DESIGN INTERVENTIONS AT A SYSTEMIC LEVEL

A PROVOCATIVE CONCEPT FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Design interventions at a systemic level; a provocative concept
for the music industry

Master thesis
Msc. Strategic Product Design

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PREFACE

This sheet of paper contains the music for Kyteman's "Sorry", as performed in Tivoli, Utrecht 2009. For me, this piece of paper has a symbolic value for my graduation project. I will explain why.

I wrote down the notes just after it was released, somewhere in 2010, so that I could play it on my alto saxophone; I played it over and over again and I still have that piece of paper. Subsequently, during my studies, I played the tenor sax in a Big Band and rediscovered the fun of making music.

It was Colin Benders, formerly Kyteman, that got me interested in choosing this project in the first place. As soon as his name was mentioned I became enthusiastic for the project and it reminded me of this music of his; "Sorry". As I was preparing for the project to kick-off I listened to that recording of Colin playing in Tivoli all those years ago. Hearing that again after such a long time, combined with the recent absence of any live music, gave me goosebumps.

What you will notice is that the music notes are depicted as letters. Looking at this now and with my project in mind, these letters symbolise my graduation project. I came into the project with some knowledge of music and the music industry, however I soon discovered I did not really know that much. Throughout the project I became more and more familiar with the subject and the quality of my conversations improved significantly. Not only did I learn a lot about the music industry but I was also inspired to sit and listen to music more often. I bought a proper stereo system to enjoy it more.

Enjoy the read!
Philip

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This master thesis was executed in collaboration with marketing agency Maak. Maak expressed an interest in offering services to independent music artists. The objective of this thesis is to show stakeholders how value can be reinterpreted and distributed to balance value streams in the music industry. This goal is achieved by developing a thought provoking concept.

The process involved two main research phases and a design phase. In the first research phase the music industry was mapped out. Subsequently the decision was made to focus on the streaming industry, especially on Spotify. To form the basis of the design phase, all the insights from the previous two research phases were assembled and distilled to create the following four design principles:

1. Artist empowerment; lower barriers to entry for independent artists
2. User involvement; Collectivism, collaboration and co–operation to be reflected in design, critical listeners to become part of the creative process
3. Stimulate independent artists
4. Playlist improvement; Restore the importance of the user-generated playlist; currently playlists are generally either impersonal or biased - or both:

- Algorithmic playlists; no human involved
- Editorial playlists; More and more people dependent on a small group of editors
- DSP's push their own playlists; User-generated playlists are becoming devalued as they are becoming harder to find.

Research question: How can we redesign the music industry to balance value streams?
Answer: Make music streaming more social.
Why: Direct Streaming Platforms constrict the relationship between creators and their audience.
Goal: Make streaming more social for independent/DIY creators. Create direct, intimate interactions and foster those connections.

The design phase consisted of ideation and concept development of three concepts. After which, one concept was chosen to focus on. In turn this concept was named "Lister".

Lister is a music community platform which allows users to discover, and exchange ideas about, music based on similar taste, in a social way.

Lister was validated in various ways and has been through several iterations as a result. It is well-supported by music industry professionals that were involved in the process. It shows signs of having potential and there could be justification for further research to better define the concept, to establish different needs and values amongst stakeholders and a launch strategy.

@PHILLUSTRATOR
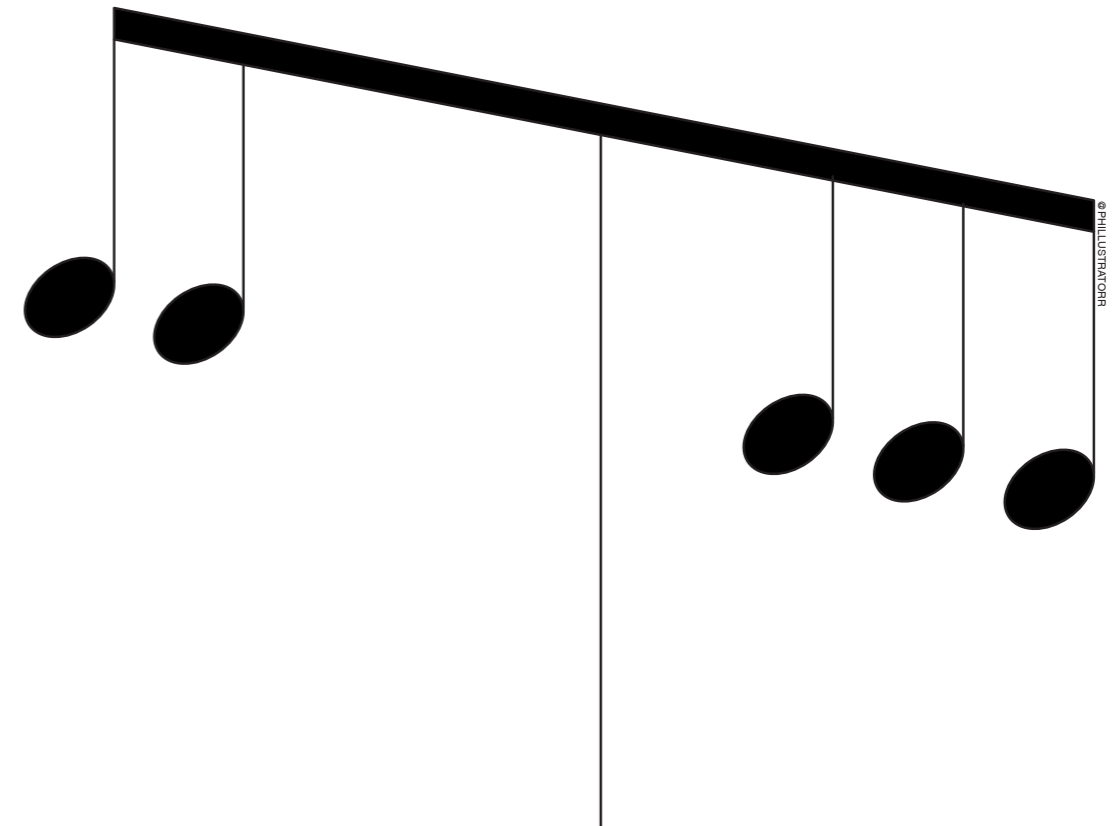
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Even without the corona-related circumstances, executing this project would have been a challenge for me. Luckily I had a lot of great people supporting me throughout the project who I would like to thank.

Omar Kbiri for sharing his passion and knowledge with me and providing me with the chance to do this project under his supervision. Omar never failed to energise me during meetings and believed in me from the start of the project.

Both my university supervisors, Dirk Snelders and Jeroen van Erp for mixing academic guidance with informal chats filled with energy and dedication. And also for taking on my graduation project, which was somewhat out of the ordinary.

There are a number of people that contributed to my project, but some went out of their way to do so. I would like to thank Ton van der Werf and Niels Aalberts for their great advice and the time they freed up to help out wherever they could.

My Mum and Dad, for supporting me throughout the project. My Dad especially, for being a sounding board for my ideas and thinking along whenever he could.

Marah for putting up with me when I was grumpy and stressed and putting a smile on my face. Did you know she is also an Indesign wizard?

Bootsy for the countless study hours we spent together, either helping each other or going on adventures in an empty IDE faculty. Mostly the latter.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the following people for their valuable contributions to the project: Patrick van Thijn, Anneke Stulp, Erwin Blom, Gerard van Enk, Colin Benders, Roos Meijer, Lieke Heusinkveld, Pim van Os, Pitou Nicolaes, Marinus de Goederen, Wilbert Mutsaers, Jos Feijen, Dago Houben, Selma Schellings, Guillaume Warmerdam, Madelon Acket, Willem Bijleveld, Eva Breunesse, Tim Graeff & Marisa Wouters.

GLOSSARY

API
API is the acronym for Application Programming Interface, which is a software intermediary that allows two applications to talk to each other.

DIY
DIY stands for Do It Yourself and is the aspect of the punk subculture where everything is constructed by the individual.

DSP
Direct Streaming Platform is an online store or streaming service that features digital albums and singles.

Independent Artist
An artist that is not signed to one of the three major record labels (Sony, Warner and Universal) or one of their subsidiaries.

Indie (record label)
Indie is short for independent. And is used as an abbreviation for independent record labels, i.e. not under control of the three major record labels. Indie is also a music genre.

Lister
The name of the concept proposal that has been developed as a part of this graduation project.

Master (rights)
Master (rights) A master right gives the license holder the right to use a recorded piece of music. By owning your master recordings, you get to stay in control of your career and work.

Major record label
Major record label The so-called 'big three' major record labels are Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment and Warner Music Group.

Music industry
The music industry consists of three sectors; The live music industry, the music publishing industry and the record industry.

Overlap
Overlap In the concept of Lister (see Lister), overlap is defined by the music that a user has in common with another user, based on their existing playlist(s).

Recording company, also: record label
Record labels are companies that produce and market recorded music They engage in a wide range of functions in the music industry, including new artist recruitment and development, music publishing, and copyright enforcement.

Slider
The slider is the feature of Lister which enables the user to define the desired overlap (see overlap) for music discovery.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In March 2014, a band called Vulfpeck released an album on Spotify containing 10 tracks, all roughly 30-seconds long and containing no sound at all. The album went under the name of "Sleepify" and fans were encouraged to stream the album on repeat overnight. The album was released to rack up royalties which would cover the costs of a free "crowdfunded" tour.

Spotify pays per stream, but streams are only counted when the song is played for a minimum of 30 seconds. So the idea toyed with Spotify's rules and the main format of the music industry nowadays; streaming. This was just taking it to an extreme of short song length and extremely high volumes of streams (Knopper, 2018). Before "Sleepify" was taken down it managed to accumulate almost $20,000 dollars in royalties, with Jack Stratton, drummer of Vulfpeck, calling it "the most silent album ever recorded".

During the mid-90s Prince started appearing in public with the word "Slave" written on his cheek. His argument was that he was signed to Warner Bros. (the record company) and they, as a result, owned and controlled his name as well as any music released under that name (The Guardian, 2015). That is why he changed his name into a symbol as he started to be referred to as, amongst other names, "The Artist Formerly known as Prince".

Although the above events took place more than two decades apart, they paint the same picture; a music industry where there is an ongoing power struggle between those that make music and those that sell the music.

This thesis looks to answer the question of how to rebalance value streams in the music industry. The focus is on independent artists and how they can flourish. To answer this question information is primarily obtained by interviews and reinforced by literature research. This information lays the foundation for the development of a concept that supports the independent artist and looks to challenge the status quo and prompt a conversation.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW
The build up of the report is as follows. The first chapter provides an overview of the graduation project including the design brief, an introduction to Maak and the approach to completing this master thesis.
Chapter two describes the history and evolution of recorded music. This chapter looks to highlight key influences that shaped the music industry to what it is today. Three key pillars are chosen to provide structure and to bring the story to life.
Where chapter two leaves off by introducing the democratisation of music, chapter three elaborates upon that and dives into the two current major revenue models; live and streaming. Both topics are viewed from the perspective of the independent artist throughout this chapter.
In chapter four the history of independent artists is reviewed. This leads back to the origins of Do It Yourself (DIY) music during the early days of the punk era. In this chapter, which is treated as a case study, the ideas and zeitgeist of the DIY movement are translated to the here-and--now to provide learnings and insights.
Chapter five analyses the music streaming industry with a focus on the Direct Streaming Platforms (DSP). After a broad overview, Spotify is analysed and the consequences of streaming are discussed. Lastly the phenomenon of playlists is looked into.
Chapter six is a culmination of all the above information, where the foundation is laid down for the next phase of the project; design. This is where the research phase of this thesis is concluded and where the insights (highlighted at the end of each chapter) are moulded to form the basis for the design focus.
Chapter seven; Concept development. In this chapter the design process is described, starting with ideation and concepting, all the way through to the final concept.
Chapter eight continues with the further development of the final concept. Results of concept validation are presented. The concept is validated with industry professionals, artists and users through interviews, surveys and simulation. Iterations are performed using feedback from the validation process. This leads to the final concept; Lister.

In the final chapter, nine, the results of this research and design thesis are discussed and recommendations are made for further research and development of the concept platform. Lastly, there is a section which reflects on the process of the graduation project.

REPORT STRUCTURE
In terms of structuring this thesis, the emphasis is put on making it a well-organised, easy-to-read and results-oriented piece of work. To ensure this, each chapter begins with an introduction to the chapter, the content to be discussed and the aim of the chapter. The contributors to each chapter are listed; this thesis relies heavily on expert interviews besides existing literature.
Furthermore, each chapter comprising the research phase (chapters 2-5) is concluded by an overview of the main insights of that chapter and, in some cases, a list of decisions that have been made as a result of the insights. In chapter 6, Design focus, these insights are assembled and applied to form the basis of the design phase. From there on the design phase is described in chapters 7 and 8, with chapter 9 making recommendations on further research and design elements.

This chapter provides a general overview of the project; defining the initial brief, introducing Maak as a company, outlining the assignment and providing the approach and process.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

C1

CONTENT

AIM

To show the relevance and motivation for this graduation project and how it came about.

1.1 PROJECT BRIEF

MAAK

This project is a collaboration with Maak, an Amsterdam-based marketing and advertising agency founded in 2015. Maak believes in marketing that leaves ingrained customs behind and takes disruptive actions, referring to New era marketing. The key is that clients become aware that change can lead to positive progress.

At the time of exploring graduation subjects, Maak was running a campaign (for Colin Benders, a creative musician) which was going to accompany the release of a new vinyl record. This is what sparked the conversation surrounding this graduation subject. It was clear from the conversations with Omar, co-founder of Maak, that he has an enormous passion and knowledge for music. Although music is not the core business of Maak, it was evident that Maak would be of considerable help throughout the project, due to Maak's experience and contacts in the industry.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

"How can a music artist become independent?"... That is the question that sparked this graduation project. However, tackling this issue only from the artists perspective limits the solution space and will lead to tunnel vision. Therefore, this project aims to view the entire music industry as an ecosystem; a complex network of interdependent businesses. Moore (1996) defined the business ecosystem as a community which produces goods and services of value to customers, who are themselves members of the ecosystem. The main issue that the ecosystem of the music industry currently suffers from is unbalanced value streams. This is the result of an industry that has gone through rapid change, while always adopting a very defensive attitude towards development and innovation. This has led to an ecosystem which is far from ideal; artists have little influence on their own destiny, consumers have become spoiled by streaming services and major record companies take home most of the earnings.

ASSIGNMENT

OBJECTIVE / GOAL

The objective of this research and design thesis is to develop a concept product or service which is based on gained insights and design principles. The objective of the concept is to show stakeholders how the music industry could be re-thought at a systemic level, to balance value streams. For Maak, the focus is on artist autonomy and how they can be a part of this.

TITLE

Design interventions at a systemic level; a provocative concept for the music industry

RESEARCH QUESTION

In order to achieve this objective interventions have to be made in the music industry, this leads to the main research question: "How can we redesign the music industry to balance value streams?"

To be able to answer this question a number of sub-questions have been formulated to be used as a guide during the process of the project:

- Who are the stakeholders in the music industry and what do they value?
- What are the sub-revenue models of the involved parties?
- What does the future look like for the music industry without interventions?
- What interventions will lead to a systemic change of the music industry?
- How can this intervention(s) be implemented into a strategy?
- How does this strategy translate into a business opportunity(s) for Maak?

PROCESS

The process that has been followed can be viewed as a triple diamond approach. Each diamond signifies a diverging and subsequently a converging part of the process. In the case of this thesis, the subsequent diamonds are defined by Music Industry, Streaming and Concept development (see diagram 1). The primary research phase, and first diamond, is conducted on the entire music industry and is performed by literature review and interviews. This is followed by a stage-gate, where a decision is made on the topic(s) of the secondary research phase; Streaming. This phase is once again stage-gated. This time the insights from the previous two diamonds lead to the foundations of a design phase which is executed in the third and final diamond.

	Music industry	Streaming	Concept development	
Results	History of the music industry	Vaue map streaming industry; focus on Spotify	Ideas	Final concept
	Mapping current ecosystem	DIY; history and now	Concepts	Validation
	Knowledge & insights	Insights and thoughts		Iteration
Methods	Interviews/conversations	Interviews/conversations	Design principles	Interviews
	Literature review	Literature review		Survey
			"What if" scenarios	Simulation

Diagram 1: Triple diamond approach

This chapter looks to shed light on how the music industry has been shaped throughout history; predominantly recorded music is discussed. By analysing the past, a clear picture can be painted of the current state.

DESIGN INTERVENTIONS AT A SYSTEMIC LEVEL

INDUSTRY

MUSIC

C2

CONTENT

AIM

To gain a clear understanding of the turning points that occurred that changed the music industry.

CONTRIBUTORS

Niels Aalberts
Patrick van Thijn
Ton van der Werf
Erwin Blom

2.1 THE EVOLUTION OF RECORDED MUSIC

Before getting started, it is important to define the three main sectors that make up the music industry, as defined by Hesmondhalgh (2002). Firstly, the "live music industry", dates back to the 14th century when musicians became salaried professionals who would perform for a limited audience (Álvarez Vásquez, 2017). The second of the three main sectors is the "music publishing industry". The name might suggest this sector is responsible for the printing of sheet music, whereas this is indeed the case and where it finds its mid-15th century origins, nowadays music publishing concerns much more than this as it involves the ownership and control of the rights to musical compositions (Hesmondhalgh, 2002). Lastly the "record industry", often implied to be synonymous with the "music industry" (Leyshon, 2001), transformed music into a physical good. Meaning music could be listened to without the musician being present.

Throughout this chapter mainly the "record industry" sector will be discussed. The evolution of recorded music will be supported by three key pillars to provide structure, those being; Formats, Recording and Distribution.

