

WHAT 2 LISTEN 2

MASTER OF DIGITAL MEDIA MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT

WHAT 2 LISTEN 2:

Reinventing The Presence Of Tastemaker Influences In Music Discovery Through
User Interaction and Aggregate Data.

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The Major Research Project submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT:

Historically, the process of music discovery has been fostered through the personal connection(s) listeners develop with music and artists via broadcast media formats. Streaming technology has made music more accessible to the listener than ever before, but it has also failed the listener, inhibiting the process of music discovery by eliminating the tastemaker. By referencing the theory of Public and Counter-publics by Robert Warner, the paper outlines importance of audience recognition, response, and personal connection to music discovery. In 1942 Joseph Schumpeter wrote about “incessant product and process innovation”, coined the phrase “creative destruction” (a process through which something new brings about the demise of whatever existed before it) and proclaimed it to be “the essential fact about capitalism”. Despite this, Schumpeter also outlined the concept of “creative response” (innovative acts by entrepreneurs) and its importance to society. What 2 Listen 2 embraces the ideology of Schumpeter and creates a multi-level solution to expand the role of the tastemaker, and restore the concept of personal connection to the process of music discovery via storytelling. This solution has been articulated as a market ready broadcast property as well as an app/web solution in a beta form.

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To my family; Jennifer and Griffin Willock- Without your encouragement and undying support I would never have had the courage to do this. Thank you a million times over.

Figure i:



SPOTIFY PUBLIC RELATIONS AGREEMENT
Playlist Placement

This Agreement is made between [REDACTED] and Lynn Banks (Contractor), with a principal place of business at [REDACTED].

Artist:
[REDACTED]

Song Title:
[REDACTED]

1.Services
Our Team will build out a Pitch sheet which is Customized for each artist and song. We then personally pitch the song until it has been added to a minimum of 10 Spotify Playlist.

- Playlists range from 4k - 250k followers
- Total Playlist Reach between 70k – 500k Plays
- 4-5 Week Campaign

2. Payment
In exchange for the services performed,, the client agrees to pay \$1,100 USD (\$1407.19CAD) per song. Services will begin upon receipt of full payment. The Contractor and the client agree to a cash payment within 24 hours of signing agreement.

3. Terms
100% Refund Policy on Spotify Campaigns if the client has not received the Minimum playlist's agreed upon.

By Signing this Radio Campaign Agreement, You agree to all the terms listed in the contract.

Contractor/Company: _____
Date: _____

Artist Name: _____

Label or Ent. Company: _____

Printed Name of Buyer: _____

Buyer Signature: _____
Date: _____

Confidentiality Agreement

Introduction:

Through history, radio communication has been used as a source of information and entertainment. Unlike print and other media sources, radio has the unique ability to be constantly renewable; it can offer new content and communication with minimal delay. Until recently, radio was the primary outlet audiences utilized to discover the artists they loved. Radio sent people running to the store to purchase albums, it drove them to concerts, it was a central source of entertainment and there was no alternative, particularly when it came to music. In the 1980s, music-based television stations emerged and regardless of what everyone feared, video did not kill the radio star; it acted as a complement. The 1990s arrived, the Internet came to be, and it brought the rampant evolution of technology with it. While change did not occur overnight, technology eventually led to the creation of music-streaming services. Pioneer services such as RDIO, Deezer, and Songza paved the way for current heavyweights such as Spotify and Apple Music (not forgetting the “evil monster” that was Napster). As of July 2017, subscription audio streams had already increased approximately 83.4% over the YTD total of 2016 (BuzzAngle Music, *2017 Canada Mid-Year Report*, 2017, July 4), indicating that streaming services are still on the rise at a rapid pace in Canada. The evolution of technology and music-streaming services has exposed society to an entertainment value that radio cannot offer-- the ability to play what you want, whenever you want without limitation. Convenience notwithstanding, there is a void in this process. While the user has access to a seemingly endless catalogue of songs, the absence of an

accompanying narrative has disrupted the process of listeners developing a personal connection with what they are hearing.

