific music or artists to us
- People listen to music when they shower
- Wake up to music
- People take music for granted at social events
- There is a very distinct divide between the amount of time they invested in music - yet they still felt music to be emotionally important

Think

Music is a commodity to be consumed or environmental, totally beyond their control

Music is important to everyone

When asked where they find music people typically had very ambiguous answers.

"Friends" was the best answer.

Everyone agrees: Parties have bad music

Everyone cited the strong emotions music was able to evoke and seemed to use it cathartically.

What people look for in music varies drastically contextually.

Feel

Alex feels like music is a useful tool to get things.

People seemed to associate music really strongly with specific activities. "Waking up", "Exercise" "Chilling" "Working out"

People view music to set the tones of their lives.

People have very strong connections and opinions about music.

Arianna views music as something border lining spiritual from an emotional standpoint

Say

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Surprises

no one really had a definite answer as to where they found new music

music is really important to people yet everyone we talked to was incredibly passive in how they found music

Tensions

People have very strong beliefs about music and its role in their lives. They view it as something to consume even though it appears to function more like a psychological tool, almost like therapy or an antidepressant or anything else people could self-medicate with: There is a lot of tension between how people think they use music and how they use it.

Contradictions

Some people leaned more toward music being a consumable while others leaned more towards it being part of their environment. The “consumers” always seemed to be more interested in engineering their experiences (i.e. better hardware, more critical of “frat party music”)

Dualities

finding music through friends

release of control to frat parties

vast majority of recommendations lost

emotionally impactful on an individual level

radio/Pandora

spontaneity

mystical reverence for emotional impact

finding friends through music

sharing control of one audio system

music taste entirely absorbed from environment

catalytic for social interactions

iTunes/Spotify

control

hijacking music to evoke internal emotions

the paradoxical nature of music as a conscious and unconscious tool for influencing both the individual and his/her milieu

Conclusions

Music plays a much bigger role in friendship than people recognize

Music is emotional conditioning

Universal social patterns

Observations in the wild

Goals:

Give people curated radio experience

Allow everyone to showcase tastes

Retain user control