FORMATS

By the end of the 19th century people were able to listen to audio recordings, the technology that made this practice happen was the popular invention of the phonograph by Edison in 1877, a device that mechanically records and reproduces sound. In the 1900s records were introduced to the consumer market, discs rotating at various speeds and made of different types of materials. This made it possible for mankind to experience pre-recorded music, and to mass produce copies from a single master recording.

As the discs evolved throughout time, music quality and quantity increased. Whereas early records were made out of shellac, which made them noisy, and above all fragile, later records we produced in vinyl. The use of vinyl not only increased durability, but in combination with microgrooves also ensured more music could fit onto the format. A shift from 4 minutes per side in the early 1900's, to 23 minutes per side with the introduction of the longplay (LP) record by Columbia in 1948 established the length of music singles and albums alike. The single/album era ensued.

Ignoring the advent of the compact cassette, the next milestone was the introduction of the Compact Disc (CD) in 1982. When this new format came about, old master recordings (which had previously been recorded as analog and pressed on vinyl) needed to be transformed to the digital format of the CD. Along with the CD, came the Discman, a device which made possible the playing of music "on the go". So the CD era came into existence.

The next milestone was the introduction of digital files for the masses. The MP3 format was originally developed in the early 80s, but it wasn't until 1992 that the MP3 went mainstream, and not until 1999 - with the creation of Napster - that the format really caught fire (Kendal, 2017). With the invention of the internet, and as computers became more sophisticated, so did the constant demand for convenience. It was a need that the CD and Discman could only fill for so long. Within 10 years the turnover of the global music industry

and the music industry in the Netherlands was halved - the cause - piracy. With the rise of the internet and the MP3, peer to peer file sharing of digital audio files became big business. The MP3 era was typified by Limewire, Oink, The PirateBay and of course Napster. This pirate era lasted until these companies were shut down, nonetheless the wheels of change had been set in motion.

RECORDING

The period from 1999 until 2009 is very much regarded as the "dark age" for the record industry. As of 2009, the expansion of the internet to mobile devices has created an opportunity for music to be listened to without having to download it; streaming. We now live in the streaming era.

During the 1900's, as people were getting used to the idea of records as music format, recording studios were starting to become important tools of this new industry (the record industry). The studios were acoustically treated places where, in a complex and costly process, experts would place microphones in front of the musicians (Richieri Hanania, 2016). Each studio had unique methods and equipment, this same type of secrecy could also be found at Abbey Road studios. Established in 1931, the studio would be known worldwide as the main recording studio of the Beatles.

For almost four decades vinyl recordings and magnetic tape recordings were used as analogue methods for recording sound. The magnetic tape invention spurred numerous tape-based recording formats, most notably reel-to-reel and the compact cassette. The former, however not mentioned previously as a format, was a popular recording medium in any professional recording studio for decades (Alinson, 2020).

It was not until the introduction of the CD in the 1980's that the transformation from analog to digital recording took place. This digitalisation also changed the layout of the studio as computers

became a more and more important element in the recording studio.

The equipment that used to be inaccessible outside the studios now became affordable to even non-professional musicians. Soundboards and magnetic tapes could all be replaced by a single personal computer (Richieri Hanania, 2016). Technological innovations like the Roland 808, a drum-machine which entered the market in 1980, and computer programs like Pro Tools, hitting the market officially in 1991, revolutionised the way music could be created, recorded and subsequently mixed and edited. Where it started out as something inaccessible to an amateur, nowadays almost anybody can replicate certain recording studios, like Abbey Road, at just the click of a button.

2.2 THE RISE OF RECORD COMPANIES

DISTRIBUTION

The technological innovations in terms of formats or recording have generally led to two things;

1. a new way of making money (revenue model), which usually results in making more money and
2. new ways of artistic creativity.

Think of vinyl shifting from single to album, the introduction of the CD, then the disruption of mp3 and finally streaming in the digital age. What lies as the core of all these technical innovations is distribution. This has always been the bottleneck of the music industry.

Back in the 1900s, when music started selling as a physical good, the distribution of shellac/vinyl records was limited to how many of them would fit in the delivery van, and subsequently how many would fit in the music store they were being delivered to. Although the format size decreased when the CD came around, the question always remained; How much can the industry take, both in physical music stores and on the radio?

That is what is different this time round, ever since the dawn of the streaming era. The streaming industry has largely taken the place of radio and brick and mortar music stores. Now the shelf is endless, leading to distribution becoming limitless.

The three key pillars of formats, recording and distribution all have one thing in common; they cost money. During the 1950's record companies entered the scene, structuring the process of the "recorded industry", but also making it a closed system. Although they helped establish the careers of many stars. The downside was that the system, established to generate these stars, became a monopoly, tantamount to a music dictatorship (Rocha Leal, 2020).

Back in the times when music was sold as a physical good, record companies offered contracts to artists with a 85% to 15% split in the record companies' advantage. These contracts meant that the record companies controlled publishing, recording, artist management and even merchandising. As such, the recording and distribution process lay in the hands of a new kind of company that, in the structure of the musical industry, controlled the production and consumption cycles during the second half of the 20th century: the record company (Richieri Hanania, 2016).

Record companies took up the role of bank when it came to providing artists with advances for recording their music in the studio or recording video clips. That role of taking risks (on artists and their music) was taken by record companies and in return they demanded a higher share of the earnings. The way things worked was that an artist would only start making money, off a studio album, once the recording company recouped the costs of creating it, which included recording costs, the hiring of musicians and any related advances (Rocha Leal, 2020).The profit for artists would come when they would go on tour on the back of the success they had enjoyed from record sales or airplay on radio. Live performances were the main income stream for artists and their management.

The introduction of the CD in 1982 led to huge wealth. Between 1988 and 1999 six record companies controlled the world of music: EMI, Sony, Warner Bros., PolyGram, BMG and Universal. They were earning vast sums of money - some of which they reinvested in the business.. Tommy Mottola, appointed CEO of Sony Music in 1990, had a saying for this: "You have to spend money to make money." During the 1980s and 1990s, the digital format multiplied industry profits due to decreasing reproduction costs and a booming market for pop music. Not only did the listeners accept paying more than twice as much for the new kind of media, but they ended up reacquiring their favourite albums in digital disc version as well (Hanks, 2015). The real highs would later be dated back to '95, '96 & '97.

However, when the pirate era came around in 1999, the limited distribution started to fade away; the very part of the music industry which the major labels had a monopoly in, or at least a certain amount of control, was taken out of the equation. This brought major challenges to record companies worldwide, as their music was being offered for free on platforms such as Napster. This resulted in a decrease in earnings for the record labels. Once this happened the record labels turned to the "live industry" to reclaim their part of the share. They claimed responsibility for building up the brands and the music catalogue of artists and in doing so they also wanted to reap the rewards.

Now there was money in music again; this had not been the case since 1999. The main contributor to this transformation has been the music streaming industry. Today there are still three major labels which control the world of music: Sony BMG, Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group.

The skewed balance of power that has evolved in the recorded music industry has become more and more visible in the past 15 years. It is the consequence of the technological innovations the industry has gone through. They are what has shaped the music industry to what it is today and they have enabled the recording companies to take advantage of the situation.

2.3 DEMOCRATISATION OF MUSIC

C2 INSIGHTS

In an article published in 2012, Peter Galuszka argues that the democratisation of the recording industry could be understood as a process in which amateur and aspiring artists gain — at least in theory — access to listeners all around the world without the mediation of the profit–oriented record labels. The main part of the democratisation is the fact that there are no more vans needed to distribute vinyl records or CD's; this has all been replaced with optical fibre, as previously described in chapter 2.1.2.

But the fact that the music industry has shifted towards a more hybrid version, where major labels still play a role and where there is a lot more room for smaller alternative music has not only been upt to limitless distribution alone. A big part of the democratization of music has been due to the DIY (do it yourself) movement.

DIY music has its origins in the mid 1970s punk rock scene. It developed as a way to circumnavigate the mainstream music industry. By taking control of the entire production and distribution chain, DIY music bands were able to develop a closer relationship between artists and fans. The DIY ethic gives total control over the final product without need to compromise with record labels (Albini, 2014).

There are a lot more possibilities nowadays for the DIY/independent artist, so there is a need to be very smart and savvy about how the opportunities are managed and utilised.. It has not necessarily become easier, there are just a lot more possibilities.

In chapter 4, the history of DIY and its translation to modern day DIY artists is described extensively.

2A	Record companies are still very much in control.
2B	Barriers to entry for independent artists
2C	Baby boomer generation is paying for music for the third time
2D	Streaming era is here to stay, and seems very stable. "It seems like we are coming to a standstill in terms of technological innovations. Streaming is here to stay, for a while." (Aalberts, personal communication, 17 November 2020)
2E	Demand is going to increase as other countries adopt streaming, supply is already unlimited.

CHAPTER 3

MAJOR REVENUE STREAMS

In this chapter the independent artists are portrayed and they are introduced along with the two main revenue streams in the music industry today; streaming and live. After that, live streaming is discussed, a combination of both live and streaming and relatively new to the scene. Everything discussed in this chapter is highlighted from the perspective of the independent artists to make their position become more apparent.

C3

CONTENT		
	3.1	STREAMING
	3.2	LIVE
	3.3	LIVE STREAMING

AIM	
	To demonstrate the journey of the independent artist, by discussing the live and streaming industry from their perspective.

CONTRIBUTORS	
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3.1 MUSIC STREAMING

The most important thing about streaming is getting the music "out there"; online for the public, of good quality, ready to be consumed by the independent artists' potential audience. To achieve that, the independent artist must have produced or recorded music and stored the music as a digital file.

The music streaming landscape is quite broad. It is more or less dominated by companies, known as Direct Streaming Platforms (DSP's). The DSP's compete with one another by slightly tweaking the benefits provided to both artists and consumers. The main DSP's are: Apple Music, iTunes, Amazon, GooglePlay, Spotify, Deezer and Tidal. All have at least one thing in common and that is that they work with online distributors.

INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

So what exactly is an independent artist? An independent artist is not under contract with a commercial (major) record company nor one of their subsidiaries. Independent artists can be signed to independent record companies, also known as indie labels. The terms independent, indie or DIY are generally used to describe music which is either produced, recorded and distributed autonomously, remaining independent from major record labels or their subsidiaries. In this chapter the term independent artist will be used.

DISTRIBUTORS

All music on DSP's has been uploaded through online distributors or aggregators. These companies have outgrown the distribution companies which were once in place to distribute music when it was sold as a physical good. There are two types of online distribution companies; bulk and specialist.

A bulk distributor is a bulk aggregator. One size fits all. There is no pre-selection of artists,

everybody can upload music through any of these distributors. For most of the services a flat fee and annual membership is required. It is then the responsibility of the company to make the music available at the time and date and on streaming platforms specified by the artist. Since the companies are bulk distributors, artists should not expect any extra one-to-one services. As an independent artist this is likely where the journey begins in terms of streaming. Popular bulk distributors are: CDBaby, TuneCore, Distrokid, Ditto and Amuse.

Specialist online distribution differentiates itself from bulk distribution by conducting pre-selection of artists. A tailored approach is adopted. An example of a specialist is LAB music; a self proclaimed boutique distribution company, established in the Netherlands, working with an exclusive selection of artists, labels and management. LAB works solely with music that LAB believes in, which results in the music paying dividends, according to LAB music managing director Guillaume Warmerdam (Warmerdam, personal communication, 12 December 2020). In exchange, the specialist distributors often charge percentage fees (dependent on revenue). These companies will provide cash advances to spend on marketing, sound recording or shooting music videos; often referred to as label services.

STREAMS

Streams are the currency of the streaming industry. The amount of streams racked up by an artist determines how much is earned, depending on the agreement made with the distributor in each case. Each DSP is responsible for setting its own streaming charges/revenues. The earnings from streaming are paid out through the online distribution companies to the artists (after the DSP and the online distribution companies have taken their cut). See table 1 for an overview of the Per-Stream Payout.

The artists can increase the amount of streams

by marketing activities outside of DSP's to attract listeners, such as social media or radio. However, there are also options within the DSP itself to stimulate the number streams.

The first one is cost-free and involves pitching music to the DSP. In the case of Spotify, this means that through the "Spotify for Artists" page, artists can pitch their music, accompanying it with genre and playlist suggestions. The goal is to be included on big playlists curated by Spotify. Getting placement on a playlist can give a big boost to the number of streams. (Spotify, 2020). The second way of generating streams on the platform itself is utilising advertising. Spotify, for example, offers different types of advertising. These can be used to mobilise followers or target a certain group when new music is released by the artist.

As for streaming via specialist distributors, depending on what is specified in the contract, they could increase the chances of getting playlisted. They have more contacts within the industry and sometimes have specific roles to influence playlisting; so called streaming managers or pluggers.

In the streaming era, the number of streams has gained importance both for artists and their managers. Today, generally, an artist's success is defined by the metric of streaming. However this ignores the importance of live performances which will be discussed and demonstrated in the next section.
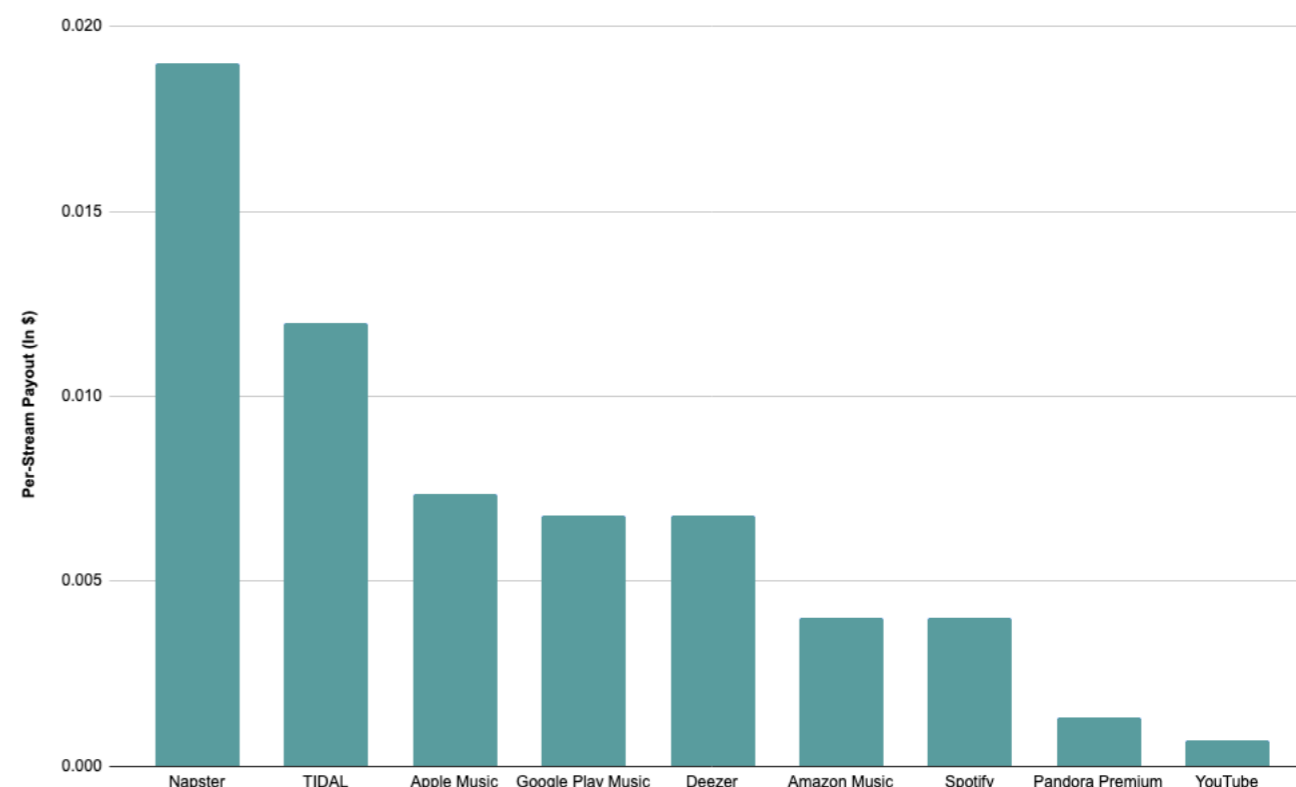

Table 1: Per-Stream Payout 2021, Source: https://www.digitalmusicnews.com

3.2 LIVE

3.3 LIVE STREAMING

The sequence of the sections in this chapter - with Streaming preceding Live - has been chosen deliberately, because this is how things happen in the current music industry. Firstly the artists will have to focus on releasing music online. Once this is successful and attention is generated, venues (i.e. booking managers) will become interested in booking the artist.

Artists, however, should be prepared for the difference between streaming and live. It is important to realise that the number of streams is not necessarily a fair representation of an artist's fanbase; an artist might achieve one million streams, yet when playing a venue only ten people will show up. This is due to the huge popularity of playlists on streaming services and the fact that people listening to music do not necessarily know the artists name!. Yes, getting on a few hot playlists can skyrocket an artist's monthly listeners and streaming numbers overnight. But these are not fans. These are fans of the playlist. (Herstand, 2021).

music scene. ESNS is indeed a launching pad for artists. The timing of the event, mid January, means festival programmers and venue bookers can start filling their line-up and thus that artists can start planning their tours. This is a huge opportunity for up and coming artists.
ESNS is split into two parts; Eurosonic is the part of the festival which is designed for European artists, whilst the local talent from the Netherlands plays Noorderslag.

GIGS

When it comes to live performances, there are certain gigs that artists will want to be playing to catch the eye of industry professionals and kickstart their live career. The Great Escape (UK), Reeperbahn (DE), MaMA (FRA) and Eurosonic Noorderslag (NL), to name a few. For example, Eurosonic Noorderslag, an annual festival which normally (COVID excluded) takes place in the North of the Netherlands is described in a little more detail below.