Part 1:

Identifying The Problem- Radio vs. Music-Streaming Portals:

In his writing *Publics and Counterpublics*, Michael Warner (2003) states (in part) that: 1) Publics exist “by virtue of being addressed” 2) “The address of public speech is both personal and impersonal” 3) “publics must continually predicate renewed attention, and cease to exist when attention is no longer predicated” (Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 2003 pages 49, 57, 61). Warner’s (2003) understanding is that it a public is created by virtue of an individual or a group being addressed- the number is not finite. By this definition, if another person was to overhear you talking to yourself; a public has been created. Warner also illustrates that in order for a public to exist, attention needs to be maintained via ongoing renewed stimulation. These concepts identify what hampers the radio industry when faced with the competition of music-streaming services. At the same time Warner’s concepts expose why the radio industry’s current solution to the problem is not a viable one. The current state of Canadian radio and the gamification of music-streaming services will also be examined, and the role they have in diminishing the role of the tastemaker in the process of music discovery demonstrated. A market ready solution that fills this void in the current marketplace will be outlined.

Every radio station in Canada has to pay a sum for each song they play on the radio; this is dictated by The Copyright Act (R.S.C, 1985, C. C-42) (Branch, L.S. *Consolidated Federal Laws of Canada*, 2017, July 19). The same legislature outlines the amount due to songwriters, copyright owners, and individual performers each time their recording is played on any radio station. A supplemental bill, Tariff 8 (*Government of Canada, Industry Canada, Copyright Board Canada, Decisions*, 2014, March 7) sets the same guidelines for streaming services. This argument is not disputing that there are payouts to copyright owners and publishers at some level from all sources, but will focus on the creator (writing publishing) side of the equation to keep the mathematics simple. For each play a song receives at any Canadian radio station, it earns the creator a payout of approximately \$1.30 CAD, which is paid directly by the radio station (via SOCAN) to the writers of each song. Each time a song is consumed via a music streaming service, the creator of that recording is due a sum of approximately \$0.000102 CAD.

In 2016, there were approximately 22.3 billion song streams consumed via streaming platforms in Canada at a rate of \$0.000102 CAD per stream (BuzzAngle, Music, 2016 Canada Report, 2017, January 10). The total paid out collectively to music creators in Canada would have been approximately \$2.274 million CAD based on these numbers. If radio stations played 22.3 billion songs, the collective payout due to creators would be \$28.99 billion CAD, a significant and astonishing difference. This spawns the argument: What defines an audience, and what factors decide the potential reach of a transmission?

According to Warner, “publics exist by virtue of being addressed” (Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 2003, p.49), this concept is extended to both a person and a group, and exemplifies the advantage streaming services hold over the radio industry. Canadian law stipulates that each stream is to be treated as being consumed by one individual (on one device, on demand) and is given a finite value of \$0.000102 CAD. Reality is that when played aloud, a music stream (or anything for that matter), has the potential of reaching a broader audience than just one person and often does. A music stream playing in the background at a party, or in your backyard loud enough for your neighbours can hear increases its reach, whether the listeners are directly engaged or not. Apply the same model to a radio broadcast and engagement is seen as constant by virtue of potential reach. At radio each song played would be considered equal to 12,745 audio streams (\$1.30/\$0.000102). While it is true that many radio stations broadcast to a much greater audience- it does not alter the potential reach of an audio stream when played aloud. By virtue of the streaming services pay-per-play model, if nobody is engaged with the service then there is no audience, and when there is an audience, it is only one individual. If there is nobody, or a minimal listenership tuned into a radio station, Canadian law dictates that it constantly maintains a listenership of 12,745 (approx.) audio streams. While the reach of radio is seen to be larger --who can guarantee that an audio stream is being consumed by no more than a single listener? It is possible to fill a stadium and broadcast a Spotify (or any portal) playlist over the loudspeakers to 50,000+ people. There is nothing stopping retail stores, or places of business from employing a music-streaming service to provide

background music 24 hours a day 365 days per year. This possibility has been completely ignored, is virtually impossible to police; and is potentially being taken advantage of everywhere you hear music playing.

This argument is not absent of several additional factors to consider. If faced with paying increased royalties, would subscription based services be forced to sell advertising or raise subscription rates substantially? Should users be billed higher rates based on their volume of music consumption? Currently, a “new user” can gain unlimited access to music-streaming portal Spotify for a 60-day period by signing up and providing an email address. “New” users can repeat this process continuously (with the aid of newly created email addresses at the end of each 60 day term), and avoid paying subscription fees all together, forcing the streaming portals to absorb the costs. How widespread is this? Innovations and new forms of business are seldom without flaws, at some point these issues will come into question.

“Given the many choices that consumers have to experience music, commercial radio will need to use informed creativity, ingenuity, and experimentation in its journey to maintain profitability and groom fresh (and younger) audiences.” (Gomez, R. *Radio's 40 Year Old Music Programming Formula Is Killing Innovation, Alienating Younger Listeners, and Widening the Disconnect with Its Audience*. 2018, January 12).

Warner (2003) also states that publics “are created through renewed attention / being addressed as a public is both a personal and impersonal experience” (Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 2003, p.57, 61). The general consensus is that streaming services have caused radio listenership to decline, but the true extent of this is unknown. According to Media In Canada, local radio stations saw their steepest decline in revenue in 5 years in 2016 (Rody-Mantha, *Local radio ad sales see steepest decline in five years: report*, 2017, August 1). A simple assumption would be that lower advertising revenue is a direct result of a decline in listenership. Using the concepts put forth by Warner it could be argued that the decline in listenership can be attributed to a fragmented audience who have embraced the diversity and customization abilities that are offered by music-streaming services, and the dwindling personal connection listeners have with radio broadcasts.

The response of the radio industry was to launch two streaming initiatives in Canada - iHeartRadio, and Radioplayer Canada. iHeartRadio offers content from Bell Media stations and Radioplayer Canada provides access to approximately 500 other Canadian stations (Farrel, *Radioplayer vs. iHeart Ready To Duke It Out Over Mobile Apps*, 2016, September 29). If a radio broadcast has a declining audience, what would lead these organizations to the assumption that people would embrace the ability to stream the same broadcast on their personal device? Making this model more troublesome is that each time a radio broadcast is streamed via an app, both a streaming payout and regular radio payout has to be made. In contrast, streaming services like Spotify only pay when they have an active engaged user(s), or an active

audio stream. Both of these solutions have been put to market by the radio industry without the ability to be considered an innovation that disrupts current music-streaming platforms (Apple Music and Spotify et al.), neither are customizable by the user.

“Self-evidence of transparency may seem less important to video games, radio programs, or pulp fiction than to telephones, yet as critics have long noted, the success of media depends at some level on inattention or “blindness to the media technologies themselves” (Gitelman, L. *Always already new: Media, history and the data of culture*. 2008 P.6)

Warner defines a public as being “created through renewed attention” (Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 2003 p.57). A potential solution may be that radio needs to adjust their current model to renew the attention of the audience to the medium. Should radio expand the amount of variety in their formats? Is an increased dedication to specialty programming required? Would an audience be more engaged with a broadcast that is completely exclusive to radio? The personal connection listeners have to a host (or artists) is often what consistently draws one to a radio station; this is what makes morning show programming one of the most profitable business lines for radio stations. Imagine rock n’ roll without Allan Freed or Wolfman Jack. What if the frenzy created by Orson Wells and the radio program *The War Of The Worlds* never occurred? This is the very foundation that radio was

built upon; listeners thrive on novel content that earns and maintains their attention.

Part 2:

Innovation And The Silencing Of The Tastemaker:

On October 23rd, 2001 at the Apple Town Hall on their Cupertino California campus, Steve Jobs announced the launch of the iPod with the statement- “This amazing little device holds a thousand songs, and it goes right into my pocket.” (Brennan, M. J. 2012, June 19). Early adopters clamoured to load their CD’s onto their iPod- being faced with the challenge of being able to house a finite amount of their record collection on their \$399 device. Some users scoured the Internet in search of illegal MP3 files rather than going through the effort of ensuring the files on their iPods were legitimate and of the best quality. At that moment Steve Jobs and Apple lit the fuse that would forever alter the process of music discovery while the entire music listening public and the entertainment industry stood by and watched (or did they unwittingly embrace it?). The consumer void has yet to be filled.