Eurosonic Noorderslag (ESNS) is a non-profit, European artist only, 100% showcase festival and music conference. Selling out each year, ESNS attracts over 4.000 professional delegates, including 400 international festivals, and showcases around 350 European artists for over 40.000 visitors in total (Eurosonic Noorderslag, 2020). ESNS has a proven track record for helping break new acts on the international live

A hybrid of streaming and live has recently grown in popularity. With artists having to put in more effort to reach their audience, live streaming concerts is a direct consequence of the latest developments surrounding COVID-19. Although the purpose of this thesis is to design beyond the pandemic, the effects that have occurred on the live industry as a result, are too big to not be taken into consideration.

Apart from live streaming performances by the likes of Billie Eilish and Dutch band De Staat, artists have also taken to popular platforms, such as gaming platforms, to perform virtual concerts. Travis Scott teamed up with Fortnite for his concert titled "Astronomical" and more than 12 million people[fans] took part in the spectacle (Stuart, 2020). Not much later Lil Nas X performed to an audience of millions across two days and four shows in the hit kids game Roblox. The shows gathered 33 million views in total across the four performances (Kastrenakes, 2020). Taking a quick look at these numbers (and thinking about the revenue streams and publicity), the implications of these events could be enormous.

People seem to be judging the live streams as if they are replacements for live concerts. However, the production and the experience of such concerts is completely different, making it a category on its own. "A category that is here to stay", argues Jos Feijen, general manager of music venue De Effenaar in Eindhoven (NL) (Feijen, personal communication, 1 December 2020). De Effenaar is currently working on an audiovisual streaming service, comparable to Netflix for music. This service would be part of a greater artist service platform which enables artists to collect data and gain insights about their live performances, a valuable addition to the live performance segment.

Colin Benders, formerly known as Kyteman with his eponymous orchestra, is one of the artists who believes that there is room for a new category post-COVID (Benders , personal communication, February 1 2021). Benders is especially interested in the way it could work out for independent artists, arguing that once artists receive a

consistent flow of visitors to live streams, they can set up a production anywhere in the world, whilst also bringing in people physically. Using this setup, artists could potentially visit countries or cities in which they have less of an audience, yet still it would be profitable for them. This makes it more attractive for artists to start growing their audience, knowing they have some reassurance. On top of that, this could lead to having a certain leverage and negotiation position when artists are playing at a certain festival whilst live streaming it at the same time. Directing the streamlink to their own channels (i.e. the platforms that they have followers on).

Whereas digital nomads were once popular, the future holds musical nomads, according to Benders (Benders, personal communication, February 1 2021).

C3 INSIGHTS

3A   Hierarchy of the streaming industry has established itself.

3B   Introduction of online distributors.

3C   DSPs have power in telling where and what your fanbase is.

3D   Risk of anonymity among the many.

3E   Importance of live performances.

3F   There is still a demand for live music.

3G   Live streaming has a future.

DECISIONS

Focus on the scope of the Netherlands.

Live industry not within scope

Goal; Creating a new relationship between artist and consumer (listener).

Decision to analyse DIY from punk origins and Spotify to see where there could be potential overlap between the two. Spotify is chosen because it is the biggest DSP in the Netherlands (scope).
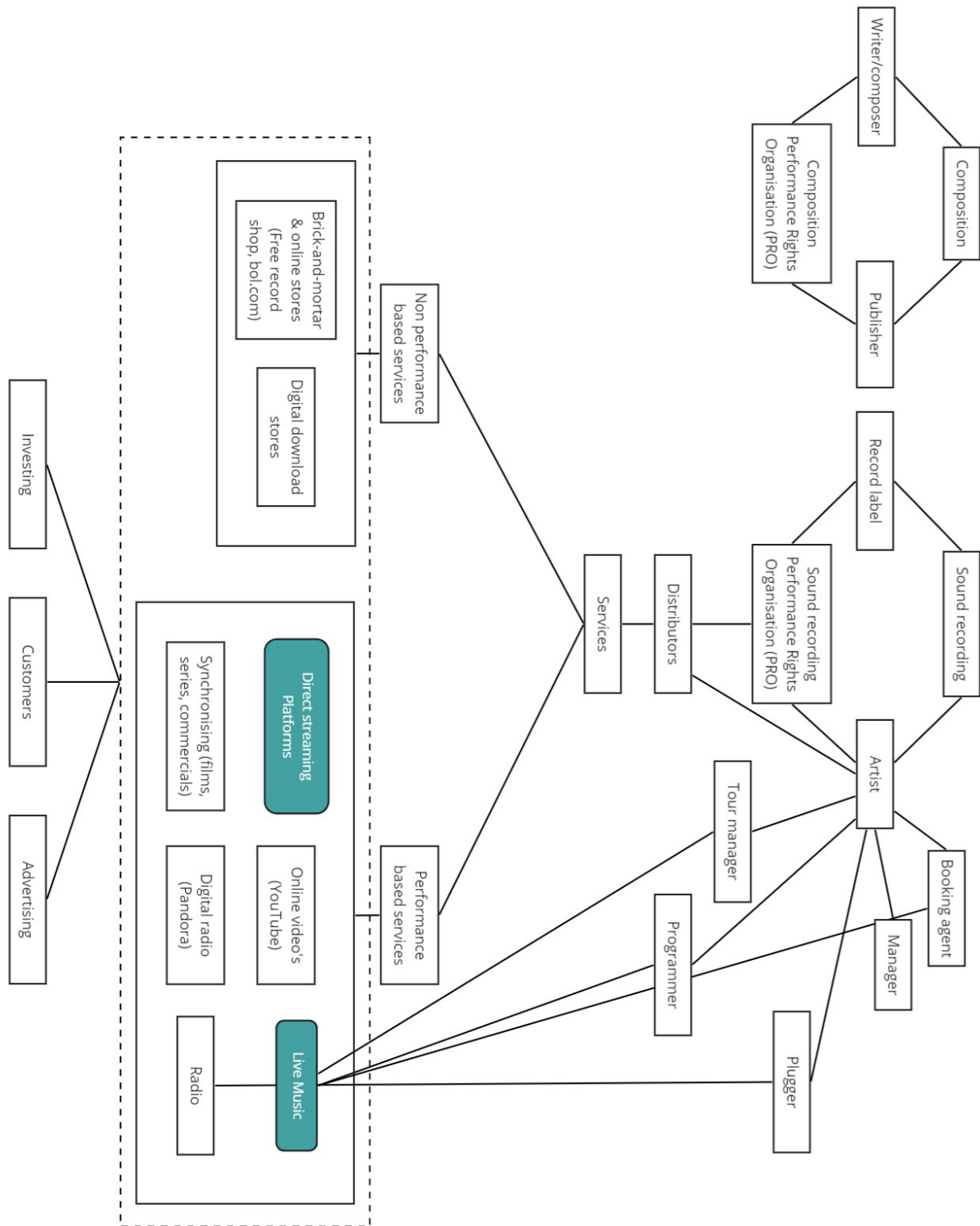
Diagram 2: Streaming and live position

C4

In this chapter, which serves as a case study, the origins of DIY (do it yourself) music are retraced to the punk era A broader approach is taken, not only focussing on music, to capture the beliefs and ideas of this movement. From there, these ideas and beliefs are translated to the current situation.

CONTENT

4.1 DIY ORIGINS
4.2 TRANSLATION TO NOW

AIM

To conduct a case study on the DIY scene, translating its origins to a modern-day setting, to verify if those ideas and beliefs can still be upheld.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ton van der Werf
Madelon Acket
Erwin Blom

YOURSELF

IT

DO

4.1 DIY ORIGINS

The music industry has the tendency to repeat itself, according to Ton van der Werf a teacher at the Utrecht School Arts (HKU) (Werf, van der, personal communication, November 30 2020). "If you look at the rise of DIY, especially during the punk era, you might recognise certain principles", was his advice for this graduation project. "DIY has continued to grow throughout the years. Take a step back and analyse the history of DIY, start translating these factors onto the current music industry to see where DIY might work nowadays."

DIY lies at the heart of everything, everything has to be built up. This is the first sentence spoken by Madelon Acket during the interview (Acket , personal communication, 3 December 2020). Acket was the owner of the very first punk store in The Hague (NL). The punk movement emerged in the UK during the 1970's. Acket would travel up and down to London to visit SEX, a botique run by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood between 1974 and 1976, to stock up on items for her shop. "Buck Danny", the shop's name, specialised in clothing that defined the look of the punk movement; Silkscreen printed t-shirts, each one different than the next, buttons, safety pins, zippers and chains. Fashion was just one side of the punk subculture (Jonker, 2012).

The punk music movement was started as a rebellion against the hippie culture. It was the reaction to the number of record labels overproducing music of artists such as David Bowie, Fleetwood Mac and the Beatles. The music was judged to be too commercial and too static, therefore "Boring!" was a frequently heard remark.
The punk subculture advocated a DIY-ethic; being self-sufficient and not depending on a paid expert. This resulted in songs that were short, straightforward and "in your face". Musical instruments were played as they should not be played, by people who could not play them "properly", all fueled by a deep belief in individual freedom and anti-establishment views.
The independent record companies which started developing during the 1970's and 80's were taking full advantage of the technological innovations in terms of music production and distribution.

Independent distribution channels were set-up, album covers were handmade by stenciling and fanzines containing record reviews were used to spread information. However for both DIY artists as DIY labels, these were tough times for taking on the giants of the music industry.
Back then, many artists would give it all up for a contract at a major label, abandoning DIY and therefore being seen as a "sell-out". Likewise, independent record companies risked being bought up or losing their best acts to a major record company, as soon as they became successful.

During the ongoing poverty and an enormous housing shortage of the 70's, the punk subculture became a political movement, where role fading between music artists, activism and the audience became apparent. An attitude of stubbornness prevailed. Acket recognises that the same stubbornness exists nowadays, however there is a key difference; back then it was rebelling simply to rebel, whilst nowadays it is rebelling to do better.

4.2 TRANSLATION TO NOW

Hesmondhalgh (1997) applied the concept of democratization to analyze British post–punk which led to a set of notions that are vital to a democratic media system. The notions, as described in Peter Galuszka (2012) article are participation, access, decentralization, collectivism, collaboration and co–operation. These notions will be consulted as a guideline to translate the beliefs and views from the DIY scene of the punk era into the status quo.

"The Internet is the new phase of DIY, the new punk" proclaimed Erwin Blom (interview reference), co-owner of Fast Moving Targets and always on the lookout for new innovations. Whereas artists during the punk era would sell themselves out, nowadays artists do not feel the necessity of doing so. The big difference is that back then it was a matter of principle and out of necessity, nowadays it's ordinary and well organised. Not only do we live in a time where distribution possibilities are endless, also technology tools are pretty much endless and easily accessible. DIY has never been this accessible, which leads to the first two notions of "participation and access". Both of these seem very translatable to how the current music industry operates.

Moving onto the second notion of decentralisation. This notion does not quite come into its own in the current situation. Although DIY has kept on expanding, the power of music industry giants still remains. The three major labels, also referred to as "the big three", lost a little global market share in the last 12 months, falling from 66.5% in 2019 to 65.5% in 2020 (Midia, 2021), yet still remain in a dominant position. Not to mention that the main source of music consumption via streaming is also very centralised around big players exercising a huge amount of influence. More on this though in the next chapter.

The final three notions, being collectivism, collaboration and co–operation are leading in creating and enhancing the relationship between artists and the audience. As a DIY artist, you have to play an active role yourself, which is something you must enjoy and be good at. Collaborations and co-operations were big during the punk era, as the likes of Punk, Hip Hop and Reggae were

very much intertwined. As groups that had been outcast by society to start off with, they interacted with each other and influenced new movements. On the topic of co-operations, Acket finishes the interview by comparing Grandmaster Flash performing in a punk club to Travis Scott's concert in the game Fortnite (as described in chapter 5.4).

A scan of the original pamflet user to mark the opening of "Buck Danny"
Source: Acket archive

C4 INSIGHTS

4A	Punk movement was the result of a rebellion.
4B	Collectivism, collaboration and co—operation to be reflected in design.
4C	As a DIY artists you are required to not only be good at making music. Also be good in doing business.
4D	The DIY artists need a helping hand to fill their competency/capability gaps. Opportunity for Maak?
4E	Whilst financial income is important, so is recognition.

MUSIC STREAMING INDUSTRY

In this chapter a deep-dive is taken into the world of the streaming industry. The concept of the Direct Streaming Platform is introduced and illustrated by facts and figures. A closer look is taken at Spotify, the Swedish Direct Streaming Platform, as well as the consequences that streaming has had on music in general.

C5

CONTENT

5.1	DIRECT STREAMING PLATFORMS (DSP)
5.2	SPOTIFY
5.3	PLAYLISTS
5.4	CONSEQUENCES OF STREAMING

AIM

To illustrate the growth and influence of streaming in to-day's music industry.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ton van der Werf
Wilbert Mutsaers
Colin Benders

5.1 DIRECT STREAMING PLATFORMS

5.2 SPOTIFY

Just over 20 years ago Napster and its peer-to-peer file sharing service, made its way into the world. At its peak in February 2001, the platform provided access to millions and millions of music tracks for 80 million subscribers globally, for free (Gowan, 2002). Now, 20 years later, there are 433 million users of paid subscription accounts listening to that same music on DSP's. So how did this growth come about?

A Direct Streaming Platform (DSP) is an online streaming service that features digital music albums and singles.

The first major initiative was taken by Apple, when they launched the iTunes music store in 2003. The iTunes store, introduced to accompany the iPod, offered users the ability to download mp3's for a fixed amount per song or album. Both last.fm and Pandora, launched just before and just after the iTunes music store, offered something different. The platforms recommended music based on the users listening behaviour. This was the first time that machines were used to predict and suggest music for users to try out (Grannell, 2018).

Spotify was the first platform to recognise the importance of pairing on-demand listening with a platform that recommended music to listeners. What followed was a power struggle to win the attention of the consumer. As a result, DPP's, such as Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal, Deezer and YouTube, have become increasingly dominant, ushering in a shift from ownership to access (O'Dair Et. al, 2020). However, Spotify has alway maintained its position, boasting a 32% market share in 2020 (Mulligan, 2020).

In the following sections there is a focus on Spotify as a company, the importance of playlists and finally the consequences of streaming will be discussed.

The name Spotify was registered by Daniel Ek and Martin Lorentzon in 2006, however Spotify did not go live until October 2008. The reason for this delay was mainly due to the license deals that had to be agreed upon with record companies for the enormous song catalogues that were necessary for the platform to work. The platform first launched in Scandinavia, France, the U.K. and Spain, it took another three more years to finalise the licensing deals in the U.S. (Bertoni, 2012)

From the start, Spotify offered a "freemium" based model; users which have free access to Spotify's services receive lower quality music and occasional advertisements in return. The subscription-based or Premium users receive high-quality music and can download music straight to their device(s) for offline listening.

155 million of Spotify's 345 million worldwide users are subscribed users (Spotify, 2021), making them the biggest streaming service in the world. These 155 million premium users are responsible for 90% of Spotify's revenue, the remaining 10% is brought in by advertising revenues. Spotify gets its content from major record labels as well as independent artists and minor record labels alike. The company pays 70% of its total revenue to rights holders in the shape of royalties. The remaining 30% of revenues is invested back into the company, as that is the current strategy; growth now, profit later. Or as Ek put it in an interview with CNBC: "Eventually we will get to a point of maturity where we'll focus more on profit over growth, but for the next few years it's going to be predominantly growth for us." Since its establishment in 2008 Spotify has never been a profitable company.

THE SPOTIFY MISSION

What Spotify has done is bring money back into music. Spotify has paid more than 15 billion euros to music industry rights holders in total according to the 2019 Spotify financial statement (Spotify, 2020). However, from the getgo Spotify has always been on the receiving end of criticism regarding unfair compensation for artists. The platform pays royalties according to the pro rata model; the number of streams of an artist's songs as a proportion of total songs streamed on the service.

Wilbert Mutsaers, head of Spotify Benelux, who was interviewed for this thesis spoke about "Letting as many people as possible live off their art/music in front of the widest possible audience" as Spotify's mission statement. Whilst, the official mission statement reads "1 million" (Spotify, 2021) instead of "as many as possible". With 60.000 songs being uploaded every day and 90% of streams being shared between 57,000 out of 8 billion artists, this suggests there is still a long road ahead to achieve the stated Spotify mission

5.3 PLAYLISTS

5.4 CONSEQUENCES OF STREAMING

A playlist, as stated by the Cambridge dictionary, is a list of pieces of music chosen by someone to listen to on their computer, phone, etc. (Playlist, 2021). It originated from the fact that the music industry started selecting music for the consumer.

In 2015, Spotify launched the "Discover Weekly" playlist. Updated weekly and providing recommendations of new music based on listening behaviour and songs enjoyed by similar listeners, the playlist was a huge success (Dredge, 2015). Just over a year later Release Radar and Daily Mix were introduced to the public. Ever since, Spotify has upped their game in music discovery -completely revamping and personalising the user homepage and introducing multiple new recommendation tools, like Spotify radio.

Spotify playlists essentially come in three different types;
- editorial (or curated) playlists that have been put together by a Spotifyeditor
- algorithmic playlists that have been fabricated by Spotify computers using Spotify algorithms.
- User generated playlists that have been created by both freemium and premium users.
The only difference between freemium user and premium user playlist capabilities is that a freemium users' playlist can only be played on shuffle.

Whether they are Spotify playlists or user-generated playlists, Spotify is obtaining valuable data from its listeners (who listens to what). Wherever the data is going besides Spotify and their advertisers remains unclear, nevertheless Spotify harvests a lot of information, and (as the saying goes) "information is power".

That power is reflected in the fact that as of October 2020, all of Spotify's top 10 playlists, defined by the amount of followers, are owned and curated by Spotify.
On top of this, each of the major labels has their own "independent" Spotify playlist; Universal owns Digster, Sony owns Filtr, and Warner owns Topsify. These playlists, which are on Spotify, are proclaimed and put forward as being neutral, however they heavily feature music produced by

the same record company that owns it.

Spotify launched Spotify for Artists in 2017 where, as described in chapter 3.3, artists can pitch their music to Spotify's editors to be considered for playlist inclusion. Besides that, the service also provides data on streams and listeners. On this topic, Mutsaers argues that "one should not just look at the out-of-pocket value of streams, but look at the entire value of what you are getting; data, insights etc.". However, all of the data provided is relatively broad and within the platform nothing can be carried out or achieved based on the gained insights.

Whereas Spotify set out to be a truly social platform in 2012, little seems to be left of that statement (Warren, 2012). Colin Benders uses the notion of "Spotify fans" to describe "Spotify consumers that have a manufacturable success; It does not matter which artists they listen to, they come to Spotify to get their daily fix of music anyway".

When choosing a streaming service for his music, Colin Benders describes it as "a process where most time is spent looking for lesser evils". Spotify, in this context, is defined as a "marketplace for attention" by Benders. Where artists merely serve as content providers for a platform which is mainly occupied with their own manufacturable success. That in itself is a consequence of streaming, but what have been other knock on effects caused by the embrace of streaming.

A song being skipped has become an artist's worst nightmare. This has become the case since certain DSP's introduced the functionality that a stream would only be included (in the revenue calculation) if the song was played for at least 30 seconds, before being skipped. This resulted in songs becoming shorter as they started to ditch the instrumental intro and leap straight into the hook. Hoping that this would lead to a lower skip-through-rate. On top of that, a skip is registered, meaning that a certain amount of skips could mean that a song will be removed from an editorial playlist.

These types of insights have led to a defensive attitude from artists as they receive direct feedback on their music. Something that was not possible to uncover in the CD era, was if all songs on an album were appreciated. Nowadays, it is very clear which songs work and which ones do not. As a result, a lot more singles are released.

Lastly, streaming has altered the way money is earned through recorded music. Earnings are spread out compared to CD or vinyl releases. Or as Music Week editor Tim Ingham told the BBC: "Unlike buying a CD or download, streaming is not a one-off payment it is a constant long-term source of income for artists". This perpetuity has been the impetus for older artists, like Bob Dylan and Fleetwood Mac's Stevie Nicks to cash in on their song catalogs. On the other hand it has attracted big investment firms to acquire such music catalogs, such has happened to Taylor Swift.

C5 INSIGHTS

5A   Lazy Spotify consumers, all they want is a play button and to hear music.

5B   For Spotify to achieve their mission/ vision, they need to help independents. Meaning positive discrimination towards independent artists.

5C   Dominance and influence that playlists have.

5D   Users can make playlists, yet they are insignificant.

5E   Playlists represent an opportunity, a lever for change.

5F   Removing the barrier to entry is key.
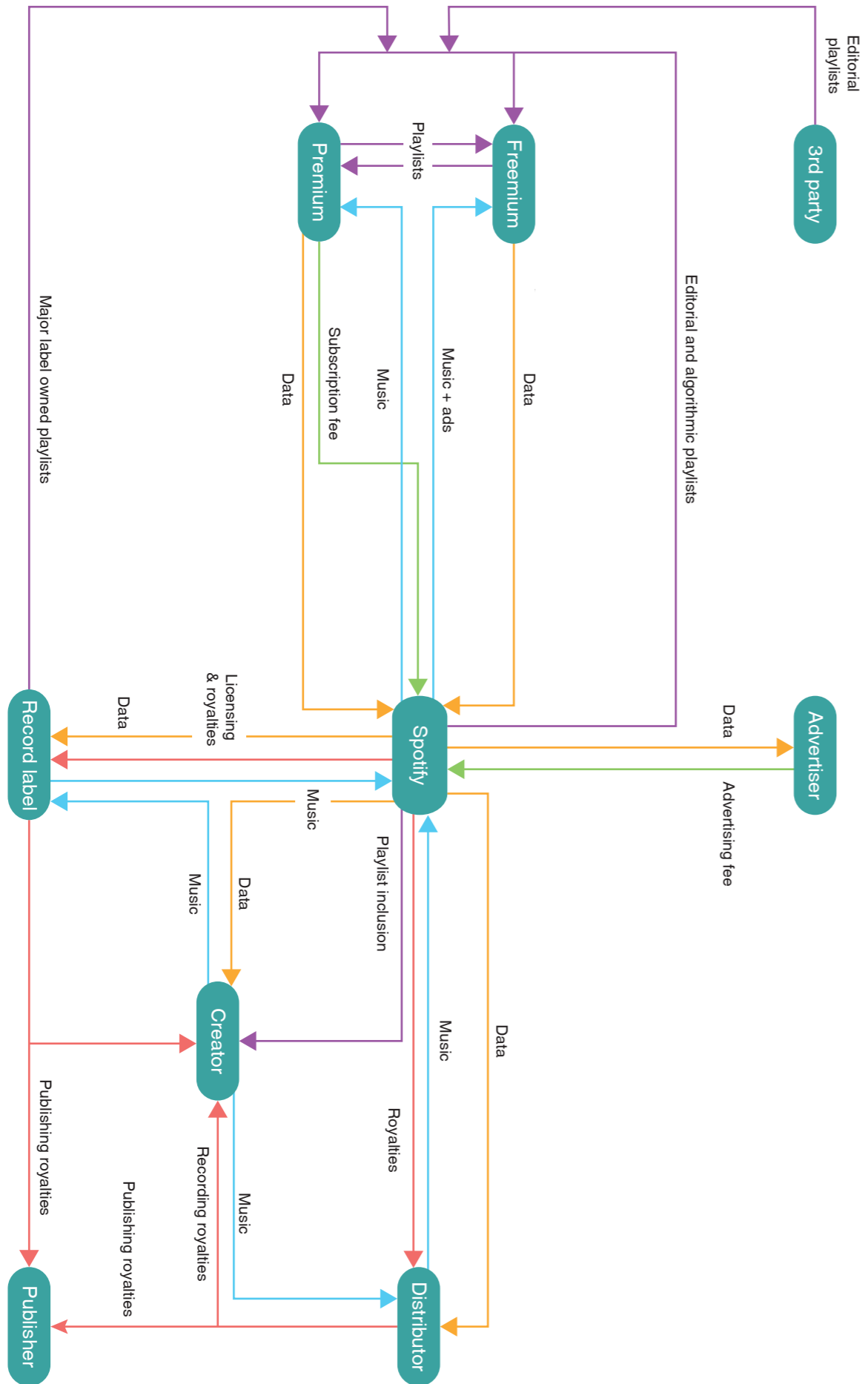
Diagram 3: Spotify value network

In this chapter the research part of this thesis is concluded by summing up the main insights of each separate chapter. Drawing from the gained insights from the research phase, design principles are set up to initiate and support the design phase.

FOCUS

DESIGN

C6

CONTENT	6.1	DESIGN PRINCIPLES
	6.2	DESIGN CHALLENGE

AIM	Collect and analyse findings from conducted research and identify opportunities in terms of design principles.

6.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

6.2 DESIGN CHALLENGE

To define the design principles, all insights from previous chapters are reviewed. Those that present an opportunity or threat are selected. This results in the following list of insights:

2A   Record companies are still very much in control.

2B   Barriers to entry for independent artists.

3A   Hierarchy of the streaming industry has established itself.

3C   DSPs have power in telling where and what your fanbase is.

3D   Risk of anonymity among the many.

4B   Collectivism, collaboration and co–operation to be reflected in design.

4D   The diy artists need a helping hand fill their competency/capability gaps. Opportunity for Maak?

5B   For Spotify to achieve their mission/vision, they need to help independents. Meaning positive discrimination towards independent artists.

5C   Dominance and influence that playlists have.

5D   Users can make playlists, yet they are insignificant.

5E   Playlists represent an opportunity, a lever for change.

This list was distilled down to the the following four design principles:

1.   Artist empowerment; lower barriers to entry for independent artists.

2.   User involvement; Collectivism, collaboration and co–operation to be reflected in design, critical listeners to become part of the creative process.

3.   Stimulate independent artists.

4.   Playlist improvement; Restore the importance of the user-generated playlist.

Streaming is a massive revenue stream of the music industry. The streaming industry is still growing. Streaming is the main source of music discovery.

The solution lies in playlists. Playlists hold the key to unlocking value for the independent artists. As platform-generated playlists become more and more dominant and important, so does the power of the DSP to dictate which creators make it into the playlists and thus what the audience is listening to. On top of that, playlists are becoming less social.

- Algorithmic playlists; no human involved
- Editorial playlists; More and more people dependent on a small group of editors
- DSP's push their own playlists; User-generated playlists are becoming devalued as they are becoming harder to find.

The problem is lack of community. This leads to minimal audience engagement and music discovery. The data and insights are there, yet not properly accessible and directly usable for artists or their audience

When revisiting the main research question the following line of reasoning seems logical:

Research question: How can we redesign the music industry to balance value streams?
Answer: Make music streaming more social.
For whom: Independent (DIY) creators
Why: Direct Streaming Platforms constrict the relationship between creators and their audience.
Goal: Make streaming more social for independent/DIY creators. Create direct, intimate interactions and foster those connections.

Note: From this chapter onward the term creator will be used instead of (music) artist.

VALUE DEFINITION

In the research question, the word "value" is used. It is now pertinent to have a short discussion about "value". Value means different things to different people; different people can value the same thing differently. Value is most commonly associated with monetary worth which is tangible and can be easily measured.

In the course of this project it has become clear that, for example, "recognition" also has a lot of value to a creator. Recognition is largely intangible. It is worth noting though that such intangible value can, over the course of time, lead to tangible monetary value. As recognition spreads so a fan base can build up and lead to sales (streams).

So it is important to understand that value has a very wide interpretation with respect to the main research question. In the light of this graduation project, the focus swings somewhat towards value that is mostly intangible be it via recognition, empowerment or social interaction.

CHAPTER 7

In this chapter the development of the concept is described; starting from ideation, through to defining three concepts. On the basis of the design principles set out in the previous chapter, a decision-making process is used to select which concept to continue developing, leading to the final concept.

CONCEPT

DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 7

C7

CONTENT		
	7.1	IDEATION
	7.2	CONCEPTUALISATION
	7.3	FINAL CONCEPTS

AIM	
	To illustrate the creative and decision-making process which marks the translation from research to design.

7.1 IDEATION

7.2 CONCEPTUALISATION

The ideation process for this project was focussed primarily using the "What if…?" scenario technique. This method triggers unexpected ideas and challenges the designer to think differently about the problem at hand. This led to the following list of ideas.

What if….

What if Patreon was on Spotify?
Following artists would pay off for both parties with exclusive content and presale for concerts.

What if users received a Screen Time report for Spotify?
It could be called "Wrapped weekly", quantifying your weekly consumption of music in terms of a metric such as minutes listened or money earned because of your streams.

What if pitch submissions via Spotify for Artists are reviewed by Spotify users?
It could be called "pitch to the people/public". The submission would be reviewed by the followers of that creator/artist.

What if there was Tinder for Spotify?
New music could be discovered by listening and by swiping the user judges if they like the music or not. Resulting in a clearly defined taste by the user.

What if royalties earned through premium subscriptions weighed heavier than freemium users? This would make users think twice about using a freemium account over a subscription account. If choosing for a subscription account means that artists earn more through your listening, this might incentivise paid subscriptions.

What if playlist discovery would work based on geo-location? Playlists would be exchanged with someone you have crossed paths with and who has similar music taste.

What if artists were allowed a limited amount of playlists to choose from, but were guaranteed placement on the ones picked?
This could make playlist editors/curators

redundant, and evenly spread artists among editorial playlists.

What if users have the option to pick new releases as the draft system in the NFL?
Users could create a "fantasy football"esque playlist and would be rewarded if songs they picked performed well (amount of streams for example).

What if streaming would embrace a "playlist centered payment system?"
Playlist inclusion is rewarded and being included in a playlist becomes a new metric, like the amount of streams is at the moment. This would incentivise user generated playlists.

What if songs would be reviewed/considered by a multiple tier review system?
Songs that are pitched are not only reviewed by editors/curators, but also by fans. Resulting in a broader panel and a more nuanced review.

Using the ideas as mentioned above, three promising concepts were chosen to take forward into conceptualisation. To be able to make a well-founded decision on which concept to finally choose, the concepts were refined and judged on two main criteria:
1. Value proposition for each of the three stakeholders; Creator, Audience, DSP
2. The design principles as specified in chapter 6.1.

CONCEPT A

Playlist-centered payment system

Description: At the moment artists are being paid based on the number of streams their music accounts for. Playlist inclusion could be a new metric, based on which other artists also receive a payment. This would be the case for user generated playlists only.

Creator value: A playlist-centered payment system would lead to a more direct connection between the artist and fans.

Audience value: Audiences would be made part of the process and feel more included along the journey of the artist and therefore appeal to fans.

DSP value: Insights into music consumption behaviour. Playlist editing becomes more artists and consumer centered. Gaining a competitive advantage over other DPSs.

Design principle compliance:
1. Artist empowerment; Low. The artist is not empowered
2. User involvement; High. Users are involved and their actions are made meaningful, yet there is no back and forth with artists.
3. Stimulate independent artists; Medium. Artists are stimulated to create more fan interactions that might convert into playlist inclusion.
4. Playlist improvement; Medium. The playlist becomes important, yet does not fulfill a social purpose.

CONCEPT B

Multiple tier music review system

Description: Instead of song pitches being reviewed by inhouse curators, a multiple tier review system is used. The top tier is still occupied by curators, in the second tier are accredited followers and the final tier is formed by other followers and fans.

Creator value: The song pitch is not only targeted at the curator. This results in a broader evaluation of the music, other than it being judged by a small amount of people. This leads to more insights in terms of reviews.

Audience value: The audience becomes more involved and is credited for their contribution. More reviews will lead to more informed decisions in terms of discovery and this then leads to more fulfilment for the listeners.

DSP value: Collecting fan insights and valuable data is what is in it for the DSP's. On top of that, part of the work of sorting and scoring pitches is performed for them.

Design principle compliance:
1. Artist empowerment; Low; Although the artist gains a huge amount of feedback on their music, not much changes for them.
2. User involvement; High. Users' opinions are valued and can influence other users, with some opinions being valued higher than others.
3. Stimulate independent artists; Medium. The knowledge of a broader review should stimulate

7.3 FINAL CONCEPT

CONCEPT C

Proximity-based music community creation platform

Description: Users exchange playlists based on geo-location. Matches are made based on similar music taste and having crossed paths with that user. The user can choose two different user modes, either spreading or discovering music. Artists receive insights about how their music is spread. Communities are created organically "by themselves" and artists can tap into, and interact with them.

Creator value: Community comes into being that revolves around their music. Direct intimate fan/audience engagement. Once artists start engaging fans, they start creating advocates for their artist "brand".

Audience value: Music discovery, user-generated and therefore coming close to real life (face to face) recommendations. Ownership in the creative process

DSP value: User behaviour insights. Being perceived as a truly artist-friendly and social platform. A point of differentiation that provides the DSP with a competitive advantage.

Design principle compliance:
1. Artist empowerment; Medium. Artists are empowered by the creation of their own communities. This provides them with influence with regard to their fanbase.
2. User involvement; High. Users are involved by spreading the music of the artist they like or discovering new music. They also become part of a community.
3. Stimulate independent artists; Medium. Artists are stimulated to interact more with their fans, which results in their music being spread.
4. Playlist improvement; High. Users playlists become important for music discovery and for community creation. Something truly social.

DECISION

Based on the above evaluation of all three concepts, the decision has been made to continue with concept C.
The reason for this is because concept C shows the most potential value for the creator, the audience and the DSP. On top of that, it also offers a point of difference when it comes to fulfilling the design principles that were established in chapter 6. A key point that differentiates this concept is that it shows promise of becoming a legitimate social platform where user playlists really start making a difference.

As the three concepts advanced throughout the concept development phase, adjustments were made. These adjustments were based on talks with people (experts and enthusiasts), and also around thoughts that had been formed by the author of this thesis. As was described, Concept C has been selected. In this subchapter, the changes and further developments to concept C will be presented, along with a visualisation to clarify the features and how the interactions between different user groups are envisioned.

Note: From this point onwards, when the words concept or platform are used, they refer to concept C if not mentioned otherwise.

CONCEPT C - A MUSIC COMMUNITY CREATION PLATFORM

A music discovery platform based on similar music taste

Some definitions of terms relative to Concept C:

SLIDER
A major change to the concept is that the proximity-based or geo-location based playlist discovery has been replaced by a "slider". This slider is used as a tool to determine the amount of desired overlap to discover music with. A user will choose one of their own playlists and subsequently use the slider to determine the percentage of that playlist they want to discover music with. The slider is set from 0 - 100%. For example, with the slider set at 20% of a playlist containing ten songs, would mean that music would be discovered based on two songs that are common in the target playlists.

OVERLAP
The two songs as described above are defined in this example as the "overlap". This overlap will be used to look for playlists that have been created by other users that contain these two songs,

amongst others. The user is then presented with a view of the content of these other playlists and can then start discovering the music that they include.

USERS - Discovery and Distributor mode.
A conscious decision.
Connections are made between users when a desired amount of overlap of music is measured between two user-generated playlists.

As a user you can switch between two modes; Discovery and Distributor mode
This means your playlists are either private (Discovery mode) or public (Distributor mode). Both modes can be activated at the same time however, if this is desired.

Discovery mode; Users can discover new music, add it to their playlists and subscribe to artists. When users subscribe to artists they become part of that artists' community.

Distributor mode; Effectively a distributor becomes a promoter of any artists' music by having selected it in their playlist.

Note that both modes can be activated at the same time.

CREATORS (the artists)
Artists can track the movement of their music and watch their community grow, receiving insights on location and quantity.