We cannot predict the progression of technology; however, the notion that the rising popularity of iPod started the widespread “need” for music to be available with an increased amount of convenience is not unrealistic. After the launch of the iPod, online digital music stores became a reality, eventually paving the way for music-streaming services. These streaming portals have rendered the concept of

available space to store music on a device irrelevant; not to mention what was done to the concept of ownership. It is estimated that Spotify allows users access to over 40 million songs (*How many songs are there in total on Spotify?* 2017, December 30), that number is growing daily if not by the minute. Wrap your head around that number for a moment: How many CD's would 40 million songs take up? How many iPods? With the volume of music available in mind, consider this fact: 99% of all music streaming comes from just 10% of all available songs (Digital Music News 2018, February 14). The ability to choose whatever you want to listen to makes this figure shocking, especially when there are no limitations placed on the amount of music an individual user consumes via a streaming service (other than the data limit of their cellular plan, but WIFI combats that). The only limit placed on subscribers is if/when they choose to save music to a personal device for offline listening. Even then, the cost of this feature is nothing beyond a regular subscription fee, and the personal download limit set in the thousands (I stopped at over 3000, and there was nothing stopping me from continuing); the deciding factor on limit may be device memory. Traditionally copyright owners are compensated when a copy of a recording is made. When a user downloads a digital copy of a song via a music-streaming service, artists are not compensated beyond the royalty they receive from the audio stream. This raises another controversy that may have to be dealt with by music-streaming services in the future.

On the positive side, the growing number of songs released in the current marketplace can be attributed directly to the emergence of music-streaming

services and digital download portals. Artists are able to place material onto any number of digital outlets (streaming and digital download portals included) in a matter of minutes through artist service websites such as Tunecore or CD Baby etc., or in some cases with the digital portal directly. Artists no longer require a recording contract or record label to release material. There is no extended sell-in cycle required, and the cost is minimal (if anything at all) beyond small distribution fees. It has never been quicker or easier for content creators to release music; all it takes is a few clicks on a computer, tablet or smartphone. Independent artists can rely on social media and the Internet to promote their music at little expense, but beyond self-marketing the onus rests with the user to find them. For every Chance The Rapper there are hundreds, if not thousands of artists that you may never hear of (Staff, B. *Chance The Rapper Says Success as an Independent Artist Is Attainable If You're Patient*, 2017, December 27).

Prior to a period of rapid innovation, or “creative destruction” as defined by Joseph Schumpeter (Schumpeter, J.A. *Capitalism, socialism, and democracy*. 1943) music fanatics had no other choice but to make a weekly visit to the record store to browse through bins of LPs, CDs, or cassette tapes in an effort to discover music. Record store visits came with the assistance (or judgement) of the record store clerk- a tastemaker who was readily available to offer assistance; at the same time customers often shared their discoveries with each other directly. Local influencers aside, magazines such as NME, Rolling Stone, and Spin offered album reviews. You were able to look at charts and see what the rest of the world was listening to (pre-

Internet), and could discover the stories behind the music/artists featured in the magazines. Record collections became a source of pride, giving consumers a sense of validation each time they discovered music they enjoyed and eventually owned a copy of. The introduction of the iPod and iTunes not only reduced the effort required to purchase music, but the need to possess a physical copy in order to hear it. Budget constraints and disposable income have always limited the purchasing power of an individual regardless of the good being tangible or digital, this is no longer a problem. The introduction of music-streaming services has made purchases from both the record and digital download stores an unnecessary expense, (Resnikoff, P. *Music Downloads are Nearing Extinction as Sales Tank 27.4%*, July 2018) and transformed the need to limit ones consumption into a foreign concept.

Previously music was not as convenient to consume, giving a competitive edge to the radio industry- aside from rival stations there was no competition to speak of. Local radio stations continually sought to outdo their competitors by being the first to play an artist or a song. Record labels were often left trying to enforce embargos on stations forbidding them from embracing a particular song or artist before they were prepared to release it domestically. Certain stations offered programs comprised entirely of music that was not contained on their regular playlist in order to expose their listeners to new music and gain a competitive edge. Today, Canadian radio stations are often looked at as outlets that merely add songs to their playlists based on US chart positions rather than assuming the role of the tastemaker themselves.

Today, Top 40 stations across Canada are often guilty of employing a playlist that is similar to that of their rival down the dial (not to mention their sister-stations across the country), all but eliminating any need for listeners to remain loyal to their “favourite” station. How many times have you changed the station on your radio only to find the identical song playing on 3 or 4 stations simultaneously? The absence of true tastemaker influence reduces the personal connection listeners have shared with radio since its inception.