Artists have the opportunity to directly engage with their community, in the form of exclusive content and offerings.

See Diagram 4 for more information.

VALUE PROPOSITION

USERS

Ownership in the creative process; both in being involved by the artist, but also by contributing to their success by spreading/promoting their music and growing their community. audience = creator (part of the diy/punk movement).

Peer to peer music discovery, breaking away from constrained playlists and recommendations. Regaining importance of user generated playlists.

An experience that mimics record store recommendations. A social interaction, where like-mindedness of both people and music is at the core.

CREATORS

Self-propagating communities, based on artists' music, which are initiated and sustained by their followers. Providing artists with more time to focus on maintaining the community and engaging the audience.

See growing communities of people who have subscribed to them and have exchanged their music and have the ability to tap into communities and create direct intimate fan/audience engagement.

Introduction of new types of metrics

DSP's

Spotify is more able to live up to its mission and social responsibility: "Our mission is to unlock the potential of human creativity—by giving a million creative artists the opportunity to live off their art and billions of fans the opportunity to enjoy and be inspired by it."

GENERAL

Direct exchange of value between creators and their audience

Satisfaction as a value

Personal, human & social

LISTER

From now on the concept/platform will go by the name of "Lister". This name has been chosen because it encapsulates two of the main features of the concept; listening to (new) music and making (play) lists.
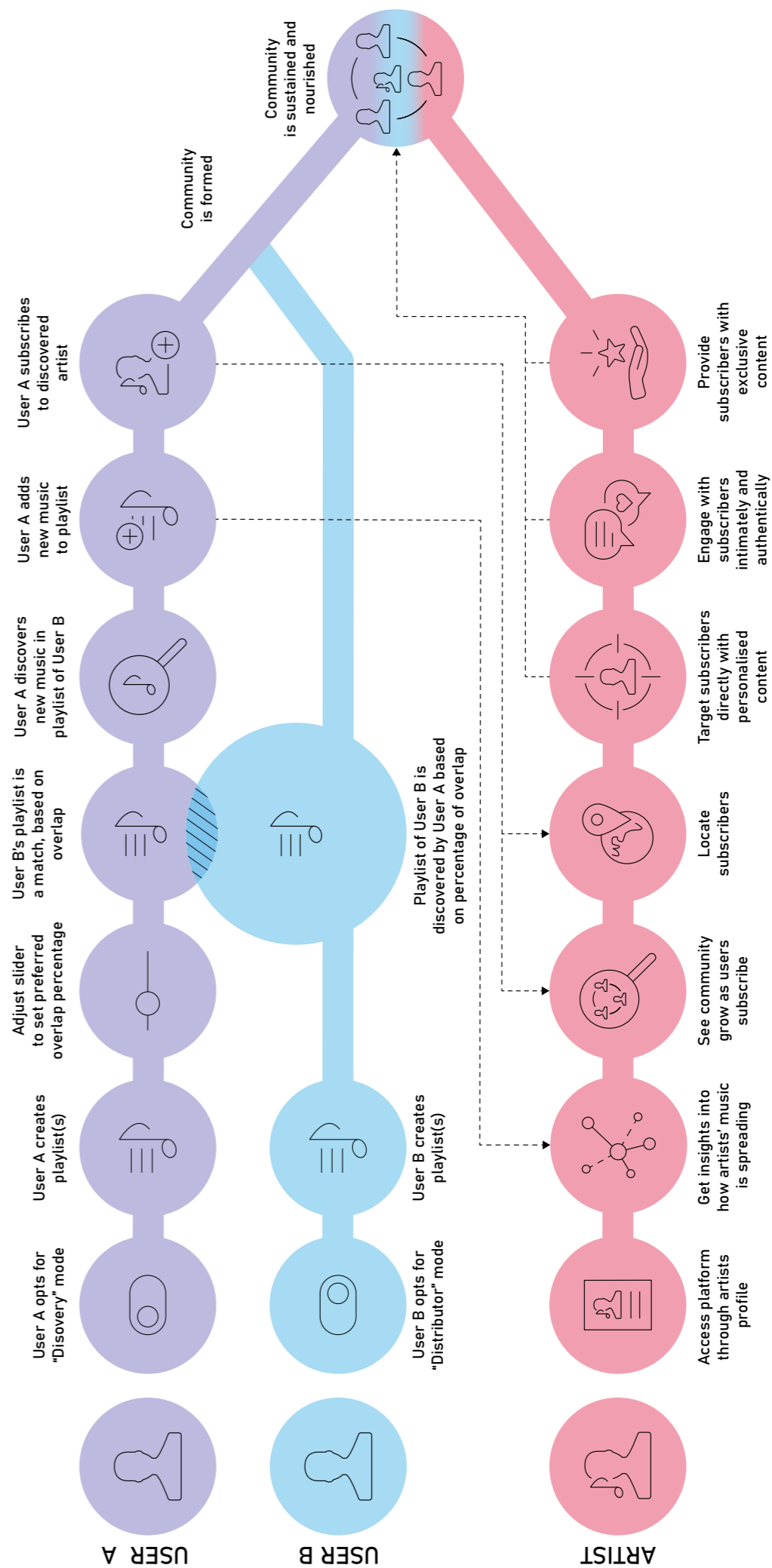
Diagram 4: Lister

C8

This chapter describes how Lister was tested and iterated upon through different rounds of validation. This consisted of testing against three basic criteria: desirability, feasibility and viability. To gather data on these criteria, the concept was assessed during interviews, a simulation and an online survey. The results are reported as feedback that either support the concept or provide adjustment for iteration.

LISTER

CONTENT

AIM

To provide the necessary verification and proof of concept for LISTER to make it a convincing concept.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ton van der Werf
Patrick van Thijn
Niels Aalberts
Roos Meijer
Pim van Os
Colin Benders
Pitou Nicolaes
Marinus de Goederen
Anneke Stulp
Erwin Blom
Gerard van Enk
Eva Breunesse
Tim Graeff
Marisa Wouters

8.1 VALIDATION METHODS

In this part the different methods that were used to validate the concept are presented. Each subchapter introduces the method and describes the steps that were carried out.

CARD GAME SIMULATION

Firstly, the concept was tested purely regarding its functionality. The main objective of this quick test was to investigate if the process of defining overlap between playlists would lead to proper music discovery and whether the train of thought made sense.

To simulate the interaction, a deck of regular playing cards was used. Each card from any suit resembled a song, making 13 songs in total. These 13 songs were the entire song catalog on this platform. Playlists were created by drawing random cards from a pile. To see if there was overlap, two playlists (i.e. hands) were examined. If there was a certain level of overlap, then the cards that did not match would, in that case, be "discovered". It worked and thus, in a straightforward way, the functionality of the interaction was proven.

Card game simulation

INTERVIEWS

Each of the interviews was conducted via Zoom and lasted 45-60 minutes. The interviewees were provided with a handout containing an overview of the concept several days in advance. This ensured that all participants were informed about the concept in the same manner and that the process was more efficient and focussed. The handout can be found in Appendix II. The interviews were audio recorded for transcription purposes.

The main research objective of the interviews was to validate the concept in terms of desirability for artists and in terms of feasibility by industry experts. This leads to quotes that either support the concept or suggest changes to improve it.

To structure and guide the interviews a list of questions was set up to be consulted during the interview. This list contained questions such as:

- What do you think of the concept?
- What appeals to you about it?
- Is something missing?
- Is anything unclear?
- Do you believe there is a need for such a thing?
- Which part still needs work?

A total of 11 interviews were conducted, containing 6 industry experts and 5 music artists.

Industry Experts;
Ton van der Werf (Owner Endewerf Management & Teacher HKU)
Niels Aalberts (Editor-in-chief 3voor12 VPRO)
Patrick van Thijn (Regional Manager Benelux FUGA)
Anneke Stulp (General Manager Benelux FUGA)
Erwin Blom (Owner Fast Moving Targets)
Gerard van Enk (Developer/Owner Million Pieces)

Music artists;
Colin Benders
Roos Meijer
Pim van Os (Pim and Proper)
Pitou Nicolaes (Pitou)
Marinus de Goederen (A balladeer)

SURVEY

A survey was set up in Google Forms. The survey was distributed via the personal newsletter of Niels Aalberts (Editor-in-chief 3voor12 VPRO). The reason for this was to target as many music enthusiasts as possible. In the end, 30 respondents completed the survey. The survey consisted of 7 questions, 4 open questions and 3 closed questions, which would result in quantitative and qualitative data.

The main research objective of the survey was to investigate the willingness of potential users to use more advanced features.. The simulation, as described in the previous part, looked into the slider and overlap interaction, so the survey was in place to further investigate the user journey from the slider onwards. The survey also looks into the willingness of users to take on the playlister (distributor) role and what would incentivise that.

The participants were given a brief introduction into the project, but were not introduced to the entire concept before the survey. The following participants were asked the following questions in the survey:

1. In what way(s) do you discover new music at the moment?
2. How would you most like to discover new music?
3. How would you feel if you could discover new music through playlists based on your music preferences, but created by other users?
4. Would you use a subscription function for users to keep up to date with their (new) playlists?
5. Would you add discovered music to your own playlist(s) to help the artist distribute their music?
6. Would you like to take on the role of playlist maker and be responsible for the discovery of new music by other users?
7. If so, what would encourage you to get into that role?

See Appendix IV for the full survey including responses.

FACE-TO-FACE SIMULATION

The simulation test was carried out at the Utrecht Art School (HKU). The test involved four participants, three 2nd year Kunst & Economie students and their teacher Ton van der Werf. Ton had already been introduced to the concept previously and thus also took up a facilitative role during the simulation. The test duration was scheduled for two hours. The entire session was recorded both on audio and video.

The main research objective was to investigate the user interaction of the slider that controls the desired amount of overlap.
The following questions were expected to be answered by means of the simulation:
What are the effects of using overlap to discover music?
Is the music exploring experience improved?

Each of the participants was asked to bring a laptop and have Spotify installed. After a brief introduction, the participants were paired and were asked to complete three assignments.

The interaction of creating the overlap based on similar music taste was mimicked by creating a mutual playlist of songs that both participants have included in an existing playlist they created.

1. Match as many songs as possible that you both have in your own playlists. Make a playlist of these songs containing a maximum of 10-15 songs.

After this, one pair of participants was randomly picked to bring their overlapping playlist back to 9 songs, whilst the other pair could only retain 3 songs. This, respectively, resembled high and low overlap.

2. Expand the playlist by adding songs you want the other to discover. Make sure the playlist is public and share it with the other participant.

After this came the third assignment; listen to the additional songs on the expanded playlist.

8.2 FEEDBACK

3.   Discover the music the other has made from your overlapping playlist. Listen to the music as you are used to discovering music.

After the participants had listened to their expanded playlists, a 45-minute evaluation took place which was guided by the following questions.

- What did you think of discovering music based on overlap?
- Have you discovered music in a different way than usual?
- How did you feel about discovering music through another user's playlist?
- Was it an improvement?
- What do you think of the addition of the slider?
- What is the difference between high and low overlap?
- What would you like to know as a distributor?

At this point in the simulation, the participants had not yet been introduced to the entire concept. As soon as they were then given the full overview, a further 3 questions were asked:.

- What do you think - now that you've seen the whole concept?
- Would you use it? Why / why not?
- In which user role would you feel most at home and why?

For the entire slidedeck that was used for the simulation see Appendix III.

From top to bottom:
Card game simulation
Participants discovering new music
Evaluating the simulation of Lister

In this subchapter the feedback is presented which was collected by all three validation methods mentioned in the previous subchapter. The feedback has been analysed and split up into two separate groups. In the first step, the validations that reinforce and verify the concept are reported. Secondly, the results that indicated for any modifications or adjustments to be made are presented. These changes are then implemented and feed into the iterations.

REINFORCING FEEDBACK

UNIQUE USER EXPERIENCE
The first insight that came up during validation is the fact the user experience is unique to this concept.

"What I find particularly interesting is the start, where a very conscious choice is made for a role. I have not encountered that anywhere else, those two different modes. (Aalberts, personal communication, 10 March 2021).

From the survey it became clear that 50% of the respondents would take on the role of playlist maker and be responsible for the discovery of new music by other users. This signals that there would be a potentially equal split between both user groups, which means there would be enough content creators and enough users to consume that content.

Moreover, the unique user experience is enhanced by the incorporation of the slider to determine the overlap for discovery. This feature was specifically tested during the simulation and led to music being discovered which suited the user.

TRUSTWORTHY DISCOVERY
The first survey questions were aimed at uncovering the participants music discovery habits and how they could be improved. With the first question, "In what way(s) do you discover new music at the moment?", it became clear that

more than half of the participants used Spotify to discover music, with Bandcamp, YouTube and Apple Music also among DSP's getting mentioned occasionally.

When asked how music ideally would be discovered, most participants were content with improvements of the status quo, suggesting broader and more structured discovery through DSP's. "Quite satisfied, however, a tool for more "unknown" music would be nice" (survey reference), was one of the answers. The concept has the potential of enabling this, as it may broaden and deepen a user's music discovery whilst still remaining familiar, this is what is meant with "trustworthy discovery". Anneke Stulp supports this: "I think it's an interesting concept and what really appeals to me is the fact that it does have the potential to provide the surprises that Spotify playlists often lack for me." (Stulp, personal communication, 24 March 2021).

During the evaluation of the simulation it became obvious that trust plays a major part in music discovery. The main drivers of trust in this case are familiarity and recognisability, which are enabled with the addition of the slider feature. This results in "Discovering music that suits me. It feels very safe if it already fits in my own list. Then I am more inclined to actually listen"(Wouters, personal communication, 12 April 2021)

Being at the controls of your own music discovery is a very comforting feeling as evidenced by a comment in the survey "You notice that when you make a playlist with the two of you, that when you then start exploring it sounds recognizable and familiar" (Graeff, personal communication, 12 April 2021).

On the addition of the slider feature one participant in the simulation remarked: "I would personally like it very much, because I cannot handle too much new music at once. I like recognition in songs, I like it when there are more of my own (well-known) songs and a few new ones to discover. In order to make the discovery process go more gradually" (Wouters, personal communication, 12 April 2021).

SOCIAL/HUMAN FACTORY

In the survey, friends' recommendations were named second most as a current means for music discovery. However, "through friends" was also the second most common answer given by participants when asked how they would ideally discover music. This goes to show how social music discovery really is and how it is not yet properly represented within, and associated with, streaming.

The lack of a social factor is also underpinned by Erwin Blom: "I very much agree that that social layer is an important missing factor, for both the artists and the fans." (Blom, personal communication, 25 March 2021).

During the simulation it also became clear that the human factor plays an important role. When evaluating the test, one participant remarked: "Knowing that we already matched in terms of taste [before listening to the music] makes you very curious about the input." (Wouters, personal communication, 12 April 2021).. Another comment emphasized the effect that the human factor has on how the music is received: "There is something very human in it. The authenticity is what makes it work, including the love that has been put into it." (Breunesse, personal communication, 12 April 2021).

One of the implications of the music being knowingly discovered with a social factor is that the discovery is given more of an opportunity: "I may have listened a little longer. Took a little more time and it gave it a chance." (Graeff, personal communication, 12 April 2021). In the simulation, all three participants agreed on the fact that they had not necessarily discovered the music in a manner different to usual, yet they had indeed listened to each song longer before skipping.

When stepping into the distributor role of creating playlists for others, Ton van der Werf argues that "When you create a playlist, you try to tell a story. That's the human side. That's the downside to those pre-programmed playlists, there's no story in them." (Werf, van der, personal communication, 12 April 2021).

So there is value being added just by bringing the human element into creating a playlist, value is added by putting thought into the song sequence and the build-up throughout the playlist. This is something that an algorithm certainly does not do. From the survey it became clear that 70% of the respondents would indeed use a subscription function for users to keep up to date with their (new) playlists.

LACK OF INFLUENCE BY INDEPENDENT ARTIST

A key objective of the design principles is to empower artists. This is to overcome the observed lack of influence that independent artists have as opposed to artists tied to a major label. This lack of influence is illustrated by the following quotes from interviews with music industry experts.

"I think the biggest advantage [of your concept] could be that Spotify playlists are no longer the holy grail and the realization that there are also other ways to reach more listeners. I never want an artist to think; I have to join a major label because otherwise I will never get to see my audience." (Stulp, personal communication, 24 March 2021).

"I also find the artist's journey very interesting, because of course that is the card DSP's hold close to their chests. They pretend to give artists insight into that data, but that data is of course the gold they sit on. And they do give small parts of it to artists or labels and rights holders, but of course not so much that the artists can also do without DSP. It is of course a force field that you try to undermine with your concept." (Aalberts, personal communication, 10 March 2021).

"Spotify for Artists; very handy but completely useless. You have some kind of influence on your page, but on the other hand you really do not. And you certainly do not have any influence on the playlists." (Werf, van der, personal communication, 9 March 2021).

From the survey it became clear that 80% of the respondents would add discovered music to their own playlist(s) to help the artist distribute their music. This signals that the platform could

move forward in fulfilling the empowerment of independent artists.

NEED FOR INTERACTION

As described previously, for the concept to benefit the creator, the creator needs to be committed and proactive. Or as Ton van der Werf puts it: "If the artist works together with the audience you can create something organically which has value to both parties." (Werf, van der, personal communication, 9 March 2021).

In the quote by Ton van der Werf there is a major "if"'... as in "if" artists are indeed willing to interact and regard it as valuable. From the interviews with artists it became clear that the desire for interaction is present from the artists perspective.

"I know from a lot of artists, including myself, that with Spotify becoming the go-to-platform, that there is simply no way to communicate with your fans via this. [...] The idea of being able to communicate more or get more from a community or your fan base I certainly think there would be a need for it." (Meijer, personal communication, 12 March 2021).