Songs featured on the radio airwaves are actually controlled by automated playlists that are set days, if not a week in advance- further removing the human element from radio programming. The frantic on-air phone calls featuring listeners making requests are pre-recorded, and used when a song is next in the existing queue. Not only are on-air personalities often pre-recorded, they do not control a single component of the playlist. If a radio DJ went rogue and played a song they wanted to introduce to their listeners, or anything that strayed from the automated playlist, it would likely cost them their job. Are radio stations actually in the business of breaking new artists? Or, have they always been advertising avenues that feature music content to gain an audience? Considering the volume of music available, radio has essentially ceased to be a source for broad music discovery. The audience has been forced to seek other avenues that allow them to consistently discover new music. Thankfully, the listener is not without alternatives.

Radio is not the lone culprit impeding music discovery. Similarly, music-streaming services employ curators, tastemakers who decide what is featured on the playlists they are responsible for; outside of these playlists it is the users responsibility to discover new music on their own. When using the search engine on Spotify, the absence of full (or unaltered) search capabilities hinders the process. I created a What 2 Listen 2 playlist on Spotify and was unable to find the playlist via the search function, regardless of having secured a unique name. I have employed several different devices from multiple locations (and multiple IP addresses), and the only way this playlist could be accessed is via a direct url; almost as if Spotify arbitrarily hides playlists that are created by end users, or makes them extremely difficult to find- why? To add further perspective, it was recently uncovered that Spotify has employed a Sweden-based company (Epidemic Sound) to create “fake artists” to be featured on popular playlists (Gensler, A., & Christman, E. *How Spotify's 'Fake Artist' Controversy Has Increased Tensions With Label Partners, Could Hurt Its Bottom Line*. 2017, July 19.). By purchasing these songs for a flat fee, Spotify is able to reduce the royalties they pay out, and place “fake artists” into positions on popular curated playlists that could be used to introduce users to new artists. The next time you do not recognize an artist on your favourite Spotify playlist, Google it and see what you uncover.

The gamification of music-streaming services has added another layer to an already complex issue. One would think that the metric by which an artist can measure their success would be the number of times their material is streamed on a portal.

However, it is possible to purchase plays on all streaming portals. Artists can “buy” their way onto playlists (not unlike the old days when payola was legal at radio), completely skewing any sort of ranking system; and adding to the sense that listeners are being sold to. An example of this “pay-per-play model” is offered by a Toronto-based music manager and is illustrated above (see figure i). For \$1407.19 CAD you will be guaranteed placement on a certain number of Spotify playlists, and your song streamed by a minimum number of “listeners” or your money back. This is merely one of many options available, all of them contributing to an already broken system of music discovery. Giving heed to the phrase “things are not always as they seem.”

Spotify is not the lone outlet that has the potential to be gamified. In 2016 artist driven (Jay Z et al.) streaming portal Tidal reported that the service had seen its users stream Kanye West’s Life of Pablo album 250 million times in 10 days. Life of Pablo was streaming exclusively on the platform for a 6-week window at the time. The problem with this data is that Tidal only had 3 million subscribers worldwide, each subscriber would have had to stream the entire album approximately 8 times per day to reach this number. A similar claim was put to Beyonce’s single Lemonade; the exclusive release was said to have streamed 306 million times in 15 days. It was demonstrated via a study that Tidal was manipulating user accounts to inflate the numbers of its exclusive marquee artists (Ingham, T. , *TIDAL accused of deliberately faking Kanye West and Beyoncé streaming numbers* 2018) . The gamification of Tidal, by Tidal itself would have not only resulted in inflated royalty

payments (taking money from the pocket of their own investors) and chart numbers, but would have created a false sense of what the listening public was actually consuming.

The volume of music that is available “in your pocket” is beyond impressive, but the ability to discover new music on your own is becoming increasingly difficult. Users cannot leave a search bar blank and expect their next music discovery to magically appear: The onus is on the user to discover artists themselves. Connect to Spotify (or any streaming portal) and search for something that is new or novel to you without accessing a curated playlist, the Internet, or speaking to somebody else. What are your results?

Part 3:

The Solution- What 2 Listen 2

In 1943 Joseph Schumpeter gave origin to the term “creative destruction”- a process through which something new brings about the demise of whatever existed before it. Schumpeter went on to proclaim creative destruction as “the essential fact about capitalism” (Schumpeter, J.A. *Capitalism, socialism, and democracy*. 1943 p. 84).

Steve Jobs and Apple exemplified this process with the introduction of the iPod and later iTunes. Initially, the iPod made MP3 players and portable CD players obsolete. Later, iTunes offered the ability to download audio files directly to your iPod, allowing consumers the ability to purchase things instantly rather than heading out to a retail store (and having the hassle of loading it onto their device after),

revolutionizing how people purchased and consumed music. In 1947, Schumpeter conceptualized innovative acts by entrepreneurs with the term “creative response” and deemed it important to society (Schumpeter, J. A. *The Creative Response in Economic History*. 1947 p.150). Interestingly, Apple itself instigated a “creative response” of their own to the iPod with the introduction of the iPhone. Not only did the iPhone reduce the iPod to a mere app, the smartphone technology offered by the iPhone was an innovation that several industries could not keep up with. One device now had the ability to function as a point and shoot camera, cell phone, personal organizer, Rolodex, and a source of news and weather amongst other things. At the same time the iPhone was a realistic replacement for a personal computer by virtue of its ability to handle email and web browsing. Eventually, the iPhone allowed for music-streaming services to evolve from existing exclusively on a home computer, to being available on the go via smartphone technology. Currently, iTunes (and digital purchases in general) are trending toward extinction due to the emergence of music-streaming services (Resnikoff, P. *Music Downloads are Nearing Extinction as Sales Tank 27.4%*, July 2018); a continuing cycle in a capitalist society. Realizing this, Apple launched Apple Music, its own music-streaming platform.

“Algorithms don’t determine people’s taste in music and visibility on a platform’s homepage/playlist doesn’t matter as long as an artist’s audience knows where to get their music.”- Chance The Rapper (Chance The Rapper [chancetherapper]. *DJBooth @carlcheryAM Algorithms don’t determine people’s taste in music and visibility on a platform* [Tweet] (2017, December 26).

A 2015 study conducted by Jackdaw Research surveyed 2 separate groups of 200 and 500 people, all of whom were active users, or were familiar with music-streaming services. Participants who ranged in age from 12-65 years of age were asked questions that focused on music-streaming and their listening habits. One finding was constant throughout the Jackdaw study: individuals who were interested in finding new music were found to be most likely to pay a subscription fee to a music-streaming service (Brown, F. J. (n.d.). *Would you pay \$9.99 a month for Apple's music streaming service?* 2015, Oct.20). The Jackdaw study was conducted in June and September of 2015, shortly after the launch of Apple Music, prior to this Spotify was the leading streaming portal by a wide margin and faced no serious competition. 2 years later, in 2017, a study conducted by Edison Research surveyed 2000 US citizens aged 12 and over. All parties surveyed met a certain criteria, and shared the opinion that “it was very important to stay up-to-date with music”. The Edison study discovered that 19% of those surveyed looked to AM/FM radio as a source of music discovery, 15% cited YouTube, and 39% stated they relied on friends/family/others to find new music to listen to. Spotify, the music-streaming portal that offers over 40 million song choices was seen as the least likely source of

music discovery at 10% (McCarthy, N., & Richter, F. *Infographic: Radio Still Beats Online Services For Music Discovery*. 2017, March 16). Those surveyed were of the opinion that regardless of the amount of material at their fingertips, music-streaming portals are not the best place to discover new music, seeing other people as the best method. The Edison Research study suggests that the missing element in music discovery is a community or public aspect, something that music-streaming portals lack.

In response to both the radio industry and music-streaming services inability (or is it unwillingness?) to fully incorporate tastemaker influences into their playlists, a multi-platform solution; What 2 Listen 2, has been conceptualized. In it's app/web form What 2 Listen 2 will look to fill the void of the tastemaker in the Canadian marketplace by aggregating data (not limited to radio play, music streams, YouTube plays, global sales data etc.), and combining it with user input. An area of focus will be given to songs with substantial difference in music streams over radio plays, a considerable increase in plays over a defined timespan (or a combination of these numbers), new releases and new artists will also be a focal point. Allowing this data to be sorted by country will grant users the ability to discover music that is making a substantial impact in another market but minimal (if any) in their own; music they may never hear but may fall in love with given the opportunity. Users will have the ability to survey these song lists; and discover each individual song via clickable links that will bring them to the selection made at a streaming portal, or other location pending availability.