"As with Spotify, it always remains fairly anonymous in terms of artist insights; For example, I can see that I have 10,000 listeners per month and I can see how many followers I have, but I have no way to message or interact with those people directly. And that's something that, as a new platform, you can distinguish yourself in." (Nicolaes, personal communication, 22March 2021).

"You're much better off with a loyal fan base than an occasional place (in a playlist) that hits a few million streams. And you have to think about that and from that point of view I am very enthusiastic about your idea." (Thijn, van, personal communication, 3 March 2021).

For the full list of reinforcing feedback quotes please see Appendix V (this includes quotes which are not mentioned in above text).

8.3 ADJUSTING FEEDBACK

THE SLIDER
The feature of the slider was central to the simulation that was run, uncovering the interaction of the slider and what effect it had on the user was the main objective. Firstly, the addition of the slider led to a new type of interaction, as explained by Eva Breunesse: "It [the slider] has to do with your comfort zone. It also depends on the day, sometimes I feel like something else one day. The slider is acceptance but also recognisability." (Breunesse, personal communication, 12 April 2021).

Moreover, when asked what the perceived difference was between high and low overlap the participants remarked that the slider, and its high and low settings, symbolised a state of mind or the mood of the user. This type of feedback had not been anticipated or uncovered during earlier validation methods. The following two quotes support and elaborate on these thoughts.

"The slider works very well based on the different needs you have. One day you are very open to new music and you put the slider low and the next day you have had enough and keep it closer to yourself and music you know [putting the slider high]."(Wouters, personal communication, 12 April 2021).

"The slider fulfills different needs; what is your need today [in terms of music]? You are constantly changing, your state of mind is constantly changing. So just having the option of the slider and to be able to play around with that is great for a consumer." (Breunesse, personal communication, 12 April 2021)

INCENTIVISING THE DISTRIBUTOR ROLE
The most common feedback that was received on the concept during the interviews had to do with the incentivisation of the distributor role. These types of users were perceived by many as the trendsetters of the concept, "smaakmakers" in Dutch. Pitou, a Dutch artist, asked the question: "How are you going to attract the trendsetters (smaakmakers) that lure the rest of the people to your platform, how are you going to make it

interesting for them?"
(Nicolaes, personal communication, 22 March 2021).

Colin Benders went on to answer Pitou's question during his own interview: "I think user B [distributor] finds a lot of things interesting that now only end up with the artist, such as the tools and insights in the community and the location of subscribers. [...] For the curator role, it could be just as interesting to start targeting people and subscribers as it would be for the artists. And with that also bridge the gap to making radio and build an independent community and becoming a larger listening community." (Benders, personal communication, 17 March 2021).

So far, the addition of insights and a subscription function to the distributor mode seemed like a logical step. This was also supported by the fact that playlisters themselves also deem these functions important, as was discovered during the interview with a Dutch singer songwriter that goes by the name of A balladeer: "I also make playlists myself and as a playlist maker I notice that I have no data about it and therefore do not understand how it works, for example where people come from or where they catch on." (Marinus de Goederen)

When asked what the distributor would like to know when fulfilling that role, the participants of the simulation answered the following; "First of all, as a distributor, I would make sure that many smaller artists are featured in playlists. So that they also get a chance." (Graeff, personal communication, 12 April 2021) and "Very specific; which songs are liked and which are less popular?" (Wouters, personal communication, 12 April 2021).

According to the students, the distributor role was all about: "Getting in touch with people. A kind of chat under the playlist." (Greaff, personal communication, 12 April 2021) and "Recognition, the user b role is an ego boost." (Wouters, personal communication, 12 April 2021). This goes to show that also during the simulation, when having experienced the concept, that potential users value a richer experience of the distributor role.

The challenge lies in activating people, especially when you talk about communities. "Why should I become active? Is always an important question to ask yourself. [...] The main reason people participate is recognition, to be seen" (Blom, personal communication, 25 March 2021).

PLATFORM INTEGRATION
Up until the validation, no decision was made as to how the concept would be realised in terms of technical integration. The two options were to have the platform as a freestanding DSP or as a modification (mod) on an existing DSP. During the validation process, it became clear that for the concept to be accepted by its different users it would have to be built as a mod on top of an existing DSP.

"I think the idea is super cool, but the trigger for me would be whether I had to add something or could it be a general thing. That's why I thought Spotify is already something everyone is on so that would be a logical choice since it is also getting bigger. There it is also quite a loss that they do nothing about community and make streaming more social." (Meijer, personal communication, 10 March 2021).

"The most promising situation is to build a valuable service on top of Spotify, which is of course very clever." (Blom, personal communication, 25 March 2021).

From the survey it became clear that more than half of the participants use DSP's (mainly Spotify) for music discovery. When asked: "How would you most like to discover new music?" just over half of the respondents were content with discovering music through DSP's, or wanted an improved experience. Trustworthy discovery, as mentioned previously as a reinforcing feedback, also involves discovering music via known platforms.

During the evaluation of the simulation it also became clear that the platform would be best off being a modification: "Het zou makkelijker zijn als het aan Spotify vast zit." (Breunesse, personal communication, 12 April 2021).

To make recommendations on how to integrate the concept into an existing DSP required some technical knowledge and a dependence on the DSP. As such, Erwin Blom also remarked: "I would at least mention that dependency [of Spotify], because it is always a danger to build on top of someone else's API. You have to describe it as a risk factor and see what is possible now." (Blom, personal communication, 25 March 2021).

LAUNCH STRATEGY
The final adjusting feedback concerned the potential launch of the concept and how to gain traction. Industry experts Niels Aalberts and Erwin Blom both shared the opinion that the concept should start by already building the platform and creating content before the initial launch. Ensuring that the concept comes into its own and is fully understood by all types of user.

"All good things start with targeting an influential niche and creating maximum value for it. The first users will not be your mom and dad and my brother. They love music, but they are not that deep in it and do not want to profile themselves with it that much." (Aalberts, personal communication, 10 March 2021).

"Before you launch something like this, you have to make sure that when users come, they immediately understand what the idea is. For that, your plan must be very well organized and you must, so to speak, have 10 artists who have prestige in a certain scene." (Blom, personal communication, 25 March 2021).

For the full list of reinforcing feedback quotes please see Appendix VI (this includes quotes which are not mentioned in above text).

8.3 ITERATION

In this subchapter the adjusting feedback as described in the previous subchapter, is transformed into points of iteration. These final iterations are accompanied by an updated visualisation.

DISTRIBUTOR BECOMES SELECTOR
To reinforce the changes that are made to "distributor" mode, it will be renamed to "Selector" mode. This name change stands for the new features that will be added and to avoid any confusion surrounding the previously used term of distributors or distribution companies.

SELECTOR MODE ADDITIONS
The Selector mode is brought to a new level with the addition of listener insights and a subscriptions feature. The thinking behind this is to incentivise users to take on the Selector role. As became clear during the validation process, the selector mode was not attractive enough in its original form.

This role change of the Selector mode now becoming the previously mentioned trend-setter ("smaakmaker"), enhances the platform and puts it very much in line with the five fey factors that Erwin Blom describes in his Communities Handbook for activating your audience (Blom, 2010).

1. Contact; Finding like-minded people
2. Expression; Showing others what you can do or have made
3. Joining forces; motivating for the development of open source software, among other things.
4. Reputation; motivating for people to become and stay active.
5. Reward; The best thing to do is to get them active because they really love your community. What works in such a situation is that the reward consists of more privileges on the site or exclusivity

SLIDER METRIC
The slider represents the sentiment of the user and can be adjusted accordingly. The slider is expressed in percentages, ranging from 0 to 100. However, to simulate the interaction with the slider without making it overly complicated, during the simulation only two modes of the slider were made possible; High and low. The change was positively received by the participants.

The way that the slider was interacted with led to reconsidering the slider metrics in terms of percentages. Low, high and medium would suffice, except it did not feel personal. What if the slider is a representation of the amount of songs that the playlist contains in the most literal sense? The amount of songs is the metric, making the interaction feel more trusted. For example, the playlist includes 15 songs. In this case, the slider will range from 1-15.

PLAYLISTER COMMUNITY
The inclusion of a subscription feature for the Selector will enable "playlister communities". This means that there is an opportunity for niche music discovery. The subscription idea came to life when brainstorming about this future with two artists.:

"Maybe there is a dude who grew up when house came up in Detroit. He is now an accountant, but when he was our age he was just spinning records every weekend in a warehouse in Detroit. And that he tells a story every week with a playlist. That shit is fucking dope. Really a face behind the person who creates the playlists." (Os, van, personal communication, 17 March 2021).

"I am reminded of Reddit and private Facebook groups where people really geek together on a very specific genre of music. In your situation I might find someone with a really good indie alternative playlist, I will then follow them and then join a group and we will all exchange playlists." (Meijer, personal communication, 12 March 2021).

Furthermore, as was remarked by Pitou: "There is little room for small pieces of personal information in playlists. There is therefore less fun in those playlists; Coffee and chill. There is no room for a sentence or two about what they meant by it." (Nicolaes, personal communication, 22 March 2021). By enabling playlister communities and with the development of such niche playlists, personal touches such as a small story or just one or two lines describing the playlist will evolve. The concept will also allow space for this.

ARTIST PROFILE MOVES MORE TO THE BACKGROUND
As a result of the selector mode being upgraded, the artist's profile moves more towards the background. This will be an insights page where artists can track the numbers behind their music.

This makes Artists move into the Selector role, which in turn makes it more interesting for the discovery mode users, as is explained by Colin Benders: "With many platforms, the currency has become followers. For user B [selector] you have to make it attractive to grow a platform. I think that for the concept the user B is quite floating, because if you find interesting people in it, so the DJs, the artists, the connoisseurs, the radio hosts etc. Then you create a very interesting selection palette for the A users. To achieve this, part of the Artist journey must be added to User B." (Benders, personal communication, 17 March 2021).

APPLICATION PROGRAMMING INTERFACE (API) INTEGRATION
To be able to make recommendations for the feasibility part of the concept, developer and owner of Million Pieces, Gerard van Enk, was interviewed. Because of the fact that Gerard had worked with Spotify's API before, that specific API was considered.

Firstly though, what is an API? An Application Programming Interface (API) is essentially a set of agreements on how to communicate with a system; how to request data, how to get it back and in what format you get it back.

At Spotify they have two APIs:
1. Web API, this API can be used to request information from Spotify, albums, playlists, etc.
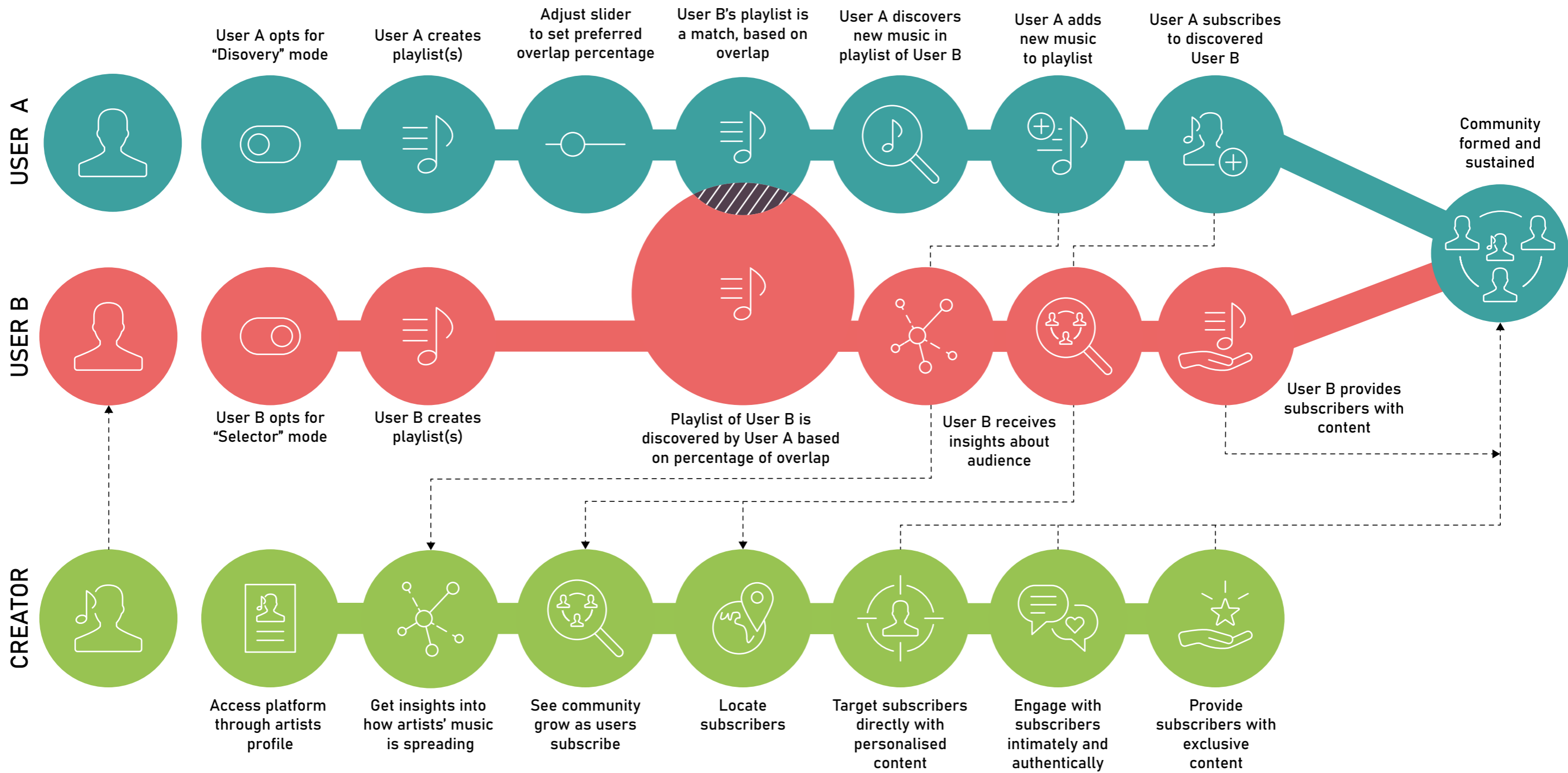2. Web Playback API, this API can be used to control the Spotify Player.

You may cache (temporarily store) certain information that you have requested, but you cannot create your own platform with it. So you may not, for example, take information that you have requested about a track and copy it into your own database so that users can then create playlists based on that. That could be an important bottleneck. So, with Gerards help a 5 step process was thought up to be able to in theory, build a proof-of-concept.

1. You need to have a good monitoring / detection system in place from the start that keeps a close eye on the limits of the API.

2. Getting the authorization flow in order, so that users can log in to their Spotify subscription.

3. I would prioritize importing playlists from Spotify, because people already have playlists here, but above all to keep the number of interactions with Spotify to a minimum. If you let someone search Spotify for every single song to then add it to a playlist on your own platform, you will soon reach the limit in terms of interactions.

Or, rovide the option of creating in-platform playlists, there are in fact systems that offer this possibility.

4. Submit the selected playlist for discovery. I would choose to perform that analysis yourself and store the data in your own system/platform. So that you can then also do the matching based on your own data.

5. You could create a fingerprint of a track, or of the data you have requested from a track. Although the best thing is if you use the data from Spotify as much as possible.

The terms and conditions of the API are the biggest barrier to your platform. In terms of technology you could build it just fine; importing playlists, extracting information from each track and comparing them amongst each other should be no problem at all.

USER A

User A opts for "Disovery" mode

User A creates playlist(s)

Adjust slider to set preferred overlap percentage

User B's playlist is a match, based on overlap

User A discovers new music in playlist of User B

User A adds new music to playlist

User A subscribes to discovered User B

Community formed and sustained

USER B

User B opts for "Selector" mode

User B creates playlist(s)

Playlist of User B is discovered by User A based on percentage of overlap

User B receives insights about audience

User B provides subscribers with content

CREATOR

Access platform through artists profile

Get insights into how artists' music is spreading

See community grow as users subscribe

Locate subscribers

Target subscribers directly with personalised content

Engage with subscribers intimately and authentically

Provide subscribers with exclusive content

CONCLUSION

In this final chapter the project is wrapped up and concluded. During the first part recommendations are made for further research and development of Lister. This is followed by discussing the project on the premises of the design brief and the initial assignment. Lastly, a personal reflection on the project and the ambitions.

C9

CONTENT

9.1 RECOMMENDATIONS
9.2 DISCUSSION
9.3 REFLECTION

AIM

To review the project and its outcomes and look ahead towards possible continuation.

9.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

This subchapter advises on further research and certain topics that were not discussed in the research or design sections of this report. Firstly, the commercial value of the project will be discussed for Maak, the graduation company. After that, recommendations will be made for further research and development of Lister.

COMMERCIAL VALUE

This project and the chosen approach are relatively unconstrained, yet the project is carried out under the supervision of Maak. With that being said, the commercial value of the project has to be mentioned. The business reasoning for Maak to take on this graduation project was to gain insights in how they might play a (new) role in the independent music business. Maak's broad expectation was for the project to help define what it is that independent artists need such that Maak could then adapt their offerings appropriately.

For Maak, Lister is a showpiece, it is a conversation starter that demonstrates their involvement with the subject of independent music. The real value however, is in the insights and design principles that form the foundation for Lister. These insights and principles are widely applicable and, when combined with the information that was gathered during the rounds of validation, they are what Maak can use to tailor their service offering.

FURTHER RESEARCH

For this graduation project spanning roughly 20 weeks, the final concept would always remain a concept or an idea. Not surprisingly, if there would have been more time or the project would be continued, there is scope for further research and development of Lister.

Understanding the "value" through the eyes of various stakeholders (creators, users and DSP's)

would be a very important next step. Uncovering and aligning the values and drivers for these stakeholders is quintessential to the success of Lister and will lead to a platform which can live up to its expectations.