When at market What 2 Listen 2 will canvas musicians, celebrities, and public figures to list 5-10 songs they are currently listening to, these (play) lists will be featured on the platform for end-users to explore. End-users will not be excluded from becoming actively involved in the discovery process, and will have the ability to highlight songs they are listening to on their own personal profiles. Giving the user the choice of becoming tastemakers themselves, or simply using the platform passively as point of music discovery based on the recommendation of others. By extending the process to the general public by way of end-user/music listener contribution, the potential for What 2 Listen 2 to create a community of tastemakers and evolve into a crowd-driven tastemaker platform exists. The inclusion of personal lists on the platform provides the users with the opportunity to express themselves through their song choices or look at what other people on the platform are featuring. The potential also exists to integrate a social aspect into the platform in the form of user-to-user communication via messaging.

A functional app prototype of this solution is available to survey. This prototype consists of sample user profiles, user generated song lists, country specific data driven song lists, and a sample of a platform generated song list. All links are live and will forward the user to a location where they can hear the music that is featured, all songs featured on this beta can be found on Spotify. A partnership with a music-streaming portal, radio station(s), and/or record labels could see the app enjoy endless potential. In order to fully achieve this aspect of the solution, app (or

web) development will be required, in addition to constant access to the required data sources.

While the advantages a tastemaker platform can offer to listeners, music creators, and copyright owners are obvious; What 2 Listen 2 also boasts the potential to benefit both radio stations and music-streaming services at the same time. The platform can serve as a source of content, traffic, and data output derived from user influence. There are no record bins to rummage through; there are no music snobs at the cash register to give you recommendations (or chastise you for the choices you made), the user has to know what to look for in order to find it, making it increasingly difficult to uncover. When accessing existing platforms users are faced with the inability to differentiate between paid music placements, organic growth, or sheer popularity. The absence of an outlet that offers a running narrative to accompany the music further complicates the process.

In General, the focus of What 2 Listen 2 is to expose the listener to content that they may miss entirely unless its existence is spelled out (or unless it boasts placement on a key playlist by a curator at a streaming service, or is added to radio). To complement the app/web presence a market-ready companion broadcast property has been fully developed and produced. Using a user/listener influenced platform to curate broadcast content will provide listeners the opportunity to be part of the process, and positions each episode of What 2 Listen 2 as a “crowd-sourced mixtape”.

What 2 Listen 2 will be produced as an open format non-genre specific tastemaker program. Going rogue on a playlist will not be an issue- it will be the norm. If (when) radio is prepared to embrace this ideology, the notion of What 2 Listen 2 evolving into a syndicated radio property may (will) become a reality. In a traditional sense, this ideology is nothing new to radio; it is in fact a return to its origins. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said: “music is the universal language of mankind”, (Longfellow, H. W. *Outre-mer: A pilgrimage beyond the sea*. 1902, p.202), the purpose of What 2 Listen 2 is to provide a forum for music to speak to its audience, the audience to interact with each other, and with the music directly. In order to facilitate this concept, a novel approach to building a connection between the music and the audience is required, and been accomplished by creating an alliance with Kitchener Ontario based start-up Tunevu. The technology developed by Tunevu allows for an expanded narrative to accompany the audio property via a patented embedded watermark and the Tunevu app. When an episode of What 2 Listen 2 plays the user will be presented with the story behind the music through a live feed running alongside the audio. This feed has the ability to feature anything from artist information, to links where artist memorabilia or music can be found, streamed, or purchased. All content can be actively engaged with while listening, or left to engage with at a later time. Allowing the user to further explore the stories behind the music as it plays, or long after it has stopped playing. Adding these elements to the broadcast property will provide the user a sense of personal validation during and well after completion of the audio program. This experience

has been simulated in a beta-phase using a non-commercial version of the native TuneVu app.

What 2 Listen 2 will present the listener with a novel approach to music discovery.

Call it a tastemaker platform, a replacement for the record bin or record store clerk; call it all of the above or something different. Regardless how this property is perceived- it will be novel. Each broadcast boasts a high production value and combines material that is trending in other countries, rarities, back catalogue, remixes and new releases. Combining these variables with listener input (Social Media, Email, online platform interaction) will set this program apart from curated or radio station playlists. There will be no one person “in control”; thus creating individual episodes that mirror a free-format, genreless, crowd-sourced mixtape. Due to limited data sets, particular attention will be paid to current songs and artists that are not being featured on Canadian radio, novel content and back catalogue at the outset. However, all episodes will provide the audience stories to accompany the music, often employing rotating feature segments.

Current developed feature segments are:

Who Wrote That- Songs written by major artists for other artists will be featured, in some cases the stories will be near shocking.

Mashups Usually Suck- They do, most are absent of musical theory and sound like two freight trains colliding. However, some are stellar- we will uncover them.

6 Degrees of Danzig- Punk rock hero turned caricature of himself Glenn Danzig is connected to a large number of artists. We will show them to you! (The purpose of this segment is to demonstrate connections between artists, and the intent is to grow beyond Glenn Danzig.)

The Remix is King- When the remix is better than the original.....you know which one to choose.

Why Haven't I Heard This/Add This To Your Playlist- Music that is absent from radio or territorial playlists is featured, accompanied by a narrative.

Uh Oh, Someone Went Solo- Bands break up, and it is usually the lead singers fault, or sometimes artists just feel like recording a solo album. We will uncover gems from these solo projects.

Who Sampled Who?- Sampling has become an integral part of music. 4 bars from one song can be used to create an entire new song. We feature some of the finest sample usages.

It Came From A Commercial- Sometimes a song does not have a story behind it and nobody likes it. That is until it is featured in a TV commercial, then it is the best song ever!!

Show content will be made available cross-format in the form of a companion grand playlist (ex. Spotify), making all material featured on What 2 Listen 2 available to the user at their fingertips (pending song availability on the individual portal).

Providing the user easy access to the songs they would like to add to their personal playlists, or the ability play show content on shuffle/repeat without the audio narrative. Not to be omitted is the users ability to discover something new, and choose to leave what they are not interested in behind.

“Even the largest unicorns now understand they exist in a regulatory and policy ecosystem, and need to be seen as forces for positive change within that system — not adversaries.” (Klain, R. A, March, 2018)

Conducting business within the parameters of the law allows What 2 Listen 2 to be positioned as a platform that is beneficial to artists, record labels, radio stations, streaming portals and listeners at the same time. By positioning itself as a leading source of music discovery and creating a tastemaker community, all industry avenues have equal reason to embrace it. Users will gain access to worldwide charts that are supported by aggregate data and/or user interaction, providing a clear path to music discovery with minimal effort. Radio stations will have the ability to reference the platform and identify which songs/artists the public are trending towards that are not featured on their current playlists. Music-streaming services will benefit in the form of cross-platform playlists driving users to access their portal to discover featured material, or possibly become paid subscribers. Artists and record labels will see the opportunity to increase the visibility of their repertoire. Collectively this creates a story that boasts a favourable narrative: What 2 Listen 2 – transforms what seemed to be a group of adversaries into potential partners and allies.

Was Napster conceptualized as the sinister monster it became? Was the iPod created to end CD sales or to make listening to your collection easier? These entities paved the way for music-streaming services to emerge and make music consumption more convenient than ever before. Radio stations play the same 10-12 songs repeatedly (Leclercq, P., *Analyze one year of radio station songs aired with SQL, Spark, Spotify, and Databricks* (2017); listeners stream the same songs online and cry boredom. Canadian radio adds what US stations are charting to their already automated playlists. Curators control the featured playlists on music-streaming services while other parties sell playlist placements, or feign streaming numbers. The void created by hushing the tastemaker has turned the process of music discovery into a chore rather than something enjoyable, this is something that needs to change. Never has there been more choice available; yet, it has never been harder to uncover new music on your own. What 2 Listen 2 needs to be positioned as the ultimate source for music discovery; being an innovation in music (discovery) that provides convenience without stealing makes it novel.

You already have the world's biggest record store in your pocket. Let me tell you What 2 Listen 2.

The below links are active as of August 23rd, 2018 and are subject to change:

App Prototype: <https://tinyurl.com/what2listen2-demo>

Web: www.what2listen2.ca

Twitter: www.twitter.com/what2_listen2

Spotify: www.tinyurl.com/what2listen2

iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/what-2-listen-2/id1362176321?mt=2>

Broadcast Demo:

- 1) Download Tunevu from Google Play or The Apple App Store.
- 2) Under the podcast tab search What 2 Listen 2.
- 3) Press Play. Interact!

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