As for now the stakeholders that have been heard are creators and users. A key (and powerful) stakeholder will be the DSP. The value that Lister provides for DSP's is seen as being a competitive advantage in terms of making it a level playing field for, and empowering, independent artists. However, for a lot of DSP's the goal is likely to be maximising market-share (leading to revenue and profit). Their competitive position might just be that they decide to keep a lot of power to themselves.

To understand fully what drives the DSP's (singularly and collectively), a lot more research has to be done on the different DSP's. In this thesis Spotify has been the primary focus, yet in other parts of the world other DSP's prevail and they utilise different approaches which would require adjustments to Lister. Deezer, Apple Music, Tidal and Bandcamp all have to be considered and involved. Besides research, DSP's have to be made aware of Lister and be engaged in validation talks. What has become clear in this thesis is that there is an opportunity - and that the opportunity can be best launched and run as an add-on to an existing DSP.

Further research should also be conducted into the technical side of Lister. So far recommendations have been made as to building the proof of concept, yet this is all theory and specified only for Spotify. Lister, as it is proposed, hinges on successful DSP platform integration. This requires not only the knowledge to build it but also the buy-in of the DSP. Hence both controlling the narrative of Lister and expectation management are key to selling the concept to DSP's.

To validate Lister, three main criteria were chosen; Desirability, Feasibility and Viability. Two of these were thoroughly researched and validated, however the viability criterion was never tested. Within the faculty of IDE, viability is defined as the ability of a concept to succeed or be sustained in

terms of its business proposition.

To be able to test a concept like Lister for viability would require a further developed product - whereas now Lister represents more of a "shareable vision". In this sharable vision it has not clearly been specified, for example, which parties own and organise certain parts of Lister and carry a responsibility for them. To achieve this, more research will have to be conducted and Lister will have to be defined in more detail..

Something that was mentioned during validation, but never made it into the Lister concept proposal as it stands, is a proper launch strategy for the platform. A well-defined go-to-market strategy would be the next step after turning Lister into a viable concept. This strategy should include the trendsetters that will start using the platform before the official launch (beta testing), ensuring that the content is present and functional. Also the target group of early adopters has to be defined, including a marketing campaign drawn up that aims at that group.

9.2 DISCUSSION

For this second part of the conclusion, the design brief (as set-out in chapter 1), will be revisited and evaluated. The initial objective of this research and design thesis was to "develop a concept product or service which is based on gained insights and design principles". The objective of the concept is to show stakeholders how the music industry can be re-thought at a systemic level and to balance value streams. For Maak, the focus is on artist autonomy and how they can be a part of this.

The question is: have these objectives been obtained?

Firstly, the objective of developing a concept product or service. This objective has been partly realised. The part of the design being supported by insights and design principles has been realised and is clearly reflected throughout the process as described in this thesis. However, the promise of developing a concept product or a service cannot be fulfilled. Lister could be classified as a thought-provoking proposal; it is not well-defined enough to be categorised as a product or a service. Nevertheless, in its current form Lister has value as an "aesthetic disruptor", a term defined by Wetter-Edman et al. (2018). The notion of an aesthetic disruptor is characterised as "a sensory experience that challenges actors' existing assumptions about a situation, as a central catalyst for changing habitual action." (Wetter-Edman Et al., 2018). Lister exists as a systems proposal incorporating unique elements such as the slider. Lister has credibility inasmuch as its development thus far has been supported, and critiqued, by industry professionals.

Secondly, the objective of the concept itself; to show stakeholders how the music industry can be re-thought at a systemic level and to balance value streams. This objective is very much in line with the main research question of: "How can we redesign the music industry to balance value streams?"

Before answering this objective, it is important to first read chapter 6.2.1 on the definition of value and how this is understood in the light of this research thesis. With reference to the main

research question; Has Lister indeed rebalanced value streams? The answer to this is no. Lister is quite a long way from rebalancing value streams. But, as discussed in chapter 6, rebalancing is something that does not happen overnight. In the future Lister, if improved in the right areas, could start rebalancing value streams. For the moment however, certain value streams would be expected to be enriched by Lister.

9.3 REFLECTION

I went into my graduation project with a very open mind, not knowing exactly what it was I wanted to focus on. Whilst orienting myself I had talks with numerous companies, but the one that stood out was Maak and the prospect of working on a project in the music industry. Looking back, I can confirm that I indeed made the right decision and in this subchapter I would like to share some of my personal thoughts and learnings.

I know that I am at my best when I step into a project involving a subject which I know very little about and therefore have a lot to learn and am challenged in multiple ways. However, normally where there might be some kind of senior role in place or a shared responsibility, be it at a company or at the university, this time round it was just me. I struggled quite a bit with that individualist approach of having to trust the process. Deep down I had faith in myself and I was confident that things would fall into place eventually, but I was doubtful whether the process was going to get me there, not least because I was the one in charge of the process.

My personal ambitions were to focus and improve on the competencies of Business model innovation, Systemic design and Stakeholder engagement. Business model innovation was not a feature of my graduation. The other two competencies however, have quite a good fit. Systemic design involves multi-stakeholder processes and high levels of complexity and is very relevant because of the scope of this project. The project itself became more complex than I had initially expected, due to the number of people that I interviewed. At times it was tough to keep an overview of stakeholders within the scope and those contributing to the project, but I enjoyed this challenge.

What really kept me going during the project were all the different people I had the opportunity of speaking with. These interactions really energised me . I was amazed how willing people were to take time out to talk to me about my project. I cannot thank Omar and Jeroen enough for supplying me with their contacts, because without these peoples' input it would have been a lot harder for me.

The willingness of people to help is something that I noticed during my internship as well and is something I still have to get used to. I am reasonably stubborn in thinking that I can get there by myself, yet when you have such a wealth of knowledge at your disposal you would be foolish not to use it. I certainly thrived off these personal interactions and they provided my project with a very personal touch.

Being able to speak to so many people was, ironically, one of the positive effects of COVID-19 with everything moving online for my graduation project. This made it a lot easier to reach out to people and steal an hour of their time. The circumstances made the graduation experience different than I had expected it to be. At times I longed for the faculty of IDE, where graduating is very much a social occasion in the main hall together with your peers. It used to be that going to the faculty decided the hours you worked on a project, whereas in my room study and relaxing sometimes merged into a grey area.

As for moving online, it took me a while to figure out what worked best for me. From the start, meetings with all three supervisors every two weeks were set up, only after a couple of those I realised that this was not working for me. I needed more personal feedback and it worked for me to just speak to one or two people at a time. The decision to narrow down my solution space hugely benefited me and the project; at times I was overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the project. Adopting the stage-gated approach gave me useful reference points and guided me through the process.

Lastly, I learned a lot about myself and how I go about projects. I enjoyed managing my own time and that of others and I think that I perform best when the pressure is on and time is of the essence.

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APPENDIX

I. INTERVIEWEES

Aalberts, Niels; Editor-in-chief 3voor12 VPRO

Acket, Madelon; First punker in the Netherlands

Benders, Colin; Artist/DJ, Colin Benders

Blom, Erwin; Owner Fast Moving Targets

Bijleveld, Willem; A&R Mangager Universal Music Group

Breunesse, Eva; Student HKU

Enk, Gerard van; Developer/Owner Million Pieces

Feijen, Jos; Director De Effenaar

Goederen, Marinus de; Artist, A balladeer

Graeff, Tim; Student HKU

Heusinkveld, Lieke; Artist, La Loye

Houben, Dago; CEO Eurosonic Noorderslag

Meijer, Roos; Artist, Roos Meijer & Maida Rose

Mutsaers, Wilbert; Head of Spotify Benelux

Nicolaes, Pitou; Artist, Pitou

Os, Pim van; Artist/DJ at Operator Radio, Pim and Proper

Schellings, Selma; Marketing Epitaph Records

Stulp, Anneke; General Manager Benelux FUGA)

Thijn, Patrick van; Regional Manager Benelux FUGA

Warmerdam, Guillaume; Managing Director LAB Music

Werf, Ton van der;Endewerf Management & Teacher HKU)

Wouters, Marisa; Student HKU

II. INTERVIEW HANDOUT

III. SIMULATION SLIDEDECK

DESIGN CHALLENGE

1/5

Research question: How can we redesign the music industry to balance value streams?

Solution: Make music streaming more social.

Target group: Independent (DIY) creators

Streaming is the main revenue stream of the music industry. And the streaming industry is still growing. Streaming is the main source of music discovery.

Problem: Direct Streaming Platforms constrict the relationship between creators and their audience.

The problem is playlists. As platform-generated playlists become more and more important, so does the power of the platform to dictate which creators make into the playlists and thus what the audience is listening to. On top of that, playlists are becoming less social.
Algorithmic playlists; no human involved
Editorial playlists; More and more people dependent of a small group of people
DSP's push their own playlists; User-generated playlists are becoming devalued as they are becoming harder to find.
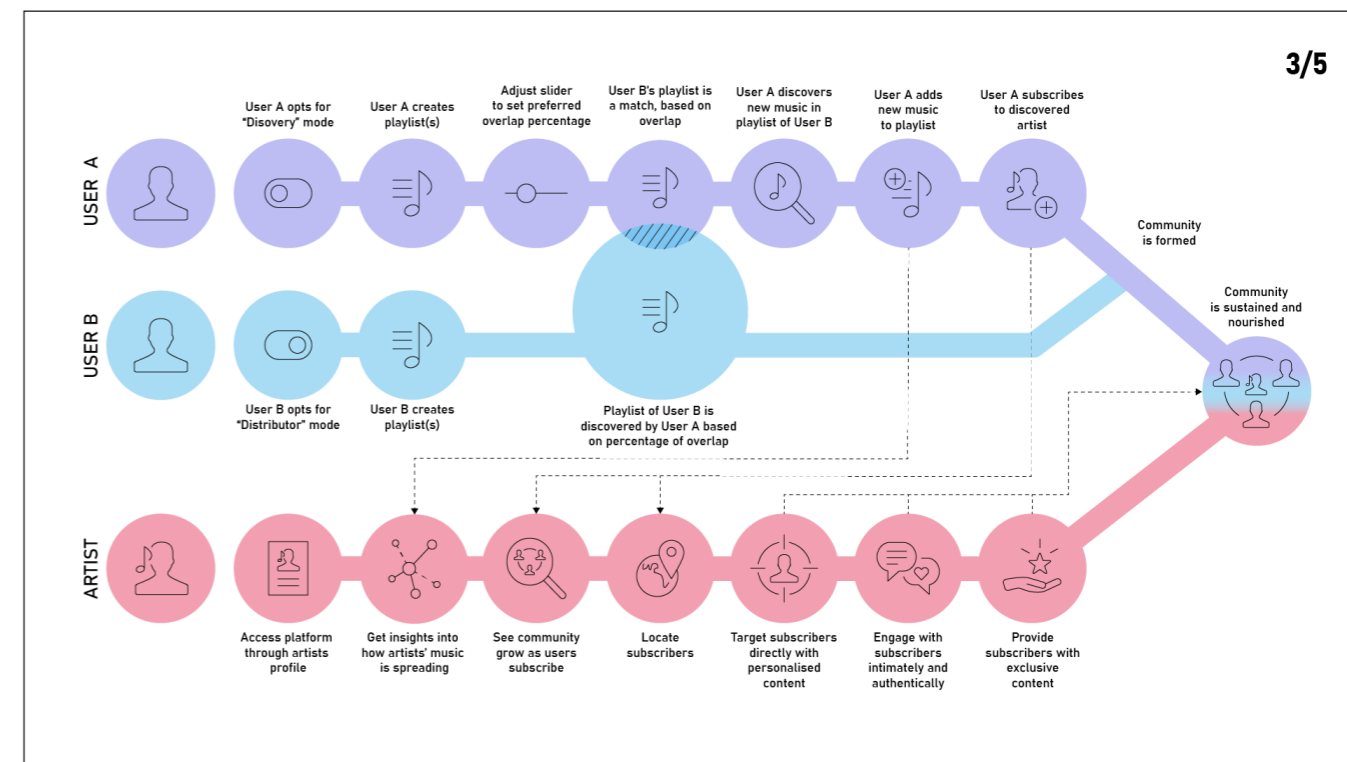
The problem is lack of community. This leads to minimal audience engagement and music discovery.

The data and insights are there, yet not properly accessible and directly usable for artists or their audience

Goal: Make streaming more social for independent/DIY creators.

It's time to create direct, intimate interactions and foster those connections.

3/5

THE CONCEPT: A music community creation platform

2/5

A music discovery platform based on similar music taste

How does it work?

USERS

Connections are made when a desired amount of overlap of music is measured between two users-generated playlists.

As a user you can switch between two modes; Discovery and Distributor mode

This means your playlists are either private (Discovery mode) or public (Distributor mode).

Discovery mode; Users can discover new music, add it to their playlists and subscribe to artist. When users subscribe to artists they become part of that artists' community.

Distributor mode; Promote favourite artists' music by selecting it in their playlist.

CREATORS

Artists can track the movement of their music and watch their community grow, receiving insights on location and quantity.

Artists have the opportunity to directly engage with their community, in the form of exclusive content and offerings.

ADDED VALUE

4/5

USER

Ownership in the creative process; both in being involved by the artist, but also by contributing to their success by spreading/promoting their music and growing their community. audience = creator (part of the diy/punk movement).

Peer to peer music discovery, breaking away from constrained playlists and recommendations. Regaining importance of user generated play lists

An experience that mimics record store recommendations. A social interaction, where like-mindedness of both people and music is at the core.

CREATORS

Self-creating communities, based on artists' music, which are created by their followers. Providing artists with more time to focus on maintaining the community and engaging the audience.
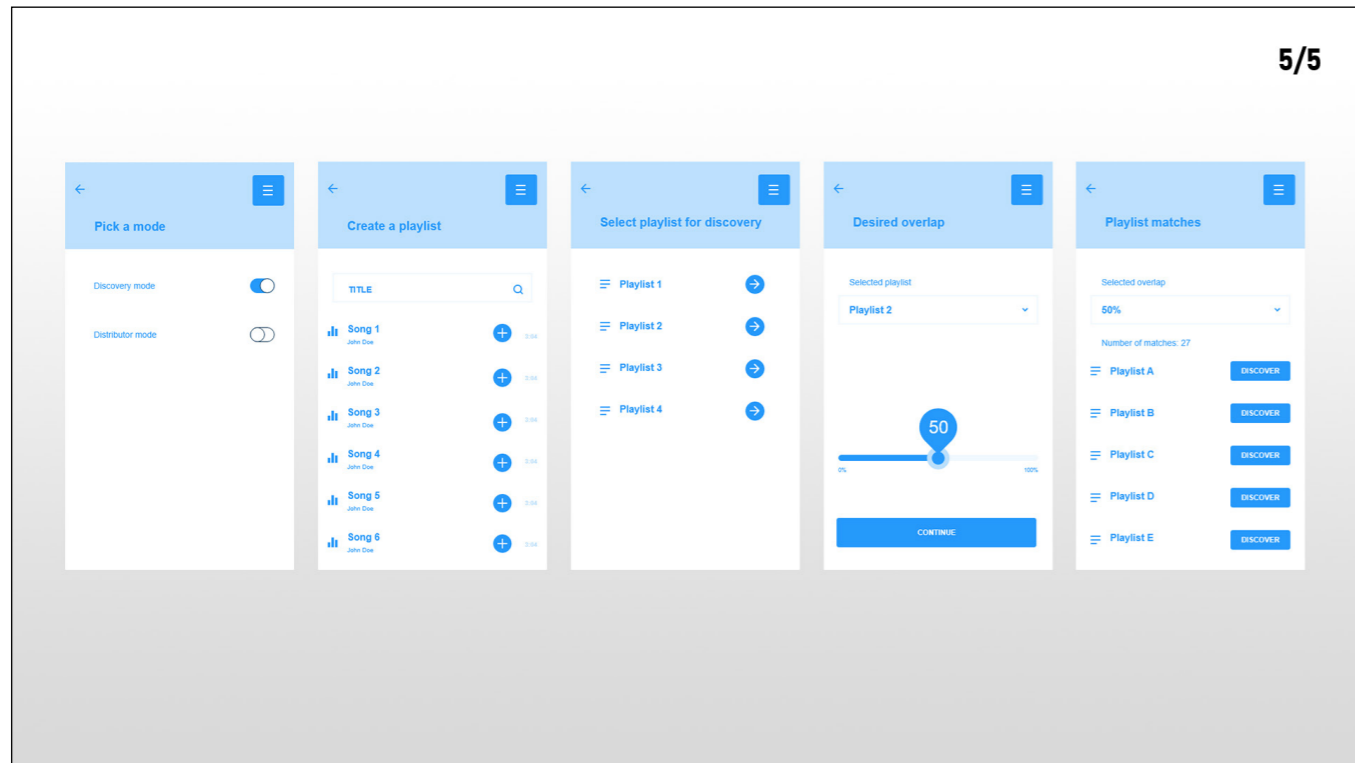
See growing communities of people who have subscribed to them and have exchanged their music and having the ability to tap into communities and create direct intimate fan/audience engagement

Introduction of new types of metrics

GENERAL

Direct exchange of value between creators and their audience

Satisfaction as a value

III. SIMULATION SLIDEDECK

5/5

Verloop van de middag

- 14:00 Introductie
- 14:15 Eerste taak (tweetallen)
- 14:30 Tweede taak (individueel)
- 14:50 Pauze
- 15:00 Derde taak (individueel)
- 15:30 Evaluatie (gezamenlijk)
- 16:00 Afsluiting

TU Delft

Voorbeeld - overlap

Laag   Hoog

TU Delft

Eerste taak – overlap

- Zoek zoveel mogelijk nummers bij elkaar die jullie allebei in eigen afspeellijsten hebben staan.
- Maak beide een afspeellijst van deze nummers

- Duur: 15 minuten

TU Delft

Tweede taak – Distributor

- Breidt de afspeellijst uit door nummers toe te voegen waarvan jij wil dat de ander die ontdekt.
- Zorg dat de afspeellijst openbaar is.
- Deel met de ander.

- Duur: 20 minuten

TU Delft

Derde taak - Discovery

- Deel de playlist met de ander.
- Ontdek de muziek die de ander op basis van jullie overlappende afspeellijst heft gemaakt.
- Luister naar de muziek zoals jij zelf gewend bent om muziek te ontdekken.

- Duur: 30 minuten

TU Delft

Evaluatie

- Wat vond je ervan om op basis van overlap muziek te ontdekken?
- Heb je op een andere manier muziek ontdekt dan normaal?
- Wat vond je ervan muziek te ontdekken via een afspeellijst van een andere gebruiker?
- Was het een verbetering?
- Wat vind je van de toevoeging van de schuif?
- Wat is het verschil tussen hoge en lage overlap?
- Wat zou je als distributor willen weten?

TU Delft
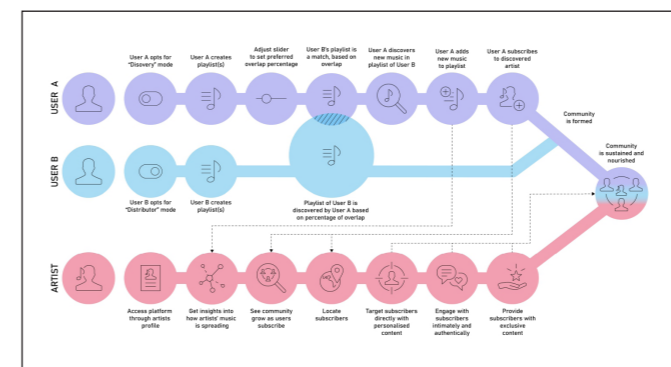

Evaluatie

- Wat denk je nu je het hele concept hebt gezien?
- Zou je het gebruiken? Waarom wel/waarom niet?
- In welke gebruikersrol zou je je het meest thuis voelen en waarom?

**T**U Delft

IV. SURVEY ANSWERS

| Participant	Op wat voor manier(en) ontdek je op het moment nieuwe muziek?	Hoe zou je het liefst nieuwe muziek willen ontdekken?	Wat zou je ervan vinden als je nieuwe muziek kon ontdekken door middel van playlists gebaseerd op jouw muziekvoorkeur, maar die gemaakt zijn door andere gebruikers?	Zoja, wat zou je dan aanmoedigen om in die rol te kruipen?
1	Via promo's (muziekjournalist) en Bandcamp	Bandcamp in een uitgebreidere variant	Matig enthousiast over tot nu toe, vaak zijn de playlist-makers niet echt de experts	Op de laatste vragen antwoordde ik ja, omdat 'onder voorwaarden' er niet bij stond. Ik maak al playlists op Spotify maar dat platform is nogal beperkt. Bandcamp mét playlists zou een uitkomst zijn. Daar kan ik dan ook echte experts volgen in diverse nichegenres (maar dat bestaat dus nog niet).
2	Tv-programma's, YouTube, muziekjournalistieke platforms, nieuwsbrieven van labels	Geen specifieke voorkeur	Prima	Liefde voor muziek
3	Soms ontdek ik nieuws via Twitter, een nieuwsbrief of toevallig via Reddit. Het meeste van mijn "ontdekkingen" gaat via Apple Music waar ik een aantal playlists regelmatig op de shuffle heb aanstaan en wanneer ik dan iets ontdek, voeg ik dat regelmatig ook wel toe aan een van mijn eigen playlists. Daarnaast heeft Apple in zijn "Listen Now" een item "New Releases" waarin je platen en singles laten zien die zijn uitgekomen van artiesten waarvan de dienst denkt dat ze interessant vind. Dat lijstje is verre van compleet, maar vind ik wel interessant om bij te houden.	De laatste jaren is mijn luistergedrag behoorlijk veranderd, waar ik voorheen in de begin jaren van Spotify nog echt op zoek ging naar nieuwe muziek, gebruik ik nu meer en meer playlists voor een bepaalde "mood". Op die manier krijg ik denk ik veel minder mee dat een artiest een heel album heeft wat ik leuk zou vinden, maar alleen de bepaalde songs die iemand heeft uitgekozen. Echter voel ik met de overload aan nieuwe muziek ook niet echt de behoefte meer om alles af te gaan en ben ik ergens ook wel blij met wat het "systeem" mij aanbeveelt. Daarnaast "ontdek" ik tegenwoordig veel meer muziek van de afgelopen jaren dan dat ik per se de laatste nummers van nu wil horen. Hoe ik het liefst nieuwe muziek zou willen ontdekken, vind ik wel een lastige, ik ben best wel tevreden met hoe het nu werkt, maar mocht er een alternatieve/ nieuwe manier zijn, sta ik daar ook wel voor open.	Ik zou ook graag andere gebruikers volgen en hun playlists op zetten. Persoonlijk kom ik in Apple Music ook wel eens op playlists van anderen uit en heb er een paar toegevoegd om zo af en toe eens te luisteren. Het is wel jammer dat dit soort persoonlijke playlists niet wat meer gepromoot worden door het systeem. Wat wel duidelijk zichtbaar is bij playlists van anderen is dat volgens mij maar weinig mensen hun playlists actief opschonen. Playlists zijn daarom vaak van een bepaald thema waar zo af en toe een paar songs bij komen. Of een favorieten lijst die met de smaak van het moment mee gaat. Een aantal van mijn eigen playlists zijn ook een mengelmoes van soorten muziek en die zou ik niet snel aan iemand aanbevelen.	
4	spotify, vrienden	gaat prima zo, maar t kan breder	lijkt me goed	
5	Spotify, recensies	Spotify, recencies	Interessant	Daar ben ik al gemotiveerd voor
6	Bandcamp, sociale media	In de platenwinkel of via vrienden/kennissen	Matige fan	Mijn muzieksmaak met andere delen en kunnen fungeren als opinieleider
7	Spotify Radio	Tips van bekenden, journalisten, kenners	Liever aanbevelingen in tekst	
8	Streaming tips (Release radar, Discover Weekly), tips op socials, recensies	(Door weer live bandjes te kunnen zien...) Release radar-achtige playlists op genre ipv algoritme.	Ja! Er zijn er een paar, maar te weinig.	Als je bijvoorbeeld fysieke dragers zou "verdienen".
9	Via Twitter, via playlists op Spotify, podcast St. Paul's Boutique, film	Zoals genoemd	Dat is in feite wat ik al doe.	Veel volgers
10	Via dj sets op soundcloud	Prima zo	Wel aardig	
11	Recensies in de media en via 'browse' op Spotify	Zoals hierboven	Ook goed	Ik zou het wel willen, maar ben er te lui voor. Playlistmaker is één woord (niet in het Engels)
12	DIY onderzoek	Via labels of artiesten	Klinkt interessant, op dit moment vind ik de voorkeurssystemen niet overeen komen met mijn eigen smaak.	Support the artist!
13	YouTube, Facebook, Spotify, contact met vrienden en kennissen, zelf zoeken.	Ik ben tevreden met de opties die ik nu heb.	Dat zou ik moeten ervaren om te kunnen beoordelen. Klinkt niet heel uitdagend, omdat mijn smaak "beoordeeld" lijkt te worden door anderen.	
14	Websites en Spotify	Websites, Spotify en bezoek aan platenzaak	Klinkt goed	
15	Toevallig, via via, uit de krant, gids, blogs, Instagram, etc	Zie vorige antwoord. Bevalt prima	Mag. Hoeft niet. Als je muzikanten volgt, gebeurt het al.	Spread the word. Iets verspreiden waar je enthousiast over bent is leuk.
16	Spotify Kennissen Muziekkrant OOR Podcasts over muziek Twitter	Via streaming aanbieder (bv Spotify)	Interessant, maar verwacht er niet veel van omdat dit vaak hele smalle selecties zijn en ik graag uitwaaier in muzieksmaak.	
17	Veel lezen een aanbevelingen andere mensen	Via Via	prima	gegarandeerde exposure
18	Via Bandcamp, Boomkat, Twitter, Instagram, tips van vrienden	Ik ben wel tevreden met hoe het nu gaat	Alleen als ik weet door wie ze zijn samengesteld	Een financiele vergoeding, de mogelijkheid om mijn eigen muziek te promoten
19	Bandcamp, afspeellijsten op Spotify van muziekkenners als Adriaan Pels, Dansende Beren, Unite Asia	Een goed radioprogramma met informatie over artiesten. Zoiets als De Wilde Wereld/ Villa 65	Kan, maar geen zg bubbellijsten.	de mogelijkheid lijsten/podcasts op een platform te zetten. Doe dat nu op Mixcloud, maar zou het leuk vinden als dat via Spotify zou kunnen, qua podcast. Hoef er geen geld voor Een schouderklopje, desnoods virtueel, is genoeg.
20	spotify en kranten	spotify	discover weekly, release radar.	als iemand me vraagt
21	Volgen van personen die muziek delen	Hoe ik het nu doe, wellicht wat gestructureerder	Ik snap t niet helemaal, iemand die speciaal voor mij een playlist maakt?	Leuk!!
22	Via Spotify playlist, Discover Weekly, Release Radar, via mijn netwerk	Via Spotify, mijn netwerk	Lijkt me zeker interessant	
23	Nieuwsbrieven, sociale media, playlists, tips vrienden.	Idem	Goed idee	Doe ik al sinds 2012. Laatste jaren wel minder effectief door wijzigingen Spotify.
24	Discover weekly. Aanbevelingen vrienden	Zelfde	Hoe vind ik deze playlists? Ik zou niet weten hoe ik ernaar moet zoeken	
25	Mijn collega's, voorgestelde nummers op Spotify en nummers die voorbijkomen in Youtube filmpjes	Door vrienden die muziek aanbevelen en concerten (bijv het voorprogramma)	Eigenlijk heeft Spotify al playlists gemaakt op basis van mijn muziekvoorkeur. Deze heet: dailymix. Wat de meerwaarde is dat het gemaakt is door andere gebruikers zie ik niet helemaal.	
26	spotify, via mijn kinderen, radio, aanbeveling vrienden	zoals hierboven	Juist de verrassing is belangrijk, heb geen behoefte aan meer van hetzelfde, is al zo vaak geprobeerd in het verleden en werk averecht, is ook al veel onderzoek naar gedaan.	
27	Radio en streaming diensten	Best tevreden zo, echter een tool voor meer "onbekendere" muziek zou mooi zijn	Prima, maak nu te weinig gebruik van playlists	Nu geen idee eigenlijk, nooit over nagedacht
28	Media (krant, muziektijdschriften), vrienden, Spotify playlists (release radar en discover weekly).	Media, vrienden, curated playlists by favorite artists	Goed idee. Eigenlijk zoals Discover Weekly, maar dan niet door algoritme (want soms nog misgaat), maar door fysiek persoon.	
29	Discover Weekly, tijdlijn Soundcloud, vrienden	Vrienden	Interessant! Zou ik ook weten wie?	Ik zou het niet willen formaliseren maar val mijn vrienden veel lastig met muziek die ik vet vind
30	JQBX, Spotify playlists nee muziek (personen die ik volg, niet Spotify's eigen lijsten) Twitter	Zoals nu voldoet prima	Hee, dat doe ik al ;-)	

Zou je gebruik maken van een abonneer functie op gebruikers om op de hoogte te blijven van hun (nieuwe) playlists?
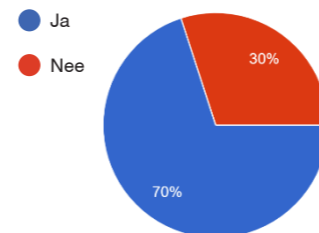
Zou je ontdekte muziek toevoegen aan jouw eigen playlist(s) om daarmee de artiest te helpen hun muziek te verspreiden?
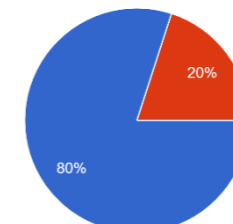
Zou je zelf in de rol van playlist maker willen kruipen en verantwoordelijk zijn voor de ontdekking van nieuwe muziek door andere gebruikers?

- Ja
- Nee

70% / 30%

80% / 20%

50% / 50%
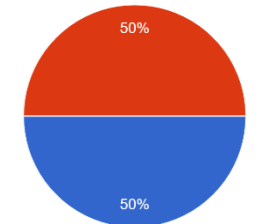
V. REINFORCING FEEDBACK QUOTES

With this concept, you are using an innovative way to bring together two parties in the music industry who still do not find each other easily.
Niels Aalberts (Editor-in-chief 3voor12 VPRO)

100 people can recommend a book to me, yet when my best friend recommends it to me, with whom I share mutual interests then I will actually go to the bookstore. This is the same with your concept, because there you also search for people with a common interest and only if that has been guaranteed will you start looking into what they are listening to and what should I be listening to. And this creates a strong bond. The fact that you are now automating that, is something that there is still not enough of and that I find truly interesting.
Patrick van Thijn (Regional Manager Benelux FUGA)

I like it. You actually replace the algorithm element with something very human and I really like the overlap principle, because that is how you share music with each other. And, Jesus, now I'm going to sound like a real boomer, how I can remember how we discovered music in the past. That is quite crazy how that is done here. And that you have control over how you deal with that overlap and get suggestions based on that overlap.
Colin Benders (Artist)

You almost create a kind of Spotify / Instagram hybrid, but in a human way.
Colin Benders (Artist)

I think the human aspect of this can be appealing. The very fact that there is someone else on the other side who hears things and lets you hear things that way.
Colin Benders (Artist)

But as an independent artist you can not get into these [major dominated/owned] playlists. The story you sketch [with your concept] could be a possible solution. That people do a kind of peer to peer marketing based on shared interests. That can be very interesting indeed. I always get enthusiastic about these kinds of initiatives.
Patrick van Thijn (Regional Manager Benelux FUGA)

I think this is very supportive of the independent business and that makes my heart beat faster, because I don't want those people to feel obliged to do anything. And that is why you might just be onto something.
Anneke Stulp (General Manager Benelux FUGA)

What you now see in the youtube scene, or Twitch for that case, is that many people subscribe or become a patreon and therefore all get exclusive things. And I think that in my scene [the DJ scene] it is still quite underexposed.
Pim van Os (DJ at Operator radio)

Something Spotify also has that comes close to your platform is listeners also like. But for me these are only Dutch artists, while only a quarter or only half of my listeners are in the Netherlands. This is something that I don't understand and that bothers me a lot. And with me a lot of other artists too. It also has to do with the size of artists, and that artists of the same size (followers, streams) are linked together. Really not facilitating at all for the smaller artists. At least for artists, this is a source of frustration that you as a new platform can capitalize on and convince artists with.
Pitou Nicolaes (Artist)

Artists and playlist makers just want to receive as much data as possible and I think Spotify prefers to do that as little as possible.
Marinus de Goederen (Artist)

If you create a playlist and you literally call it: "I have a Zoom meeting with Marinus". Then the chance exists that I will not be able to find that playlist based on that title. It is probably a one-of-a-kind, but I simply can't find it.
Marinus de Goederen (Artist)

If we could offer something different [to our artists] that will make them appear more often in third party playlists that are not from Filtr, Topsify or Digster but from users who have large numbers, I would certainly find that interesting.
Anneke Stulp (General Manager Benelux FUGA)

VI. ADJUSTING FEEDBACK QUOTES

Define the target audience for the user segment You have the model, but for who is this?
Ton van der Werf (Owner Endewerf Management & Teacher HKU)

The more to the right we go on your visualization, the more assumptions you make. It could indeed work, but it could also fail altogether. But that's exactly what makes it so interesting. I think you suggest a number of things very cleverly, but are they going to work? I do not know.
Niels Aalberts (Editor-in-chief 3voor12 VPRO)

My first point of view is that I am extremely curious about it. And as I just said, the further you move to the right, the more questionable the assumptions and the cross-connections between the different users become.
Niels Aalberts (Editor-in-chief 3voor12 VPRO)

It is very important for the beginning that you make sure you have good users before launching the platform.
Erwin Blom (Owner Fast Moving Targets)

If at some point you go full circle [user A to user B] and take the role of distributor, there must be something cool that motivates someone.
Pim van Os (DJ at Operator radio)

That middleman, the distributor, is in fact the vehicle to the masses, to the discoverers. You could reward them in turn by bringing them into contact with artists they play a lot. In doing so you facilitate a kind of connection between the people who make the music and the people who really distribute their music. I think that would be very valuable.
Pim van Os (DJ at Operator radio)

The community element is also very interesting for user B.
Colin Benders (Artist)

I can imagine that when I am user B and you really like my taste in music. Then you actually want some credits for that on the basis of playlist followers. So you can make it interesting by not just having user B deliver. I would like to see more

clearly; what's in it for user b?
Anneke Stulp (General Manager Benelux FUGA)

I think you also need things like leaderboards, for example the explorers leaderboard; people who discovered a band and included it in their playlist when they only had 1000 plays... Those types of elements give people reasons to keep doing it.
Erwin Blom (Owner Fast Moving Targets)

Human factor lies in the fact that users B have to bear in mind that overlap is created based on tracks, so some more well-known tracks will have to be included for discovery purposes.
Gerard van Enk (Owner, Developer at Million Pieces)

Subscribing to a user B will get you updates about new playlists created by them independent of overlap or not.
Gerard van Enk (Owner, Developer at Million Pieces)

I think you need to broaden the distributor's insights. Whether the distributor should change to curator or selector.
Colin Benders (Artist)

Instead of having a playlist on Spotify of "this is the best jazz of the 80s", there might be a distributor on your platform who really knows a lot about jazz. Who makes a weekly blog post with a playlist of this is jazz from this and that region, made by these people, with this mindset and this background. This means that you make a lot more of a connection with the music.
Pim van Os (DJ at Operator radio)